THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, March 17, 1997

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Monday, March 17, 1997.

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

Prayers were led by His Honour the Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, March 11, 1997.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Minutes for the meeting of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting of Tuesday, March 11, 1997 have not been received. I would beg to move that these Minutes be deferred.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Reports of the Barbados Transport Board for the financial years, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I have been informed by His Excellency the Governor-General that the first Governor-General of Barbados, Sir John Stow, has died. I thought I would bring that to the attention of the House and that the House will at some appropriate time revert to the matter.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 1 - THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 1997

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the debate on the Estimates of Expenditure for 1997/98 takes place at a very delicate and sensitive period in the development of our society. We have reached the juncture, Sir, where we have to take very careful and far-reaching decisions regarding the scope of the policies and programmes we adumbrate and implement to continue to create income and wealth while, at the same time, deal in a frontal and fundamental way with serious issues pertaining to redistribution of income and wealth.

It is a balance, Mr. Speaker, that has confronted many developing countries. It is a juncture at which there is great scope for doing great good and also great scope for doing great harm. The history of those societies in which this issue has had to be faced is one characterized by the experience in which a very delicate balance between the continued creation of income and wealth and constructive fundamental and far-reaching measures to redistribute that income and wealth have not always been happily resolved. We have an historic opportunity in this debate to show that at this juncture we can get it right.

I start this debate on that tone because, fundamentally, the Estimates have been couched in a framework that recognizes that we are in the period of intense recovery from the recessions of the early 1990s, that the prospects for the continued material development of the society are strong, that we nonetheless have within our midst intense pockets of poverty and it behoves us to continue to realize the tremendous economic potential of this country while simultaneously dealing with the abject poverty which, unfortunately, is the lot of so many Barbadians.

It is not automatic, Mr. Speaker, that the right choices will always be made. There is a tendency on the part of too many Barbadians to say that it cannot happen here, that what has happened in so many developing countries, the over-extension of the State in support of social justice, cannot happen here. But we must remind ourselves, if we need to be reminded, that as recently as 1989 Barbados attained its highest level of material development. It was a year characterised by the highest level of tourist arrivals in this country's history. Yet, in two short years it was virtually all gone and undone because the wrong choices were made at a critical juncture in the history of our development. 10.30 a.m.

We have, Sir, to appraise these Estimates from the point of view of whether they facilitate our making the right choices at this critical juncture in Barbados' development so as to continue to spur on material development, whilst bringing about that material development within the context of social justice. These Estimates are intended to set the continued material development of this society firmly within the context of social justice.

Sir, that there is poverty in Barbados, is not in doubt. That there is intense poverty in some pockets of Barbados, is equally not in doubt. We are making policies in the shadow of one of the most intense recessions in this country's history, an intense recession that occasioned and led to very drastic structural adjustment policies having to be implemented in furtherance of the common good. One of the objectives sought was to protect the long-term viability of the Barbadian society by protection of the exchange rate. Whatever common good might have been sought, Sir, the reality is that the severity and savagery of some of the structural adjustment policy did have the effect at the individual and household level and at the level

of the major producing enterprises of bringing about poverty, dislocation and financial and economic distress.

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the structural adjustment measures fell on labour, the household sector and on consumers so much so that (he household sector, the individual in society and a large cross section of the productive enterprises of Barbados were genuinely caught up in fight for survival.

It is reflected in a loss of income not just by way of the 8% pay cut but by the decline in the income generated in society. It was practically demonstrated in simple matters like the abandonment of insurance policies as people made decisions at the height of the recession to forget about the long-term in order to deal with immediate crises.

We have reached a stage now, Mr. Speaker, where happily we are emerging from the intensity of that recession.

It is without doubt true that some of the trauma of the recession continues to exist in this country. It exists in people's sense of their relative deprivation. It exists in the fact, Mr. Speaker, that many productive enterprises and many households have not yet fully recovered. It also exists, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that the expectations of the society have been aroused by the evidence of growth to expect that past problems will now have to be resolved with a greater sense of urgency.

We have to set this as the framework, Sir, because sometimes reacting to urgency causes societies to stretch themselves beyond the limits of the resources that are available for the correction of the problems that everybody recognises have to be dealt with. We have, by way of these Estimates, Sir, try to set Barbados on a course where we are judicious and sensible in our provision of the resources to correct urgent social problems without at the same time undermining the stability of the economy nor committing ourselves to economic policies that are not sustainable and could, over the medium and the long term, do irreparable damage not only to the economy but undermine our ability to continue to support the accomplishment of our social objectives.

Sir, all the numbers in these Estimates, the extent of the deficit, the financing of the deficit, the allocation of expenditure, the manner in which we are seeking to derive our revenues, are all intended to address the issue of sustaining the material development of this society within the context of social justice.

Sir, the Estimates themselves have effect within the context of the performance of the economy, as it has recently evolved and in the context of the economy as it is likely to evolve in the immediate future.

I am in a position, Sir, to report to the House, that we would have in 1996 realised the third year of growth. Growth is expected to be in order of 4.5% and we are now coming back to the situation and the House has to be mindful of this statistic where Barbados, in nominal terms, will this year be producing for the first time more than it produced in 1989. That is where we are, in terms of material production in Barbados.

It has taken three years of growth to correct the problems of the recession and we are now in a position to move beyond 1989 levels of production in this country. It is a message to us, Sir, if we need a message as to how things can go downhill quickly and how difficult it is once it goes down to bring it back up. It has taken a tremendous sacrifice, the ruining of a lot of reputations, a lot of headaches to bring back this country. Everybody in this House has constituencies to represent. All of us are under pressure to represent our constituents so I would therefore urge all members that in our urgency to deal with the problem, we do not let ourselves put Barbados back in an unsustainable position because we do not want the trauma of the early 1990s.

Sir, beneath the growth rate, there are some statistics that I think are entirely salutary. There is an inclination of some members who want to pride themselves on their large social conscience to say that things like the reserves do not matter, but they do. We saw the very fabric of this society put to the test because of the weakness of our reserves and the threat to the exchange rate that came with the weakness of those reserves. All of us, the stakeholders in this Barbados society were prepared to endure tremendous sacrifice to avoid a devaluation and to do what was necessary in the country's interest by way of allowing the reserves to be built up.

May I say, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that at the latest count, the Central Bank has over $600 million in reserves. I am saying that not in any sense immodestly and that our net reserves, our gross reserves are in excess of $610 million at the latest count. Our net reserves are over $600 million. I am saying that not with any sense of boastfulness but maybe to establish that we have now put this country on a plateau where we have a sufficient cushion of reserves to make the threat of devaluation no longer an issue in the management of the affairs of this country. That is the significance of it. 10.40 a.m.

That $600 million in our reserves that we now possess so exceeds the 13 weeks that are generally required for safety's sake, that in fact part of the management of this country's foreign exchange reserves has, in the future, not to do only with keeping them in a safe place in case you

have to call for them but will have to do with asset management making sure that we get the very best deal for them. That is an issue on which we are going to have to get professional advice because we would not want to build up the reserves and thereafter do foolish things with them in the interest of quick profits but on the basis of speculative foreign investments. That is where we are with the reserves, Sir.

It is a tribute to the country, a tribute to the Government, that last year we were able to boost the reserves without going to the foreign markets to borrow on commercial terms and that the recent accretion in reserves has come from an expansion in foreign exchange earnings and from autonomous private capital inflows. That is to say, Sir, that the external position is becoming sounder. We boost reserves by commercial borrowing but the best manner in which you sustain increases in the reserves is if the accretion in the reserves comes from your earnings and from autonomous private capital inflows. We are in the position, Sir, where a large proportion of the increase in our foreign exchange reserves has come precisely from an expansion in our earning capacity and from people investing in Barbados.

We treat it, Sir, as a salutary development because it also means that we can conceive of monetary and fiscal policy in a more expansionary context now since we have so boosted the reserves that there is no threat to the exchange rate, even if there were to be some element of reserve depletion associated with our fiscal and monetary stances. I am saying all of that to remind the House about how quickly it can all vanish and how great still is the need for us to be circumspect in the policies that we pursue even in the midst of this apparent success.

I am also pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the fact that the rate of unemployment in this country has in every quarter in the last few years come down.

Applause.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. We have been going very well, let us proceed orderly.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am very pleased, Sir, that the rate of unemployment in Barbados has in every quarter come down and that it is now less than 15%, the only time that it has been less than 15% in the last 10 years was one year and in this quarter, Mr. Speaker, the extent of activity taking place in the country would in and of itself create a *prima facie* case to suggest that the rate of unemployment in Barbados is going to come down further.

I have had, in the course of the last two years, Sir, to endure all of the taunts of people who speak savagely sometimes about the 30 000 jobs, Mr. Speaker. I have had to endure the taunts of people who have been very caustic in their criticisms of the Government's job creation programme and again, Sir, it is pleasing to us that although the problem has not yet been fully resolved this country is now showing that job creation can go with income generation and that jobless growth does not have to be the fate of countries like ourselves, Mr. Speaker. I say that to make the additional point that part of the objectives in material development that we will be seeking through these Estimates and our general economic policies may continue to create an environment within which increased job opportunities can evolve and emerge as the economy grows, if we stay on course and do not do wild things with this economy, Sir, if we get our training institutions to really begin to match the supply of skills with the demand for skills, if we set and maintain the correct framework within which new businesses can be created and old ones expanded, Sir, if we can press on with the initiatives to get an enlightened private sector to seize the opportunities that are evolving in international economies and at home and in the region. If we can get a thriving class of small businesses in this country really to get their act together, the goal of full employment is not an elusive goal for Barbados. I have not, myself, ever set a time limit on it, Sir, but I too feel that the policies that have just been adumbrated can provide a basis for full employment in this country and that we have to continue to stay the course on it, Mr. Speaker, no matter what the cost may be.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the performance of the economy is also driven by the output in the export sectors, again a crucial index because there have been times in our past, Sir, when the balance between the private sector and the non-trading sector have not been of a nature to create the conditions for sustainable growth. You can have growth in the non-export sectors for a while and if that growth is particularly rampant it would last only for a while but at some stage the growth will come to an end because of foreign exchange constraints. Where you get the growth being led by the export sectors, Sir, the possibility of that growth being sustained and sustainable and free of any foreign exchange constraints becomes real and we have therefore not only been seeking to get the economy to grow but to grow in a sensible balance between the trade and tradeable sector and we are at that stage where the economy is concerned.

In this matter, Sir, I would like to speak to the question of manufacturers. The Central Bank has indicated, and I have information that is available to all Members of the House, the Central Bank has indicated that preliminary information would suggest that the manufacturing sector has fallen by 1.7%. The Central Bank and the Barbados

Statistical Services use weights for industrial activity that allow old sectors, such as electronics, garments and furniture to continue to assume their same significance as components of industrial activity now as they did in the early nineteen eighties. There has been a change in the composition of industrial output in Barbados and newer more aggressive industries with a very high export accent have been coming to the fore while the older industries in garments and electronics have been in relative decline.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that on the basis of the information available to the BIDC, the exports from the manufacturing sector last year grew by 35%. Sir, the Honourable Member says it is nonsense because it does not coincide with what he wants it to be, but the certified exports of the sector grew by 35% so that there would have had to be a traumatic reduction in domestic demand from our industrial commodities to have a sector whose export earnings have increased by 35% register an overall decline.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said, of the Central Bank's preliminary statistics - and the Member for St. Michael North-West wants to interrupt me because what I have said does not coincide with what he wants to assert but I will make the information available to the House - these are the facts as they presently stand.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, could the Honourable Member... Order, please. Order please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I have come to the House, Sir, in as constructive a mood as possible but the Member for St. Michael North-West is not hearing what he wants to hear, Sir, so you can expect this. He is a spoilt child, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would have said enough also to indicate that there is substantial investment taking place in the Barbados economy and I will have some more to say on this matter very shortly when I address the issue of the prospects for the economy and the search for material development within the context of social justice because this is the issue of the day. Our reserves and our growth were both spurred and boosted by strong investment including strong private capital inflows. 10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be judicious in how we approach the question of the role of foreign capital in Barbados. We live in a world in which rules originating from the WTO will increasingly seek to have equality of treatment for investment between our countries and the rest of the world. We have increasingly as well, Mr. Speaker, as we have in the past, subscribed to bilateral investment treaties, the core of which has been equality of treatment to foreign and domestic investment.

Sir, there has been a history in this country of accommodation of foreign investment. A lot of our tourism plant and a lot of the villas on the west coast have historically been developed by people whose interest in Barbados was not a quick shot, immediate rate of return, but a desire for a long enduring relationship.

We are characterised as a tourist economy and as one of the few places in the world where there is a lot of repeat business.

There are people who have been coming here, Sir, for 30 or 40 years and they have made substantial investments in the society, not with the view of making a quick rate of return, but because they have a long view of their relationship to Barbados.

It is not in our best interest, Sir, to discourage people who have a long view of our development and whose interest is not in gratuitous short-term profits. It is not in our interest, Sir, to discourage people from having that long sympathetic view of our development. At the same time Sir, we are mindful of the fact that there are also some unsalutary features to foreign investment.

Very often foreign investors seek terms and conditions that are obnoxious and can exclude the involvement of our citizens, Sir, in levels of activity that go beyond the menial.

Very often foreign investment has to be supported by some very generous concessions, Mr. Speaker, so we have to be judicious.

I just want to take this opportunity today, Sir, to say that this morning I met with the principals of Barbados Shipping and Trading and St. James Beach Hotels. I have decided not to be drawn into the public controversy because, under the laws of Barbados, Chapter 71, the Minister of Finance is designated as Exchange Control Authority. Under section 33 of that Act, any attempt by a foreign entity to take controlling interest in the share-holding of a local enterprise has to be approved by the Minister of Finance acting as Exchange Control Authority.

As such, Sir, this issue has to be evaluated by the Securities Exchange of Barbados to ensure that any agreements made between the former shareholders of the existing Almond Beach and the Securities Exchange Control are consistent and are met in that context.

There ought to be something very salutary about Barbadians who own assets in the country who want to maintain an interest in those assets. We are doing everything to ensure that Barbadian shareholdings are in major productive enterprises in our key sectors and that Barbadian shareholding is maintained at a sufficient level as will allow the fortunes of the citizens of Barbados to

advance consonant with the material development of this society.

A stakeholding in this society by way of share-holding is an important part of ensuring that the benefits of material development of society, Sir, are dispensed with a view to national development.

I believe Sir, that an arrangement really must be put in place to ensure that substantial private shareholding in the Almond Beach continues to be a feature of that transaction which saw an asset being transferred by the sale from the public sector to the private sector.

I believe Sir, that a happy conclusion could be reached whereby substantial local interest in major productive assets in this country, Sir, continues to be a feature of our economic philosophy and our economic landscape.

I also want to take this opportunity to make it abundantly clear, Sir, that this administration will not, will not, will not, Sir, be associated, in any remote way, with our beaches in this country becoming private beaches and going into private hands. I want to make that, Sir, abundantly, abundantly clear...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I will speak this in a very clear way, Sir. In the late 1950s when the Sandy Lane estate was being developed, there was a covenant drawn under which the owners of the properties have to be responsible for the maintenance of the roads...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: But there is apparently, Sir, a flaw in the covenant. I am advised by the Clerk of the House, Sir, that sometime in the past, there was an attempt made to have a Private Members' Bill brought here to address what was a private matter by way of action in this House. It did not succeed then, Mr. Speaker, it will not succeed now. There is nobody on this side who is interested in bringing a Private Members' Bill to deal with that issue which has anything to do with the privatization of beaches in this country...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: This Government will not be associated with any legislation that seeks to introduce to Barbados any notion that the beaches of the country should be under private control or will be for the exclusive use of any private group. That, Sir, is repugnant to the policies of this Government.

I am saying all of that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because Barbados' development is in part being driven by autonomous private capital inflows. This is nothing new. We want to have an environment within which private capital inflows can come into this country and continue to function but do so in a manner that is not repugnant to social justice in this country, Sir, or in a manner that does not retard the opportunities or block the opportunities that should be available to the Barbadian public. 11.00a.m.

Therefore, on this particular issue, we are as vigilant and as concerned as anybody else with any practices that would introduce any new ways of doing business that are repugnant to the Barbadian way of life.

Sir, the prospects of the Barbados economy in 1997 are also fairly sound. We expect that the growth in the economy will continue at a rate that coincides with what we regard as the sustainable rate of economic growth. We believe that the balance between the export sectors and the non-export sectors will continue to be in favour of the non-export sectors. We do not see any foreign exchange crisis on the horizon. Rather, we see a continued strengthening of our reserves to allow us to have the latitude to do creative things with our social development. We see a continued balance in the spread of the growth as between the various sectors. We see a continued reduction in the level of unemployment.

At the end of the day, Sir, although the prospects are sound, we must not convey to the society that we have put all of our economic problems behind us because we must always remember that 1989 was indeed an historic year and within 2 years it had all virtually gone.

Sir, it is against that background that I want to outline the main aspects of the fiscal policy and the main details of this year's Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. In the last 2 years we have tried to contain the size of the fiscal deficit in the belief that, as the economy was recovering from the trauma of the then deep recession of the early 1990s, we first had to consolidate the strength of the economy and that until we were satisfied that the strength had in fact been consolidated it would have been a grave error to do a lot of expansion on the fiscal side.

I, therefore, set limits to contain the fiscal deficit at about 2% of the GDP. Last year, I thought I would even extend it to $2V_2$% of the GDP because I thought that the prevailing circumstances, meaning that we were still in a very delicate position, did not allow us much scope for fiscal expansion.

Last year, I came to this Parliament and brought Estimates that basically said that over the course of the year the Government forecast that it was going to

raise $1 220 000 000 in revenue and that we would incur $1 500 000 000 in expenditures. The projected out-turn for the year suggests that the revenue forecast will be more or less on target. The expectation is that we will realise revenue of $1 229 000 000, about $9 million more than we forecast. In point of fact, Sir, the revenue could have been better were it not for the fact that in the last 3 months of the year private sector uncertainty about the VAT excited significant restraint from stocking.

If you take, for example, the revenues in October for 1995 and 1996: in 1995, current revenue in October was, I think, $105 million, and in 1996, revenue in October, was $79 million. That was the extent of the battery that we incurred because of the wait and see attitude in relation to the VAT. Our revenue was more or less in line with expectation.

It is important that the House understands that the Government has tried to keep its expenditure in line with what it asked the House to approve at the start of the financial year. This is the second year in which I have to make this point to the House. We do in fact bring supplementaries to the House but our budgetary process is a fluid and continuous process in that we take stock of the rate of execution particularly of capital expenditures, and in circumstances where it is absolutely clear that certain capital projects will not be realised, there is, therefore, the recognised scope for the substitution of other expenditures that can be carried on while keeping total spending within the limits that we regard as prudent.

The House will therefore see that we anticipate that even after we have paid a productivity bonus, and the House will be asked to redeem shortly $11 million in National Development Bonds issued in favour of BDB that will fall due for redemption on March 31, that even after we have done all these other things, our total expenditure for the fiscal year will be within the limit of the $1.5 billion that the House approved in March last year despite the bringing of supplementaries.

The reality is that the analysis of the projected outturn will show that the capital programme although it has been stepped up did not fully absorb the $235 million that was planned for capital projects in the course of this year 1996-97. Rather than spending $235 million we are likely, to spend about $189 million. It all has to do with the fact that a large part of our capital programme is in the nature of projects which have loan financing with the IADB. In particular, the meeting of lADB's methodology and the nature of the lADB's bureaucracy are not factors that are conducive to rapid capital execution.

There was one project, Mr. Speaker, in particular, for which the House voted a substantial sum last year and for a very good reason. The loan contract, that is, the Bridgetown Project, was negotiated in 1992. Once the loan contract is negotiated we begin to incur commitment fees. So we start to pay the Bank even if we are not using the funds. For a few years no counterpart funding had been provided nor has there been a settlement of the contract for the consultant for Government. It took the Bank 6 months to agree on a no-objection to the consultant and it is matters like these that slow down project execution.

On the South Coast Sewerage Project we have had a lot of to-ing and fro-ing with the bank arising from the nature of the bank's methodology on contractors who are carrying out work on behalf of the Government of Barbados. There have been instances in which the nature of the work being done has been such that the Government has had to raise fundamental concerns with the Bank about the performance of the contractor. We have had in one instance to go back out to contract because the one bid was so highly in excess of the price that we wanted to pay the contract that it would have been at great peril to the Treasury for us to accept the bid. All of these things, Sir, tend to retard capital project development in the country. 11.10a.m.

It is a sad thing that over the years project management capability in the public sector has not been treated as the specialist area that it is, and it is a sad thing that there has not been over the years, Sir, systematic training of people in project management and project execution,

We do have a situation, Sir, where there is a shortage of people in the public sector trained in the techniques of project management, and we also have a related deficiency of being able to get the kind of skills needed for projects like engineering and other technical skills, at the price paid by the public sector for those kinds of skills as compared with the private sector. We have great difficulty for example, in getting engineers to work at public sector wages and we are seeking to circumvent these by accentuating the skills in project management, and by offering contracts and by seeking to get scarce services in the public sector on a contractual basis. So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, despite all of the supplementaries of which there was so much horror expressed, Government's total expenditure for the year will amount to no more than the House approved initially last March, because all that we did was to take up the slack that existed from the fact that the capital programme was not fully realised, and make up for that slack by substituting other types of expenditure activities.

Sir, in relation to the revenue in the fiscal position for next year, what is immediately apparent is that the Estimates for 1997-98 herald somewhat of a change in Government's fiscal policy. In the first two years,

Sir, because the foreign exchange situation was still very delicate, because the domestic liquidity situation was still very delicate, the Government thought it very prudent to restrain the fiscal deficit at about one percent of GDP. We now have a situation, Sir, where, as I said, our foreign exchange reserves are over $600 million, about six months of reserves, exceeding the limit required for safety. We have a situation as well, Mr. Speaker, where there is tremendous excess liquidity in the domestic banking system, and we therefore are in a position to contemplate some element of fiscal expansion as represented in a larger fiscal deficit as a proportion of GDP, in the knowledge that we can safely do so, and in the process to accomplish major objectives having to do with the achievement of social justice in this society, without putting the balance of payments of this country at risk, without inducing any threat to the exchange rate and without in any respect, Mr. Speaker, putting the private sector of this country in a position where it could not have ample and liberal access to credit.

The decision by the Government this year to allow a larger fiscal deficit has objectively and concretely to be set in the context of the existing external reserves position as well as in the context of the domestic liquidity position that is facing this country. This is not an excessively large deficit. It is in line with the deficit that I believe, Sir, is sustainable. It in fact somehow exceeds the two and a half percent deficit that I believe that we should aim at, but it is all related to the fact, Sir, that the Government has greater elbow room because of a greater external reserves comfort, to be able to treat through the fiscal side, social problems .that are urgent and can no longer be resisted and the Estimates have therefore, Sir, have to be seen in that holistic context.

Sir, I really must first of all deal with the revenue because, unhappily, a mischief has crept into the public discourse of our financial affairs that has been inspired by the fact that the Member for St. Lucy generally speaks without pausing either for breath or for thought.

Sir, the Value Added Tax is a tax...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the Value Added Tax is a tax that is intended to replace eleven taxes. The Value Added Tax, Sir, and the Excise Duty I should say, are intended to replace eleven pre-existing taxes. The new Value Added Tax and the Excise Duty are now included in the Estimates under that category called "Taxes of Goods and Services."

Some of the taxes that the VAT and the Excise replace are also included under that category called "Other Taxes on Goods and Services/* but there is one major tax, Sir, that the VAT and the Excise have replaced that was never included under the category of "Taxes on Goods and Services" and that is the stamp duty on imports that was projected last financial year to realise about $89 million which, like the other stamp duty, was classed under a category called "Other Taxes."

Now you would feel, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that before people put their mouths in gear they would look, Sir, at the total situation and try to see where the VAT and the Excise are now located in relation to where all of the taxes that the VAT and the Excise replaced were located in the first instance. It is true, Sir, that taxes on goods and services are projected to increase by a $900 million, but it is also true that the category of taxes called "Other Taxes" under which the stamp duty on imports is effective is intended to decline, Sir, from the $89 million of projected revenue last year to $7 million this year, and a sensible mind would have offset the increase in the category "Taxes on Goods and Services" with the corresponding decrease that is occasioned by the abolition of the stamp duty on imports before they made any statement at all about how much revenue the VAT is likely to realise.

The reality, Sir, is that all the eleven forms of revenue that the VAT is replacing, Sir, were last year projected. If they had been allowed to stay in place for a full year given the performance in the first nine months of the year when they were in existence, they would have, in the course of a full year, realised over $489 million and that with an element of growth those eleven taxes in this year with a three and a half per cent growth in the economy, would have altogether realised about $500 million which is what the Excise Tax and the VAT are now forecast to realise.

So that somebody picks up the Estimates, does not understand what they are saying but they rush off with this big foolish headline that the VAT is intended to raise a $100 million more than the taxes that it replaced, and that the Government is in for some major bonanza. So we have to deal with that because out there in the society is the issue as to whether or not we are in a position to afford any serious adjustments in the VAT base at this time. I would urge members to be sensible in how they read the Estimates.

The Member for St. Lucy is totally agitated from his seat because he cannot stand scrutiny. 11.20a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. It is not normal, Sir, to interfere with an Honourable Member at this point in time but the Honourable Member is misleading the House. When I made that statement about $100 million more in collection in VAT, I was not reading these Estimates. That was made over 6 months ago.

Mr. Speaker: No. That is not a point of order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: What is savage about it, Sir, is that at least one section of the media, without a critique, takes it out and trumpets it that there is a $100 million boom. There is an increase in goods and services taxes by $100 million and a corresponding decline in the taxes on other services.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please!

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Not fully corresponding, Sir, but there is a substantial decline because we have removed the stamp duty on imports and the stamp duty on imports last year was geared to collect $89 million. I have to stress the point, Sir, because I have already said to the House that we have to give ourselves a chance to truly assess the full base of the VAT. The numbers of the VAT for the first 3 months are projected in the Estimates of Expenditure this year, the first 3 months of the year in a calendar sense. The Estimates show, and in fact, the VAT is yielding revenue at the rate of $22 million in the first 3 months. That is precisely the point I am making that the VAT is yielding revenue at the rate of about $22 million for the first 3 months.

I want to develop the point, Sir, that it is our expectation that as more and more people are brought into the tax net through increased registration, the yield from the VAT will rise above the $22 million a month because we believe that, if the VAT and the excise tax are to equate to revenue foregone through the abolition of the pre-existing indirect taxes, the VAT will have to raise more than the $22 million. These Estimates should be telling the House the point I have been making all along that we have to give ourselves a chance for the base of the tax to be first established before we start making substantial adjustment by way of exemption of any other commodity.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I have told the Honourable Member, Sir, that we have 2 months[1] collection already, but that the 2 months' collection at $22 million a month will not give you $300 million in revenue unless at some time the base of the tax expands by almost succeeding in bringing more businesses and potential VAT payers into the net.

It is not true, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say that categorically without fear of contradiction, that the Government this year is expecting the VAT to yield revenue equivalent to $100 million more than that which would have been yielded in this financial year had we retained the pre existing 11 indirect taxes that have been abolished. It is not true.

It is projected, Sir, that the VAT will merely succeed in generating revenues equivalent to what would have been yielded by those 11 taxes if those 11 taxes were existing in this fiscal year to come?there would have been about $3V_2$ per cent growth in the economy. It is a mischief for any Member of this House, or any journalist, to put to the public the false and misleading propaganda that there is some massive boom in revenue that is there awaiting us. I also want, Sir, to reinforce the commitment I have given to the House that we will review it in 9 months when we have more conclusive information about the revenue yield that has ensued from the introduction of the VAT and the excise tax.

Sir, on the revenue projections for next year, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy today is totally...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: One minute please. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, could you desist from these interruptions across the House?

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! I am speaking, please. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I am asking you to desist from these constant interruptions across the Floor, please. Let us proceed orderly, please.

Please proceed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, on the revenue side, last year we received -1 am seeking in advance to address some of the queries that might be raised - an extraordinary special receipt that had to do with the revaluation of our holdings of SDRs and that $17 million special receipt, the difference is now shown as a factor that will in 1997/98 reduce special receipts by $17 million.

In relation to taxes on trade, the House will note that this year the Government expects to get less revenue from import duties and this is related to the fact that effective April 1,1997, the Government is going to give effect to its undertaking to carry out the third phase in the introduction of a Common External Tariff which will see the top rate of import duty falling from 30 per cent to 25 per cent.

The House will be aware that all Caribbean countries are under an obligation to introduce a Common External Tariff in phases. We are now at the third stage and in that third stage the top rate of the import duties will fall from 30 per cent to 25 per cent costing the Treasury, we anticipate, some $5 million in revenue.

The final phase in the introduction of the Common External Tariff will take place on April 1, 1998 when the top rate of import duty will be reduced from 25 per cent to

20 per cent. The decline in the projected increase in revenues from import duties in this year's Estimates reflects the introduction by Government on April 1 of the third phase of the Common External Tariff. The top rate on import duties in Barbados as of that date will now be 25 per cent rather than 30 per cent except, of course, for the agricultural commodities and others which fall outside the scope of the arrangements pertaining to the Common External Tariff.

In relation to taxes on property, the House will also observe that in keeping with the Manifesto position of the Barbados Labour Party as stated in 1994 that when there was a triennial revaluation of people's properties we would have so changed the rate of land tax to ensure that the land tax payable by the householder was the same before the revaluation.

Last year the House would recall that as a result of the triennial revaluation I took a decision to reduce the rate of land tax by 15 per cent such that the 15 per cent reduction in the land tax would ensure that the new values arising from the triennial evaluation would not cause householders to have to pay more. The result Sir, is that we do not therefore this year expect to receive any more land tax than we received last year. That is giving effect to a very clear manifesto position that was stated as part of the social contract that binds this particular administration. 11.30a.m.

The Member for St. Michael South Central speaks in amusement when notions of manifestoes are raised because he knows how his manifesto was savaged by the D.L.P administration.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation, I am not sure that I am hearing clearly or if there is a component of error in the presentation of the Honourable Member but I borrowed a copy of the Barbados Labour Party manifesto which is now a document of the House and I see here The Road to Economic Construction - Special Proposals - abolition of land tax to residential properties of a value not exceeding $150 000.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is not the manifesto on which this administration asked for and received the support of the people of Barbados. There were manifestoes in the past that he knows about which committed the Democratic Labour Party to giving back the taxpayers $39 million in deferred taxes of the Barbados Light Power. The Member for St. Michael South Central had the opportunity to bring a new regime for energy prices in this country and to give back the $39 million that was written into the Democratic Labour Party's manifesto. What did he do? He struck an arrangement with Mobil to give them 15% after tax profit in circumstances where they were getting 10% before. He did that, Sir. He knows about manifestoes and how he deals with manifestoes.

I am saying to this House that the Barbados Labour Party in 1994 put a manifesto to the people saying that we would adjust the land tax rate in such a way that any revaluation in property would not lead to an increase to payment by the householders in land tax. That is the policy on which this administration is elected. It is the policy that we are honouring.

I believe that there are some areas in which the revenue estimates inadvertently have underestimated projected revenues; for example the revenue estimates for receipts from foreign sales corporations are set at a constant. The revenues from foreign sales corporations have increased to $3 million rather than $1.9 million. There are those areas where there have not been major adjustments but there should have been. The point is that they are not significant enough to affect the overall estimate of revenue. We believe that the overall estimate of revenue, Sir, is realistic. The realization of the estimate of revenue for the year to come is predicated on the assumption that the yield from the VAT and the excise for the next twelve months will be greater per month than the yield from the VAT and the excise in the first two months of its operations. This is a realistic assumption. The Member for St. Lucy speaks without thought or breadth. We are not saying that it will exceed the yield that would have been accruing from the taxes that it replaced but that the VAT receipts have started at about $22 million a month. Those who are pressing the Government to cut the base further means it would commit the Government to a form of financial suicide. That is why I keep making the point to let us see the base before we act.

Sir, I turn to Government's expenditure. I make the point that these Estimates and Government's overall economic and financial policy for this year will all be designed to spur on the material development of Barbados within the context of social justice.

The profile of Government expenditure and the policies underlying them are to be found in one place in Table 8 on Page 5 of the Memorandum to the Estimates. What this profile of expenditure shows basically is that Government expenditure is set to increase but that the bulk of the increase is to come in two forms, on the current side in transfers, transfers predominantly to households and non-profit institutions and the other increase will come by way of an expansion in the capital programme.

Sir, these two forms of increase are crucial to our being able to succeed in stimulating the material development of this society while serving the best

precepts of social justice. Transfers includes transfers to the welfare institutions, Child Care Board, Welfare Department, University of the West Indies and all the institutions that are at the core of the provision of social services in this country.

The Estimates are designed to allow the Government this year to hold a line on job creation on the current side although there has been job creation on the capital side. We have also cleaned up the statutory personal emoluments because a number of posts have been frozen for which allocation had continued to be voted by Parliament. There will still be a few jobs created through the current side but any jobs created in the public sector for the year to come will have to be jobs associated with the execution of the capital programme. We are holding a line on purchase of goods and services but the increase, as you will see, comes under the head of "Transfers" - Subsidies to increase by 65.7%, Grants to Individuals to increase by 155.1% and Grants to Non-Profit Agencies by 12.6%.

The main focus of the Government in this new fiscal year is to continue to build a strong economy and to deal aggressively with the abject poverty that still exists in a very intense way in parts of both urban and rural Barbados. Before I come to that, Sir, just let me say that one of the significant areas of increase in public expenditure in this country is in the provision of university education at the University of the West Indies. These Estimates reflect the fact that the increase in ensuring that Barbadians going to the University of West Indies enjoy free access to that education will lead to an increase in expenditure of $19.8 million this year as compared to expenditure the year before.

Before I get on to the poverty alleviation aspect of the Estimates, Sir, I just want to make the point that we are now living in a society which, generally speaking, has moved from a society that provides its citizens access to basic services to a society that is providing its citizens with quality services. We have seen it in the scope of services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There are a number of Barbadians who have access to open heart surgery free of cost at the Q.E.H, a service that could cost as much as US$70 000 to a person who has to have a similar operation done in the metropolitan world. Our citizens have come to expect that our health care institutions will provide not just the basic services but quality services. Equally in the field of education and training, Sir, there is a systematic attempt to deepen the range of training opportunities available to Barbadians to include not just the consolidation of basic training but to allow Barbadians to have access to more and more sophisticated forms of training consistent with the modernization and diversification of the economy into areas that require the economy to be able to compete at the very centre of an intensive competitive international business arena. We have to understand, Sir, that part of Barbados' material and social development consists not only in the growth of the GDP but consists equally in our citizens having access to services of a very high quality for which they do not have... 11.40a.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is a fact. It is something that Barbadians take for granted. It is one of the reasons, Sir, why this society is such an attractive place for people who do not only want to invest in Barbados but also want to live here as part of their social relationship and I would ask the House not to trivialise it because it is something that I do not claim credit for. It is something that we have over an extended period of time built up as part of the heritage of this society. Those of us who have the responsibility to lead this country now and into the future should commit ourselves to ensuring that we do not kick down the ladder of opportunity by, for example, agreeing to make students pay fees at the University of the West Indies and that we maintain and broaden both the basic services as well as the quality services that are so integral to the standard of living of the people of Barbados.

I stress the point, Mr. Speaker, because it is going to be an expensive undertaking. If we were, for example, to systematically upgrade the facilities of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to allow it to stay in line with the development of technology in the health care field so that Barbadians can have access to treatments that we now might think are in the realm of high technology but that other people have come now to accept as the norm, to realise that is something that would substantially increase the cost of health care to the Government because we are moving increasingly away from just doing basic things to doing high quality things where there is a substantial capital investment involved.

I would rather, as I said, Sir, if I had to maintain - and it falls to the Government to have to choose between maintaining and expanding our services and the opportunities for social development or doing other things like playing with the tax base -1 would go in the direction of maintaining and expanding this country's access to high quality services because it is what is at the base of the standard of living for the people of this country and these Estimates, this year, reflect the determination of this administration to maintain the quality and to broaden the range of our social services as a matter of policy.

I have already made the point, Sir, and I believe it is worth repeating that in Trinidad & Tobago, for example, there is an income tax, in Trinidad & Tobago there is a corporation tax. In Trinidad & Tobago, Sir, there is a tax on petroleum. There is also, Sir, a 15% VAT but in

Trinidad & Tobago people have to pay to send their children to University. In Jamaica you have an income tax, you have a corporation tax, you have a tax on bauxite called the bauxite levy and you have a 15% VAT but you still have to pay to send your children to University. We do not have taxes on minerals to that same extent because the bauxite levy in Jamaica and the petroleum levy in Trinidad & Tobago are perhaps major sources of revenue to Government but with a 15% VAT and without tax on minerals we are still in a position to maintain access of the people of this country to very high quality services, Sir. It is a credit to us and we should continue to put ourselves in a position where nothing threatens our capacity to discharge those responsibilities.

Sir, as I said the thrust is in the direction of poverty alleviation and I hope in this House, during the course of these Estimates, that all sides of the House will have a constructive engagement on the best means by which the ends of poverty alleviation can be accomplished.

I want to start the debate, Sir, by saying the programmes for poverty alleviation must be so structured and designed as to allow the resources intended for the poor to be directly allocated and targetted so that they get to the poor. If this administration has a choice, Sir, between targetting resources directly for the poor or introducing across the board concessions that help everybody and only incidentally help the poor by helping everybody, we believe that it is socially efficient to use the resources to help the poor directly rather than have across the board concessions. It is called targetting, Sir. I heard, on the last occasion that this House convened, members speaking on behalf of the 3 parties in this House and I say 3 parties because there might be $2V_2$ because the Member for St. Philip seemed to have been in doubt that there were 3 but I never thought that there were three. It was never my misconception, Sir, but there might have been people on the Other Side who were always in doubt. I never was...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ... and he might well be yours. Future events always cast .... Well, I recommend him to you. The Member for St. Lucy says they will welcome him as leader, Sir. He will obviously look forward to the Member for St. Michael South Central being his leader in the same way that he looks to the new airport in St. Lucy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we proceed orderly, now?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the notion of targetting, if it is applied, will require us to depart from the way in which, generally speaking, the social sector has been managed and the safety net has been drawn in this country. Approaches to the provision of social relief and other forms of assistance have in this country taken the form of across the board concessions so that Barbados is a country that has a uniform grant to everybody, the rich and the poor, whether the rich and the poor want them.

We believe, for example, that we have a programme in place that allows all pensioners to be able to travel freely on buses which has been overtaken by circumstances because that is now only a benefit that accrues to people who happen to live on routes served by the Transport Board. Consequent upon the decision to remove the Transport Board buses from the short routes in St. Michael, it should be obvious to all of us, Sir, that that policy is no longer relevant because some of the poorest people in the society are in fact living in the precise areas from which the Transport Board buses have been withdrawn. To tell them that they are going to travel freely on buses that do not run in their district is to really deal with fallacies. If we are serious about dealing with how we treat the pensioners and helping pensioners to deal with the cost of transportation, we have to rethink what we believe is an across the board policy. 11.50a.m.

It is also true, Mr. Speaker, that the political parties in this country that have had to deal, as a matter of policy, with the way in which people who are needy should be shielded from the introduction of Value Added Tax... Both political parties which have had the opportunity to speak to the issue should have given it consideration.

The Democratic Labour Party had the opportunity in 1993 and subsequently, to make a determination as to whether the way to deal with shielding the needy from the effects of a Value Added Tax was, for example, to have no Value Added Tax on goods for the needy, or to collect new revenue and give it to the needy.

When they faced the issue, it was their judgement that it was most socially effective to take the revenue without having this no tax on food and pass it back to the needy through the welfare system.

Sir, we faced exactly the same issue. Like the Democratic Labour Party when they were in office, we recognized that the Value Added Tax could have adverse consequences on sections of our society and we asked that the matter be studied and that all options be opened.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, based on the recommendations that we accepted we decided, rather

than to have an across-the-board cut on things like food, to collect the revenue and target it precisely to the people who are most in need. The study also revealed, Mr. Speaker, that there were three classes of Barbadians who were most in need, the pensioners of the society, people on the welfare role, people who are minimum wage earners and single parents. They amount to 34 thousand Barbadians.

We have adopted the policy that we will target those and give them the revenue to increase their purchasing power to such an extent as to offset any decline in the standard of living that could arise from increases associated with the introduction of the Value Added Tax. That is a clear policy, Sir.

Now Sir, you may want to argue about the details. The Member for St. Michael North West said that we have not taken control of the Treasury, that we have made the National Insurance Department meet some of the cost, I cannot argue about that, Sir.

But I still feel, Sir, I really do feel that the best way to help the poor is not to indulge in an across-the-board cut to benefit everybody, but to focus on the poor. And for too long, Mr. Speaker, special interest groups, seeking special concessions for themselves have sought to address those concessions in the shroud of propaganda that the concessions that will help them more than they help the poor, Sir, are intended to help the poor.

I heard, for example, Sir, that I should remove the tax on unprocessed food. I am sure that the Member for St. Michael North West will recognize the folly in that as a measure to help the poor. A T-bone steak is unprocessed food. A sirloin steak is unprocessed food. How do you justify telling an old pensioner that you have maintained a tax on toilet paper which is basic goods which he or she must buy, and you are going to remove a tax on unprocessed food in the form of a steak because people believe that you should remove taxes on unprocessed foods.

How are the ends of social justice, Sir, accomplished, when you have these across-the-board approaches to the brain of relief, that when you study them scientifically, Sir, you end up helping those who are of a higher income to upgrade absolutely and relatively rather than help the poor, when you had the choice of taking the same pool of resources and focusing it where the problems that had to be addressed? That is the issue, Sir, that this Country and this debate have to grapple with. Are we going to continue to accept the propaganda? Do you have to count everybody in the social net to be able to focus on the needs of those who are more desperate?

I say, Sir, no. I say that we have a wonderful opportunity with the resources that we do truly in this country devote to the Welfare Department and to all the social sectors, to take the same resources and by allocating them more efficiently to expand those financial resources as our means allow. With the combination of those two things, a more efficient distribution of resources can be focused on the truly needy. An expansion of the pool of our resources will allow us the opportunity to put grinding poverty in this country behind us once and for all.

We are not spending inconsequential amounts, Sir, on education, health care, welfare, roads, housing and the other aspects of the social services, Sir. It might be true that we are not spending a lot of it as efficiently, from a social point of view, as we can and should, because our approach to social development has, in many respects, not been infused significantly by new dynamic thought. For example, do we really have to treat the care of the aged as a matter that can only be addressed by the building of geriatric hospitals? Is there not a means by which we can reinvolve community groups and enterprises at the community level in finding solutions to the care of the aged at the community level? 12.00 noon.

In relation to the transport issue, I have said, should we not think in terms of giving a travelling allowance to all pensioners so that whether they are *en route* by the Transport Board or *en route* by the minibuses we are in a position to help them with the transport functions rather than take the taxpayers' money and give it to the Welfare Department to give it to the Transport Board? What is wrong with putting the money in the old people's pockets so that they can exercise a discretion as to how their welfare can be met?

It is the same thing with our approach to the VAT. Why cut tax on all foods to be used by whoever in Barbados when you can take the revenue and put it in the pockets of the indigent and the needy so that they can exercise the choice themselves as to how they meet their welfare? In the final analysis, the best philosophical approach to dealing with the problems of social development is to put people in a position where they are not mendicant or dependent, but that they have an exercise of discretion in how they deal with their own destiny.

I feel that we have to approach social development with an eye to these kinds of solutions. We have to recognise as well that we have not over the course of the last 15 years brought new approaches to bear to the manner in which our social sector institutions are structured, the clientele that they serve and the way in which they relate to non-governmental and community groups in the process of seeking to meet people's needs.

There has been a kind of Chicago-style pork-barrel approach that informed the management of the social

sectors at various times in this country's history. The House will recall that in 1988 the Member for St. John led off a debate - the Jackman debate, I think it was - on the National Assistance Board that was shocking in the extent to which it revealed that the resources of the National Assistance Board, particularly in the area of employment, were engrossed in such a way that a sense of parity was not apparent to the naked eye.

There are those also in those institutions who seem to feel that the throwing of institutional support behind social problems is the way to go. I feel, Sir, that we have to open this issue and that is why in last year's Budget and in anticipation of this year's Estimates we commissioned a study of the function of our social sector.

We have to ask a number of questions. Who are we serving? How do we identify their needs? Are the forms of assistance in place relevant to the needs of people we are serving or ought to be serving? Are there new ways of serving that the old institutions can better relate to non-governmental institutions with a view to better spending of the taxpayers' money in a direct effort to bring about a reduction of poverty in this country? All these are issues that fall to us properly to evaluate and deal with in this House.

As I said, Sir, our social sector has not seen radical new thought in recent years. Indeed, the only radical change is that in the period of economic holocaust between 1991 and 1993 the social sector was forced to carry the brunt of the adjustment. So we have an opportunity to put wrong things right, not just by throwing money as a solution but by opening up the entire issue and I am looking forward very shortly when the study on the social sector becomes the subject of a debate that this Parliament can deal with it.

It is also true that although Barbados has reached a fairly high standard of living there are certain pockets where the poverty is so intense that it is a discredit to the entire society.

The facts are that in the urban tenantries of Barbados existing and past, land tenure arrangements have made it very difficult for the individual to have access to the land to go with the business of the development of his or her household in the same way as other sections of the Barbados society. It has been a major constraint. That is a fact.

It is also a fact, Mr. Speaker, that there are still communities in Barbados where the quality of the basic services that the rest of us have come to accept as a norm does not exist in a sufficient degree. I spoke to this, Sir, in terms of the extent of the squalor in some communities in Barbados and particularly in the constituency of St. Michael West. It was shocking that there are things that the rest of Barbados have come to accept as a norm which do not exist in some communities in Barbados.

All of us as politicians know that in our constituencies there are still a lot of little things that need to be done and it is an opinion that I have expressed, that I will continue to articulate, that the extent of alienation of a growing section of the Barbadian public from the political process is because of the contradiction inherent in the fact that the society appears to be capable of material development but the little things are not being done. There is a sense of relative deprivation so that the person who does not have access to street lights becomes an issue to Members of Parliament because there are street lights in the rest of Barbados. They feel that they are in a special sense relatively deprived by not having the simple services that the rest of us regard as a right.

It goes deeper than that, Sir. They also feel that there is no recourse for their complaint. They feel that access to these basic things is left to be handed out by politicians as gifts to the masses and that there is no comprehensive programme by the society to deal with it not in a purely partisan spirit based upon that he who has distributes his spoils in a partisan way. The society wants to feel that there is recourse, that is, a broad-based programme that is going to ensure that these things can be dealt with in a systematic way once and for all.

I feel, Sir, that if we can convince the society that even if we are not going to put in all street lights at one time, all the roads in at one time, that we have started a programme that will allow Barbadians wherever they live to feel that these basic services will be brought to them as a matter of course, that there will be a greater sense of identification with the development of this society than has been the case in the past and that we will come in direct contact with the problem of poverty in this country in a systematic way as to our credit. 12.10 p.m.

We are challenged as a Government, as a Parliament and as a society to find increased financial support for the social sector. We are challenged, Sir, to deal with the problems of the truly needy, and we are challenged, Mr. Speaker, to make such institutional changes as would allow us to be satisfied that those problems would not be tokenised, marginalised but that there is a systematic sustained and sustainment programme put in place to have them put behind us once and for all.

Now, Sir, the question as to the process of Government that we should institute to deal with it, calls to be considered, and there have been some who feel that

the decision to abolish local government has meant that the problems of the individual communities have become marginalised in this society and that the solution to all this is to re-institute local government. We do not say that to you, Sir.

We feel that the creation of specialised institutions supported from the State, that have as their focus dealings with the problems of poverty where it exists in rural and urban Barbados, is the way to go in ensuring that there is a specialised government apparatus that has a specific focus on the problems of poverty, without our having to create a new layer of government merely to solve a social problem.

In many respects, we feel that to throw a new layer of government at this social problem is worse than throwing institutions at it, and therefore we have proceeded with the creation of the Rural Development Commission and in this year's Estimates, Sir, the Urban Development Commission with the specific focus in dealing with the problems of poverty at the level of the individual and at the level of the community. It is an alternative to local government, Sir, but beyond that, Barbados, if it is to satisfy poor people that a government is serious about its problems of poverty, must have the specialised institutions to bring relief to the problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was easier obviously, and the Minister of Housing when he speaks in these Estimates will explain, that the designing of programmes for urban Barbados raises problems that were uniquely challenging, the reason being that the suburban areas of Bridgetown made up of a lot of lands, are private tenantries which are not covered by the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, that a large part of their development and dealing with poverty in the urban areas has to do with derelict housing. There are 1800 derelict houses in the greater Bridgetown area which could be transformed into 1800 new spots or places of business.

There are areas, Sir, where there are congregations of houses of more than five where a private tenantry exists but because there are in a suburban area, if the market had to operate then the landlords would be wanting to sell at a price that bears no relationship to what the poor people can afford to pay.

So let us understand, Sir, that in relation to rural Barbados, the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act in relation to plantations, has already sufficiently made a transfer of land ownership in the society and that you are dealing with people who have independent and secure title or rights of title to land.

In urban Barbados you have a collection in large measure of private tenantries and we have had the situation studied extensively over the course of the last two years as to how best by legislation, by subsidy, by new land tenure patterns, we can get for the people who are dispossessed in urban Barbados, some access to their lands to become entitled to access them on terms that do not break them, are not unfair to the landlords, and that would allow us thereafter, to go into the communities and to be able to deal with people who are capable of their own independent development.

That is the issue. Failure to resolve that issue explains why a lot of real development has not taken place historically in the more depressed sections of suburban Bridgetown and why the squalor in that part of the country, Sir, is perhaps greater than in any other part of Barbados. We have therefore, Sir, had a systematic study done on it, Sir. The entire parliamentary group has met, Sir, because it raised challenging legal issues, some that go to the heart of the constitution. How do we evolve communities and independent landowners from conditions, Sir, where they are beholden to landlords who may want to sell the land at $5.50 a sq. ft. but the tenants can only pay $2.50? We have therefore, Sir, studied it and we have now conceived of an Urban Development Programme, at the heart of which, obviously, we must first of all put in place the framework within which independent urban communities can now evolve, change land tenure patterns, Sir, in a way that respects the rights of landlords and recognises the penury of tenants and therefore establish a financing mechanism by which land transactions can be made without expropriating the land of landlords, or without impoverishing the landowners and that within that context, Sir, to have a broad based approach to urban development that focuses on traditional basic services, housing improvement, the creation of enterprises and a holistic approach to a very deep and longstanding problem.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Rural Development Commission is already in place. Last year the Government voted $1 million. The year before we voted money to do the studies on urban development because the problem was complex. Last year we voted monies to start a pilot project. I think $1 million, as well as to do some small things in the urban area.

This year now, Sir, we are asking the Parliament to vote funds through the Treasury and to support an Urban Development Programme at the same level as a Rural Development Programme, and we will have slated as well this year an Urban Development Commission to do for the urban areas, the same thing as the Rural Development Commission is doing for rural Barbados.

I also want, Sir, to say that in addition to funds through the Budget the Ministry of Finance has been

given directives to earmark funds under the Public Enterprises Fund to allow the Urban and Rural Development Commissions not only to be involved in community development in terms of community services and so on but to seek to stimulate activity at the community level. 12.20 p.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: In addition, Sir, the Rural Development Commission is also to put up a request for $1 million from the Public Enterprises Fund so that we can have a Rural Enterprises Fund created in Barbados to deal with the problems that all of us who...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: North and South. I happen to spend a lot of time in St. Philip South and I am intimately familiar with the problems of St. Philip South.

It will allow people who have ideas and need small sums of money to get a little rural enterprise going to have a place to go to get those funds. We want to do the same thing for urban Barbados because there are 1 800 derelict spots in the Greater Bridgetown area. Some can go into housing but some can go into the regeneration of inner cities also involved in bringing back enterprises to the communities. We need the funding facilities to assist persons in the urban areas, the vendors and small people, who have small requests, so that they can access funds to assist in their development and through their development assist in the development of the society.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament who have been following the work of the Rural Development Commission will know that our surveys of the needs have been all-encompassing all over rural Barbados.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: They raise St. Peter, Sir. I want to plead with the Members of Parliament to stop criticising the Special Development Areas legislation and to make use of it. I mean that genuinely, Sir. There are areas in Barbados that have been neglected for long. One is the constituency that I represent and one is the constituency that the Member for St. John represents. The Special Development Areas legislation does not just include St. Peter but it includes the Scotland District.

I want to.go on record in this House as saying that for the first time a St. John Development Plan is capable of being facilitated in its execution if people would take advantage of the fact that there is now Special Development Areas legislation that applies to St. John.

I have been working hard in my constituency, Sir, to get black businesses to invest in Speightstown to take advantage of the Special Development Areas legislation because Speightstown has been neglected for long and rather than the Government spend, we are facilitating private sector expansion in Speightstown.

There are people who would like to invest in Bath, in the Scotland District in general, and the Ministry of Finance is anxious, willing and ready to approve development projects in the Scotland District in its generality that will allow us to transform the potential of the Scotland District area into productive employment and productive activity.

I come back, Mr. Speaker, to the question of poverty. We have provision in this year's Estimates to support a Rural Development Commission and an Urban Development Programme at the same level of financing with provision for the two Commissions to draw funds from the Public Enterprises Fund to support the financing of the creation of new enterprises in those areas. This year $10 million will go directly from the Treasury into urban and rural development through those Commissions as well as there is the potential for the drawing of additional funds to support small enterprises in these depressed sections of Barbados through accessing the Public Enterprises Fund.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have created in these Estimates this year, a broad-based poverty alleviation programme that will initially attract funding of up to $10 million. The Government is serious that we have to create a new deal for minimum wage earners in Barbados. We are serious about that. The Minister of Labour has already had a tribunal agree to a change in the minimum wage for shop attendants and there is now also a tribunal that is meeting to deal with the minimum wages for domestics.

The Government has already determined that, subject to our being able to identify minimum wage earners and have them properly registered and certified, because as I said, we do not want to go through the process of just throwing away money to people who do not need it or who do not deserve it, we are going to give what is, in essence, a reverse tax credit to minimum wage earners although I just want to say that this is not a substitute for people paying lower income Barbadians well and reasonably.

We have decided, Mr. Speaker, as I said in December Jast year, that we recognise that minimum wage earners would be a class of Barbadians who would be affected by the Value Added Tax and that we were targeting them too for grants as part of the Poverty Alleviation Programme

that we must put to die country. Part of the provision is aimed precisely at them. We are bringing it now, Sir, because we have to have a process of registration and certification because this is a situation that could be subject to serious abuse if we are not careful. It is something the whole House should have an interest in because the intention is to bring diem in as well as a target group...

Aside.

Rt Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, a large part of the Poverty Alleviation Fund will be intended to allow Members to get the little small things in their constituencies done using non-governmental institutions and institutions of die State. We must have die refinancing recourse djat will satisfy die Barbadian public.

It is intended that die balance of the Poverty Alleviation Fund will go out on the recommendation of members and allow die recommendations of members that have been going to Government Departments for the longest time while nobody knew anything about them, to at last allow us to be sure that the crucial, burning priority, social problems in the society that are small and will not break die Treasury, but can mean so much to die quality of life of die individual in society, can now be addressed.

The Leader of the House, Sir, wants to make an announcement and then I will come back.

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. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second diat.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 130 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to the House for the opportunity to be able to go into some detail about Government's priorities to die extent that they reflect the expenditure patterns of Government.

I would at some time point out that at the close of the financial year to come we will be accentuating poverty alleviation and a combination of measures to be carried out tiirough the Urban and Rural Development Commissions as well as measures to be carried out through a Poverty Alleviation Programme under the Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs.

I would also add, Sir, that this thrust is going to be supplemented by the continued provision of an increased allocation for the Welfare Department to a $6 million increase to enable it to honour our commitment to support die needy in the face of any increases in VAT prices by way of increased cash grants.

Sir, die Government's dirust for 1997/98 to improve the lot of Barbadian citizens will also find expression in the composition of Government's capital programme. For many years the poor state of the tenantry roads of Barbados has been a matter of die most urgent representation and a concern to the residents who suffer from the lack of adequate facilities.

We propose this year to increase the allocation for the upgrading of tenantry roads across the island from $1.8 million in 1996/97 to $8.3 million in the financial year to come. We are also intending, Sir, to initiate major new initiatives to deal with the needs of the physically and mentally challenged. As a result, in 1997/98, a new disability unit designed to improve die condition of and for the disabled will be established with initial fundings of V_2 million dollars*

In addition the subvention to the Challenor School and the Learning Centre has been more than doubled from a V_2 million dollars in 1996/97 to $1.1 million in 1997/98. Indeed, Sir, as a matter of policy, the Government is committing itself to a policy which I hope will attract the support of all sections of the House, that we should undertake to meet the deficit of non-governmental institutions involved in providing care and assistance to the needy and the handicapped. We should undertake to meet the deficits of those institutions on the condition that the institutions do not slacken their efforts to continue to get subventions from members of the society and charge small, modest fees for their services.

Our doubling of the commitment this year to the Challenor School, the Learning Centre and the Thelma Vaughan School is in pursuance of the policies that the Government will hereinafter seek to assist in the solutions on a non-governmental basis of care for the disabled and the handicapped by meeting the deficit of these institutions.

Efforts are also being made to grapple with the problem of today's youth. This is reflected in the increased provision for the Youth Services Programme from $3.2 million in 1996/97 to $5.2 million in the financial year to come. An additional $1 million has also been provided for the work of the Vocational Training Programme. There

is also a new project. Sir, an additional $1 million for the National Training Board.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to assist those children who are suspended from school because of disruptive behaviour, the Ministry of Education has devised a programme of special education entitled "Children at Risk". For this new programme provision of $850 000 has been made. In .total the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Culture has $34.1 million in capital expenditure for the year. Included in this is an amount of $11.1 million to complete the St. Thomas School, $11.3 million to develop and maintain the physical facilities at a number of primary schools and $7.2 million on human resources development projects.

Sir, these represent some of the comprehensive new and enlarged programmes that the Government intends to institute to strengthen and accelerate the social sector of Barbados.

In the area, Sir, of health and the environment the emphasis this year will be given to the completion of the South Coast Sewerage System at a cost of $40 million and a further $15 million will be expended by the Ministry on improving solid waste disposal and management through the development of the Greenland Landfill and the erection of a solid waste transfer system. The Ministry will also extend $4 million on works to preserve the coastal areas of Barbados.

I have already indicated, Mr. Speaker, that one of the major new initiatives of the Government this year will be the increase of the amount for tenantry roads. This will move from $1.3 million to $8.3 million. The Ministry of Public Works will commence this year a $12 million road rehabilitation project and $6.4 million Bridgetown bypass road project and we anticipate this year spending an additional $10 million on development and expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Problems in the Scotland District continue to be of special concern to us and we anticipate spending an additional $4 million this financial year on top of what has been allocated last year to deal with the problems of land slippage and settlement in the area.

The House should also be aware that the Ministry of Agriculture intends to carry through the development of the marketing facilities to be placed at the disposal of small vendors. In the next financial year some $2 million is slated to be spent on the restoration of the Cheapside Market while a further $1.6 million is to be spent on the improvement of markets throughout the country.

The capital programme of the Government therefore, Mr. Speaker, is intended to address problems pertaining to the management of our environment and to address problems pertaining to our social system and particularly the strengthening our human resources capabilities.

I should stress, Sir, Mr. Speaker that the overall programme of the State this year envisions substantial spending by a number of critical state enterprises. We have reached the stage in Barbados where the demand for space by the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation is of such a nature that the corporation has had to accelerate its factory construction programme, in addition to the sums that have been provided on budget to support the capital programme of the I.D.C. The B.I.D.C. has already floated a successful bond issue and we envision that the total capital programme of the B.I.D.C. this year will amount to about $15 million to $17 million which will substantially expand the space at the corporation's disposal...to enable it to accommodate the extraordinary demand for such space and that off budget financing by the BIDC has to be seen as a supplement to the capital programme that the Government has on stream. 1.45 p.m.

I should also take this opportunity to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that one of the priority projects that the Government will be supporting this year, next year and in the years to come is a project to deal with the development of Barbados' water resources. We have identified, Mr. Speaker, that the water constraints could evolve as one of the principal constraints to the development of this society unless the problem is seriously addressed.

A water losses study was commissioned by the Government and it has now been established that more than 60% of the water pumped in Barbados is leaked and lost from the system. That is an astronomical amount which both raises a challenge as well as an opportunity. It suggests that we can solve a part of the water problem in the country without having to incur the high operational costs that tend to be associated with systems such as desalination. It means simply, Mr. Speaker, that we virtually have to replace all of the water mains of this country and that the water problems can really be tackled first and foremost by doing precisely that.

It has been estimated, Sir, that the cost of approaching the water problem by replacing the mains would amount to some $240 million which will obviously have to be spread over a sensible period and there are areas like Applewhaites where 90% of the water pumped is lost. If we appreciate that there is a cost in pumping water then to lose it we have an opportunity to stabilise water rates by addressing the problem of water supply by dealing

seriously with the problem of mains and the replacement of mains and I hope the entire House appreciates the seriousness of the situation. I will be giving serious consideration to supporting the Barbados Water Authority putting a water main replacement project in a condition for us to be able to seek financing for it and to get on with it as a matter of priority because, unless we do so, Sir, the problem of water supply will continue to be a constraint and the House will be hearing more of this matter. For the time being I am just serving notice that we will be looking for the years to come to put the development of our water supply by tackling on the front burner the problem of leakage as an issue that attracts our budget financing.

We are also, Sir, looking at the Bridgetown Port and the Airport. We have the plans at the Bridgetown Port and the Airport at a stage where critical decisions will soon have to be made about the scale of operations. We have had feasibility studies done to the Airport and indicative planning numbers established about the scale of operations. Government has commissioned a study of the duty-free shopping capacity of Barbados because we do not want to over commit ourselves with expenditure and investment on an airport without being satisfied that there will be the demand for duty facilities to support the scale of operations that are envisioned.

We also intend, Sir, as I might have said elsewhere, to establish the airport as a commercial entity on the same basis as the port is established and run it as a self-financing activity capable of eliciting equity involvement from the credit unions, the non-bank financial institutions of Barbados, the National Insurance Board and even institutional investors at home and abroad. It behoves us therefore to be very careful in the financial decisions that we make in relation to the scale of the investment that will be associated with the expansion of the airport.

Similarly, Sir, plans are well advanced to expand the Bridgetown Port and part of the off budget financing will be to have a cruise pier built for cruise ships done on a B-O-T basis - Build, Operate and Transfer. The private sector has been allowed to send in offers to build this cruise ship pier and we are now in a position where the offers have been short-listed to about 3 but we will be in a position, Mr. Speaker, soon to proceed with the expansion of the Bridgetown Port with the whole project being supported by IDB financing and the building of the cruise pier undertaken by the private sector on a Build, Operate and Transfer basis. That will be a new type of arrangement, Mr. Speaker, which I trust will be above controversy. Those are some of the bigger off budget initiatives that really constitute part of Government's overall fiscal approach.

I need, Sir, to speak as I come to the close to the question of the financing of the Estimates. The House will recognise that a 3% deficit is in line with what the Maastricht Treaty recognises as normative and operational in the European Community. I had myself said I favoured just about 2^2% of GDP and might go as high as 4% but I believe that we have the overall reserves strength and there is enough liquidity in the banking system for us to have the elbow room, in terms of reserves, and in terms of domestic liquidity to support a 3% deficit without doing violence to the country.

The financing of the deficit envisions that $116 million will be drawn from budget financing. We also anticipate going to the market this year to secure loan financing to meet some of the requirements of the expanded capital programme. Before we do so, Sir, we are in the process of dealing with Moody's to have an upgraded credit rating for Barbados. Moody's have in fact independently approached the Government of Barbados to carry out a re-evaluation for us. They have already met with the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank officials. 1.55 p.m.

I am hoping that when next we go back to the market we will be able to secure long-term financing at terms which are more beneficial to us than when last we went. In the light of a likely improved credit rating, the bulk of the financing Sir, about V_3 of the deficit, is intended to be met from accommodation of project loans and access to market borrowings. The balance, Sir, will be met from recourse to long-term domestic instruments.

Recently, I brought to the House legislation to expand the limits under the Local Loans Act. On that occasion I announced to the House, Sir, that it was Government's intention to seek to use about $90 million of debenture financing in support of Government's Capital Support Progr* n. The domestic liquidity position in the Country would facilitate that without putting a strain on anything in the country, Sir.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we perceive to have that balance in the financing, $^2/_3$ foreign and V_3 domestic. This would not impair the economic prospects of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that I have in this introductory statement tried to capture and set these estimates historically and pragmatically, in issues pertaining to the contemporary development of Barbados.

Before I conclude Sir, I suggest that Barbados' development prospects are bright, but we have to make sure in everything possible that there is not a consolidation of ownership, that opportunities there are not taken advantage of by only a select few in the society, that certain classes that have long enjoyed a privileged position in this country do not come to exercise and have

continuing disproportionate access to the opportunities that are created.

The Government, Sir, is sensitive to this issue. We recognize that investment and capital formation are crucial to die growth of the economy, to employment creation, Sir, to income creation and to social development but we cannot be blind to the inequality that can ensue from there being a totally dispassionate approach to capital formation.

I want to take the opportunity today to make a number of pleas. There are a large number of foreign investors who want to invest in Barbados, Many of them have had long relationships with Barbados, Genuinely speaking there are people who do not have a short-term view of their relationship to this society. There are people who have come to live here who want now to invest here as well, I want to make the plea for institutional leaders of the private sector of Barbados to begin to refocus die objectives and structuring of their institutions.

Let me start first with the Small Business Association, Sir, It is a matter of distress to the Government that a study was done which indicated the desirability of bringing venture capital to *the* development of small business in this country. Nobody can question its usefulness and it is a vital requirement at this stage for us to get *the* small business sector of the country to begin to understand how to use a venture capital facility. They asked for it, they were provided with the finance, Sir, and the Association has been involved and embroiled with it and its members to an extent Sir, where every few months there is a new set of people coming in to manage the institution and at the end of the day the funds are still not being moved.

We have protected the public interest, Mr, Speaker, by insisting that representatives of the Ministry of Finance have to be in any venture capital facility. It is a disappointment to us that a study was done by them to identify the need for venture capital facilities, provision is made but then there is no institutional desire to carry it out,

I want to move beyond them, Mr, Speaker. Too much of the time of the main private sector institutions in this country is taken up seeking to find ways of lobbying Governments to carry out,, in many instances, protectionist policies, rattier than dealing fundamentally with the investment focus that should be the concern of the private sector.

Too much of the private sector deliberations are organised with a view to reflecting on responses to Government on specific policies, but not sufficient are designed for the private sector itself to deal with flie investment opportunities that many foreigners are now identifying in Barbados.

It amuses me, Mr, Speaker, to get studies on Tourism that say, "coming out of the private sector", that generally are not supported by comprehensive information, because die Barbados Tourism Industry does not like to put up comprehensive tourism information that says, Mr, Speaker, that die investment climate is bad because there is no potential for rates of return and so OIL But then we are overwhelmed by a multiplicity of people from abroad who want to invest in die very same hotel capacity that our people are saying, Sir, is unprofitable.

There is a need, Sir, for the leaders of the private sector to begin to give a serious investment focus to the work of the institutions, to have at die centre of their considerations die way in which their members and new Barbadians who want to invest in this country can take advantage of die opportunities that are created, and that other people see, rather than just believe that there must be a lobby group to pressure die Government to do things in the name of special interest.

It is part of our problem, Sir, We need a strong enlightened approach by die private sector of this country to make sure that we who are seeking to expand the investment environment in this Country do not find our programmes frustrated by the fact tiiat die local private leadership is not in tune with die opportunities of die day.

Mr. Speaker, I have been restrained and will continue to be restrained on what is happening at Almond Beach because I have statutory responsibilities. I can only say Sir, that some legitimate interests of minority share holders have to be respected and observed in any transactions, Sir, and I trust that at die end of die day whatever transactions are put into effect do not substantially lead to diminution of local interest in a valuable asset that has moved from the public sector to die private sector. It is a test of the seriousness of the private sector of this country. It is a serious test.

Asides,

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am the Exchange Control Authority.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is not choosing his words appropriately. I have sat in this House and I have seen the Honourable Member for Christ Church South labour for several years, Sir, with almost $60 Million of taxpayers money in relation to Heywoods, and it is utterly disgusting that these people should be profiteering and speculating with assets that they obtained at a low price from the public purse. It must be said. Do not be afraid to say it. 2.05 p.m.

Rt Hon. (X S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the history of Barbados comes to be written it will be one of die anomalies that the Member for St Michael South Central might have been one of the most talented Members to sit in tins House but served the least in government

I am not being nasty in that respect because I am the Exchange Control Authority of Barbados by law. A matter is before me that I have not yet agitated about All I am really saying is that there are rules governing our stock* exchange and rules governing other people's slock exchanges that we would expect people to follow in take-over bids because we are a country governed by the rule of law.

I will take decisions as the Exchange Control Authority by reference to what our law provides for and what the laws of the countries of die other people are looking to provide for because I have to govern by die rule of law. I have to be satisfied that arrangements are fair to the parties and fair to die minority shareholders. These are die kinds of issues of which I will have to take cognisance.

I just want to say in general that at die end of die day, and this is all that I want to say at this stage, all concerned have to recognise that it is a considerable test for die security, die leadership and die vision of die private sector of this country, their perception of their relationship to die assets of Barbados, their perception of minority shareholders and their perception and relationship to their workers and die perception in which all of this has to be brought together in the interest of national development That is my responsibility and that is as far as it will go. Other members can speak to the issue but it will come to me for decision. I want to say that, Sir, because it is in every respect what this debate is about

We have, as I said, the opportunity to ensure die material development of Barbados in die context of social justice. We have in this year's estimates gone as far as the Government can go in balancing fiscal prudence with social development We believe that we have an historic opportunity to make those right choices and the historic opportunity not to make the wrong choices at this juncture when issues of distribution are so critical. I look forward to die rest of this debate in the belief that the discourse of members will contribute to our being able to make those right choices.

I am obliged to you and this House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should like to begin this year's debate on a positive note, responding to die positive note in which the Rt Honourable Member for St. Peter started his presentation today.

I believe that today's presentation has followed die very lofty tradition of being faithful to die past That is how I would describe it Particularly in die faithfulness which die Honourable Member for St Peter had not only to explain in a way that nobody on that side, not even I could, die purpose of die entire stabilisation and structural adjustment policies in Barbados, but also to endorse those policies with a level of conviction hitherto unwitnessed in my career as Opposition Leader.

Also I wish to attribute to him die statesmanlike quality of having acknowledged that his task has been die task of consolidation. Coming against a background of very difficult decisions that were made which he attributes as being all for the benefit of this country. I believe that economic debate has come full circle and that I waited 2 years to hear die Rt Honourable Member for St Peter come to my viewpoint, to stick steadfastly to die economic facts, as die record will show them and, as I have said, to avoid blame allocation, to acknowledge die speed with which deterioration can set in if you have a very fragile base and also to make die point that die process of adjustment and rectifying economic errors is a very long, unrewarding and difficult process.

It sometimes takes two hands. One hand is die hand of die reformer and the other is die hand of die consolidates The Honourable Member for St Peter, having come and found most of die reform, has stuck faithfully to die economic fundamentals which had been put in place since 1991. If it is possible for me to congratulate him for that afcd then put a full stop at die end of it he would tell me to take my seat That is not enough, Mr, Speaker, Sir.

I accept that this Government has seen the wisdom of those economic fundamentals. Our debate since 1994, therefore, has been about redistribution and about precisely the issues which have been part of today's debate and I make die assumption that the Rt Honourable Member for St Peter is saying to die people of Barbados that die Democratic Labour Party has had difficult economic decisions to take and it is clear that they were not taken in malice; that they were taken all for the benefit of Barbados and die people of Barbados; that his task has been to consolidate on those fundamentals and that the debate now is about resource allocation and about the thrust and direction which our economic policy should take to achieve the goals on which we agree or to make distinctions where we disagree. That is the exercise that we are about.

I also wish to say that I am happy to hear, and I believe that it comes from the pressures that we face in the society as a whole, that there is a consensus that the social sector in Barbados is in fact part of the economic sector of our country. I believe that these are points of view which the Democratic Labour Party has always adopted. In fact, the 1961 manifesto and other events since then have

very clearly singled out the Democratic Labour Party as the party which invested in the human resource of Barbadians - education, social services, because there was always that fundamental understanding that it was necessary to invest in people in a society like ours and we do not dispute any effort that any government makes to invest in people. What we have therefore at this time to dispute is whether the rhetoric of our principal policy makers is being met by action on the fronts in which important changes need to be made. That is what this debate must centre on. That then brings us, Mr. Speaker, to the focus of the Opposition's attack on these Estimates which has to relate principally to the issue of accountability, because Estimates are estimates of expenditure and revenue and function in an environment in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter has always made it clear that it is both his Government's pledge and precept, that there should be a very prudent management of economic resources, and we have to look to see the extent to which this Government has kept faithful to that particular pledge, shouted from the rooftops and elsewhere before and since September 6,1994. 2.15 p.m.

We also have to look Mr. Speaker, Sir, at this question of the alleviation of poverty, not only from the point of view of the Poverty Alleviation Unit or the mechanisms put in place, but from the whole range of social services which are available or targeted at the poor in Barbados to see the extent to which they are presently delivering and whether, even given all of the resources which this Government is going to make available to them according to these Estimates, they will be able to deliver any of the programmes which the Government says that it wishes to deliver.

Then the final point which is part of the entire exercise, is for us to look at the role of Government and, as I have said, there will be occasions when we will agree and if we do, then we will have to say so, but it is clear that there are going to be many occasions when we will not agree with the stance which has been taken by this Government.

The Honourable Member's words of comfort about the way in which Government has to be careful about the expenditure of its resources, are obviously not targeted at Members on this side. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we can hardly even claim to have asked for any share of those resources. We are constantly being told that we had our time in Government, and if you barely ask for a street light the response to people is that you should have put it up when you were in Government and since you did not, do not say anything about it.

So I make the assumption that the comments which the Honourable Member of St. Peter made in the course of his presentation, are meant to tame the ambitions of Members of the backbench and their vociferous constituents, and also to tame his own constitutents who seem to believe that there is a wide gap between promise and performance and Mr. Speaker, Sir, while on this side we are used to it and we probably could help them understand why that is, the Honourable Member for St. Peter spent this morning's debate focusing on the need to be circumspect and prudent in requiring Government to meet all of the aspirations of people.

We know that there is a raging battle within the Honourable Member's own party about how resources should be allocated, and it is not for us to get into that battle because we view our role as to ensure that all Barbadians have equal access to resources. As I say, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is focusing his response not to us but to Members on his own side. So Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us look at the first issue which is the question of accountability and that is what this exercise is all about. Mr Speaker, Sir, in due course, I am going to have to look at the specifics to see whether Government is in fact demonstrating that it has in place prudent management techniques, in which the taxpayers can feel satisfied that whatever we do in this Parliament today, in relation to voting money for the expenditure on public purposes is actually going to be managed effectively, and that the persons who have the responsibility for spending that money are conforming to the rules and regulations and laws which apply to the expenditure of such money and I will get to that in due course.

Before I do that, what I believe we need to do Mr. Speaker, Sir, is to provide the best opportunity for the analysis of these Estimates, and even the analysis of what the Honourable Member for St. Peter said in the course of his presentation from the point of view of asking the question, how does Government get its revenue and from whom, and to see whether the Government is striking a balance and rewarding or helping those persons from whom it gets the bulk of its revenue when it carries out its exercises in relation to expenditure. It is a very simple matter Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I think that it is one of the major concerns which Barbadians have; that there are people who spend an entire lifetime, a large portion of their career making sacrifices which they make in the interest of this country.

Some of the poorest people in our country bore the burden of levies with no deductions available to them for years, as part of the process they were told of contributing to a health levy for improved health. They were paying a transport levy to improve roads and so on. They were bearing all of these burdens Mr. Speaker, Sir, while there were many others who were not bearing their burden of that load and yet, at the same time, those persons

particularly those as I have said, who were the poorest in our community; people even on minimum and below minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, Sir, were not receiving any of the benefits of that sacrifice or their fair contribution to the economic development of Barbados. Many of those people have borne that burden disproportionately.

In the Democratic Labour Party, we have always felt that part of the process, particularly in the post stabilisation and post structural adjustment period, should be to target benefits, to target resources, and to so redistribute wealth in this country that more opportunities and more if you will, public gratitude, and I use that word in its widest sense, is offered to those persons who have made the greatest sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, perhaps the Estimates and the record of the Government over the past two and a half years gives us the clearest example of how to analyse that particular issue.

In the course of the Honourable Member's presentation, we heard a lot of the issue of communities, for example, helping the elderly, people in their communities helping the elderly. I want to take one good example of what happened in Barbados to cause people to lose faith in our economic system, and to lose faith in the society in which they live.

Shortly after the Government was elected, we brought to this Parliament legislation called the Special Development Areas Legislation and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we do not have any quarrels which offer concesssions to people who make investments in strategic geographical areas and we said so in the debate. Our quarrel has always been, and we maintain, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that if the vendors here outside of this Parliament leave home with hoses and rakes and go to a shop in Barbados and buy a lawn-mower and some garden forks and some plants because they wanted to create in the community in which they work, or even at home, a play park in their area, Mr. Speaker, Sir, they benefit from no tax concessions whatsoever.

In the society which we have, if a group of fifteen young people in Boscobelle, St Peter, want to develop a community park they have to go in Carters and there is VAT on the lawn-mower, VAT on the garden fork, VAT on the hose and if they go and buy plants from any of those places that sell nursery items, they have to pay VAT.

We do not have in place in our society any system which provides any rewards, concessions, to people who try to improve the quality of their own lives, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Whereas, as I have said constantly in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a man can live as far away as Alaska, he can pick up the telephone in Alaska and call the Consulate in New York, ask for one of the New Age Consular Officers who is steeped in the Country Team Approach and that Consular Officer can tell a man in Alaska who could probably barely spell Barbados, that if he came to invest in Barbados in St. Lawrence Gap, Bridgetown, Speightstown, the Scotland District, etc. that these are the benefits he will receive e.g. no land tax. 2.25 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. John speaks erroneously about what our laws provide. There is a Chapter 67B of the Laws of Barbados called Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) Act that says:

> "Notwithstanding anything contained in any enactment, the Minister of Finance may by order grant to any person, business or undertaking exemption from the payment of any duty, tax or any other money."

The Minister of Finance in Barbados, Sir, has the power. As a former Minister of Finance he knows that a large part of the Minister of Finance's job is, in fact, to give relief under this legislation to a large number of exactly the same people he is talking about under this order. It is a fact.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, it is precisely that problem that we need to address. If the boys from Boscobel went to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, what he would have to tell those boys is this: "Well go back to the group, get somebody to write a letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance." That letter has to go in the Ministry. It probably has to be there for about six months before it receives any attention because, and I will tell you why that is so, Mr. Speaker.

Any Minister of Finance who is capricious enough to write "approved" on it before the civil servants see it, when a new Government takes over, those files will be raked up and brought in here and people would say, "Imagine the Minister approved a waiver without even consulting his public officers." So, Mr. Speaker, when I used to see the applications for waivers for boat engines of a fishermen, I neither waited on the Ministry of Agriculture nor anybody else. As long as I could certify, be it on my own knowledge or otherwise that the person was a fisherman, I saved them the time, energy and problem of the same alienation which the Honourable Member spoke of earlier. I stamped "Approved" on it, dated it and signed it and sent it through.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter will find many examples under the imprimatur of the then Minister of Finance seeking to do precisely what the Honourable

Member for St Peter said: "Speed *up* the process" and ensure thai little people in our society are not forced to go through this procedure of having to beg a Minister for anything.

The man in Alaska can have an official take up die Special Development Areas legislation, Appendix I and read it on the telephone. This is what you will not pay, land tax, VAT, blah, blah, blah, and there is a list of concessions. So even before he steps off the plane in this country, he can have faxed to him the response that he needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying all of this to say to die Honourable Member for St Peter that die expenditure side is not the only side in which resources can be targeted at me poor. Just as you are using your tax policy to offer benefits to people living in special development areas like Speightstown, the Scotland District and that kind of thing, my belief is that a young man who knows that when he goes to buy that lawn-mower can go straight in the shop and say: "Well, I have a project I want my lawn-mower but I do not have to pay VAT on it" It would provide a tremendous incentive to people who live in this country.

This is part of the problem we are having in Barbados that too many Barbadians feel that notwithstanding this entire exercise of Estimates, this entire financial engineering that we are doing, that none of it is relevant to them unless the Government really has clear means of being able to deliver those benefits on the expenditure side because I will also say something else.

It is the politicians right now who have to identify all the old people who need houses, all the people who need welfare assistance. I just went downstairs at lunch time and saw two letters. It is the first time in all the years that I have been an MP in which the Welfare Department has told me what they did after I referred somebody to them and it is because I had to write them a blistering letter to say that I am sick and tired of constantly requesting assistance. We have to do that.

We are the ones who have to look for the food hampers at Christmas, We are the ones who have to identify the street lights and the pole numbers. We are the ones who have to identify the potholes. Well, I do not even want to go through the entire list. What I am going to say is, unless you are going to develop a cadre of people in this country who are going to go out into the highways and byways of Barbados and identify those needs, then no poverty alleviation programme will work.

This Government, and this is on the basis of promise and performance, established a group of young people who were not supposed to be sitting down in an office all day **larging off. I am very sorry to put it very clearly, and I do not wish to identify them. When we get to that Head I hope the relevant Minister will say why it is that in my own constituency you have replaced desk bound Community Development Officers with desk bound young people who will not get out into die communities and do the work that needs to be done.**

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking about my constituency. I am not going any further than that If it was done I would have seen die officer in some way and I say this genuinely. I am not making a political point because I do not know what die politics of die individuals chosen are. What is it that is going to be different when we introduce a poverty alleviation programme? What is it that die Minister of Finance can tell me he is going to do to get some of those people away from their desks and out into the communities of Barbados working with those who know what die problems are, identifying die needs, targeting die resources, following up the problems and ensuring that Barbadians genuinely feel that their needs are being met in a very sincere way. That is what it has to be about

I make that point, Mr. Speaker, only to say that all die rhetoric that we have in here today about poverty alleviation, if it is not met with a programme of implementation which is going to help solve those problems, dien we could as well not bother to have diis debate about who should be awarded in terms of our developments.

Mr. Speaker, everything cannot be perfect, and we recognise that, but we are saying in die Democratic Labour Party that there needs to be an entire new social order which is underpinned by tax policies, not tax policies that only speak to investors but tax policies tiiat speak to people who live in tiiis country who feel on equal terms if diey develop an acre of land in their community to die fellow who develops 20 acres in Speightstown, die Scotland District, St. Lawrence and so on …

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, I am waiting for Baxters Road to come on die list. I will not call that yet The Honourable Member for the City made a big song and dance about that but I would not put her on the spot.

That is my suggestion because, as it stands now, you identify a special development area but that does not speak to those kinds of community projects. It does not speak to that, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I can give the Honourable Member a copy. I have plenty. I think it was made a document of the House. The Honourable Member for St. Peter, most of all - we were both the youngest members of Parliament then, he the most junior on his side and I was the most junior on mine - should have known but those were better times and age has sharpened our instincts and not dulled them, thank goodness.

Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to support any effort which is made to take the resources of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and target them again to those people who are most in need. I say this Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Government's privatization of certain assets have contributed substantially to the growth which the Government is now enjoying. So you have to be even handed. 2.35 p.m.

Arawak Cement Plant - privatization did wonders for that entity. Heywoods Hotel - when I went to visit Heywoods Hotel before they sold it, air conditioners were rotting in the stand which held them up, half of the rooms were closed down and the hotel was running to ruin. The Government simply did not have the resources to undertake the kind of investment which was necessary. They are times when you simply have to cut your losses and move on in the interest of the country. We saved jobs and I assume that is very important. Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only did we save jobs and increase the benefit to the overall economy by having an asset which was not worth something substantial but we also had placed in a fund the kind of resources which the Honourable Member for St. Peter can now boast will be made available to people who may never have visited Heywood. People living in rural areas, in urban areas, the man who I assume has to buy the lawnmower and other groups like that. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there has to be a natural progression from the policies which the Democratic Labour Party was then pursuing. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter has been saying all day in here. It is very difficult to get through the heads of those people who do not have the same commitment what the Honourable Member's rhetoric suggest to the alleviation of poverty. They see it as "Oh you sell Heywoods, this body does this, you want the street light but you should not get it because when you were in office you did not put them off'. There has to be sanity in the way in which we undertake the public's business in here on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I used those two examples only to suggest the conceptual problem that Barbadians have in identifying their space in Barbados when they look at Government's tax policies, resource allocation and their relation to economic resources and how policies are focused to benefit them. Those are the kinds of issues that to me, this particular debate has to address because it is important. Mr. Speaker, let me make the position very clear. We are mature enough to understand that the Government has resources at its disposal. We know why they are spending those resources at this time. It is not the Barbados Labour Party's resources that are being spent. The resources which are being spent are the resources of the people of Barbados who worked hard and sacrificed at difficult times to produce the kind of economic development that we have had. Therefore it is in our interest to see that those resources are retargeted back to those people who made the greatest sacrifice. That is why we have no problem where we see those efforts being made. Our problem is that we are circumspect in our appreciation of how you are actually going to implement in this country, given the present environment, policies such as these.

History is on our side in this. It is on our side, because of our tradition of seeking to develop our human resources and provide opportunities and it is also on our side because we know from past experience where the limitations of Government institutions are in dealing benefits to the people who most need them in this country. We have had this experience before so we are not speaking today, Mr. Speaker, in this debate in that adversarial context - until later, we will get to that because Government still has a back log of unfulfilled pledges. The Honourable Member for St. Peter's rhetoric has never been restrained. I will give an example of what I mean.

Mr. Speaker, last estimates, the Honourable Member for St. Peter took me to task in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I cannot quote but he said that I had so starved the previous Minister of Health of money that he was going to make an allocation of $70 million so as to enable the Hospital never again to be chronically short of resources. Mr. Speaker, throughout this entire fiscal year, it got so bad that the Minister of Health herself said that had he had provided all the money. She does not know where it goes, because by the end of the fiscal year, people still had to carry their own medicines, linens and food to the Hospital. All the problems which they were facing last year, which we thought and I thought that $70 million should have assisted in alleviating the problems that the Hospital had...

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are starting the 1997/98 fiscal year facing exactly the same kinds of problems, and the people who are suffering most are the people who most need to be helped - the poor, the people who cannot fill out the form, the people who do not know what questions to ask and the people who are at the bottom rung of our social ladder. This is something that needs urgent attention.

It would be a pointless exercise if there is no correlation between what the Honourable Member

of St. Peter has promised us in here today and the results, if I were to look at his pledges about the B.D.B. The Honourable Member for St. Peter promised me and promised this House that he would have had in place the alternative successor new development institution to the B.D.B. Mr. Speaker, Sir, nearly a whole fiscal year later... This is the kind of thing that was in the forefront of the D.L.P. criticism. It has not moved the Honourable Member for St. Peter sufficiently. That kind of institution is needed, because of the weakness which you have now identified in relation to the disbursements of the Venture Capital Fund by the S.B.A. It means that right now business people themselves according to the Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot run their affairs, meaning their Association's affairs. They cannot disburse the money. Let me tell you what has happened. The past $2V_2$ years have been spent. You had an announcement by the Honourable Member for St. Peter that he was giving them $2 million. We have no problem with that. It is The Public Enterprise Investment money and that is what should be done with it. First of all they had problems with the way they set up the account. Then they had problems with that committee, then they changed that committee and they have a new committee.

In the space of $2V_2$ years the Honourable Member for St. Peter has not been able to come to this Chamber and identify one single small business person who had been able to benefit in any way from the provision of that money under the Venture Capital Fund. You have also to take point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, against a background that the Honourable Member for St. Peter sought to solve the problem that the S.B.A. was having by funding their Secretariat so they now have in place staff and still the $2 million remain untouched. Is that what is going to happen to the Poverty Alleviation Fund? Is that what is going to happen to all of these other resources which need to be targeted most at the people who should benefit. This is the kind of concern we have. I believe all Members of Parliament have this kind of concern as we come here year after year and participate in a debate like this. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that "I have made flooding a thing of the past" but if you get a day's rain in Barbados in the very area that was supposed to be dealt with, Weston, there is flooding. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he was setting up a drainage unit and that flooding would be a thing of the past in Barbados. It was one of those little tilings that the D.L.P. had neglected.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, I am the only Member on this side who spoke about the drainage unit and I certainly did not say that flooding would be a thing of the past.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I must let him know that I do not listen to much that he says because he is so thinly sparse in contribution to this Chamber that sometimes it is not worth the time listening.

I am speaking about The Honourable Member for St. Peter, who in a moment of exuberance said they were setting up a draining unit.

He stamped his foot on the ground. It may even have been at the Barbados Labour Party conference or one of those events, and he put in "Flooding would be a thing of the past in Barbados". You know how he does it, Mr. Speaker. Yet the same area in which those resources were targeted there was flooding and the Honourable Member for St. James North had to go back down there in a suit again on the day of the flooding, straight from a funeral, to provide some relief. That is part of that process of accountability. Are the funds which are being spent really meeting the objectives which Honourable Members on that side say year after year form part of the major thrust which they are supposed to be undertaking for the people who most need it in our society? I believe there are several concerns. 2.45 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter made it almost part of the economic theology in last year's Estimates that the Government had taken a policy decision that its intent was to use the expenditure part of fiscal policy to contribute to the creation of conditions in this country for sustained and sustainable economic development. Then he went on to identify how that part of fiscal policy would be used to achieve those goals.

Contrary to what most economists will say, it is not always the most efficient way to do it because sometimes just a notional benefit may be of no real benefit but the fact that some people feel they are getting some benefit, an unquantifiable benefit, provides an impetus for somebody to do something.

If you seek to equate the contribution of a foreign investor, a large investment company, with the contribution of an individual who owns a small company and say, well we are giving all of you the same kind of benefits, notionally it may assist that person in helping them to locate, as I say, their space in our economic development, so I think you have to use both sides still to achieve the goals which need to be achieved.

It is on the expenditure side that you have to do the targeting and we believe that the targeting has to be for those people who despite having equal access to resources, equal access to free education, equal access to free health, equal pensions under a scheme which pays standard pensions, that despite that, there are people who fall way below what is an acceptable basic standard of living in our country and they need an extra hand. That is where

the targeting comes, so we are not saying to Government, look everything must be targeted. We are not saying target free education only at the poor. We are saying that despite the general access, that there are some people...

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central talking about pensions, and I mentioned it when we did the VAT that there are some people who really do not need that increase. An extra $7 or $8 would not make a lot of difference to them but there are some who need an extra $21. So you can give the general increase but you also have to start to focus on those who, even with that basic minimum of social services and basic needs being met in the society, cannot survive at a level which we think is acceptable. Most of the people that I meet in my constituency, most of the people that all of our M.Ps. meet are people who already have access to all of these things and still with that access, they cannot basically make ends meet.

Now, I think the society has to come to an understanding that yes, the reserves are at record levels, that the fundamentals which the Democratic Labour Party put in place are still there, that the consolidation is taking place and that what we need now to do is to tell those who have succeeded in moving to levels where they can provide opportunities to help others, they need to do so. That is what in a nutshell is our focus in this particular debate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are also some fastidious people and I count myself among them, who have also to look at accountability from another aspect, the nuts and bolts of accountability. I have a sworn duty, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter asked me to carry it out without fear or favour. That is because when he read the Ministry of Finance's section there was not much to comment on so he did not mind. He cut himself loose and said, all right my people are handling their stuff well, deal with the others. I know he wants me to whip them into shape, both on the Front Bench and on the Back Bench in this particular debate and I will assist in that process.

Mr. Speaker, I must say I believe a lot of Barbadians took the Honourable Member for St. Peter at his word when he said that he wanted to ensure that there was greater prudence because having won a Government on a background of allegations of squandermania, breach of the Financial Rules and all of these other things we would have expected a level of prudence which far surpasses what has become common fare under this administration.

When I read the Auditor General's Report, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for 1996 this is one of the worst reports in the history of Auditor General's Reports.

I was waiting on the Honourable Member for Christ Church South because I thought he was going to make an intervention to correct me. I am saying it was the worst. It cannot be a usual pattern because the Honourable Member for St. Peter said his Government was bringing unusual skills and accountability to the management of our economy. I said he was the Lone Ranger riding through town, guns blazing, telling public officers that they would be surcharged. I did not tell you that you should not be the Lone Ranger, maybe that is the best way for you to perform your functions but that did not work because despite that the Auditor General had still pointed out grave concerns about the management and the internal control procedures in many Ministries and Departments; so we are voting in these Estimates a substantial sum of money with no guarantee that the basic procedures which need to be put in place are being left.

Let me say as a caveat to that, that the Public Accounts Committee, because of the slowness with which the Minister of Finance is doing his work, has completed a review of the Act and the Rules at its last meeting, a major task. We will be making recommendations which will be realistic and which take into account modern developments. That however is not going to obviate the need for prudence which would avoid some of these things and I have to speak to these. We will assist the Government, as is our task, in suggesting workable ways in which Government financial systems can function.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the interest of carrying forward the work of the full Government, a draft of a new Financial Administration and Audit Act has been prepared as well embodying in many respects, changes proposed by the Auditor General and if the Public Accounts Committee would like to see that draft to help it with its work, Sir, we would be glad to allow them to see it but there is a draft that has already been prepared and is now awaiting fine tuning.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you very much and we have no problem with that; we are ready. We believe it is our responsibility. In due course we will get to this report but we are doing the most difficult part of our work, contrary to the perception tiiat people have of the Public Accounts Committee that it is not doing its work. That is not true. We have made a valiant effort, time permitting, both Members of Government and the Opposition to undertake the task. We may not meet as often as the Honourable Member for St. Peter's Committee met because they were carrying out a particular exercise and, therefore, they had to meet a lot because they had a lot of unnecessary information to extract. Having written the report, they could then put the facts to suit it, Mr. Speaker, Sir. 2.55 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Honourable Member is doing quite well, so far. He says that we wrote a report and I have been Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and we never wrote a report before we had examined every person properly.

As a matter of fact, Sir, in the history of the Public Accounts Committee, there were only two reports since 1961 that have ever been laid on the table of this House. One when the late Mr. Tom Adams was Chairman and the other under my Chairmanship, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We also commented on other areas, Sir.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. In fact, the report that I laid made the recommendations for improvement of the Act and to strengthen those positions in the Constitution, Sir, and I hope they achieve the latter very soon.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we met up to yesterday, imagine that. Sunday, the Public Accounts Committee met with members of the Constitution Review Committee to speak with experts who were passing through Barbados *en route* to a conference.

We met with them to discuss recommendations that would bring the work of the Auditor General into line with modern acceptable .practices, including issues like the role of the Contractor General, as you call him, but, the work of the Auditor General in that context.

So, we believe we have a responsibility and we carry out those duties with great maturity as your Honour is well aware, in the times that he comes into contact with us in this kind of work.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, under the heading, Conferences and Delegations, I would like to address some basic, small matters which speak to the issue of accountability. "Supporting bills were not submitted to accounts for amounts spent from advances for warm clothing and entertainment made to certain officials who went on Government business overseas."

People make allegations about the conduct of politicians and even civil servants in some cases, but less so. These allegations small as they maybe are blown out of proportion.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe the Government, if it is going to expect this Parliament to carry out its task with the level of seriousness which it needs to carry out its task with, then matters like this have to be addressed.

The most horrendous is in the Ministry of Agriculture under the heading of "Marketing Facilities" paragraph 3.170 and I quote, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

> "Quotations were received by letter dated 26th March, 1996 for preparing walls, supplying and installing ceramic tiles to ten (10) butcher stalls at Fairchild Street Market. The Company was advised of the requirement to enter into an agreement with the Ministry before any work was commenced."

It did not say the name of the company, but it is equidistant between the office of the Honourable Member for St. Peter and my law office on Bay Street. Equidistant between the two, very strong connections between the Barbados Labour Party.

> "However, the Ministry prepared a payable order for $23,880 on 26th March, 1996. A visit to the site at Fairchild Street Market by the auditors on 12th April, 1996 revealed that the work, as outlined on the voucher, had not yet commenced."

So the Ministry of Agriculture paid out $23,880, two weeks before the work had even commenced in relation to the particular project.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is a very serious matter. I wish to say and, I believe I have the support of other members of the Public Accounts Committee, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, that we believe the work of that Committee is made very difficult when flagrant abuses such as this, form part of the easily identifiable record which the Auditor General is able to bring before us.

Last year, there were comments about Parliament and, contrary to what the public may feel, the members of the Management Committee made it their business to rectify those matters urgently, because, you have a Parliament functioning, appearing to abuse the procedures which the Auditor General, based on the law, said should be implemented. When the Public Accounts Committee comes to look at it and see how the Members of Parliament, together with other officials paid out the funds, the Management Commission feels some embarrassment.

The Honourable Member for the City has spent a considerable amount of time managing properties throughout the world, since she was the Minister of Foreign Affairs. She is a great property manageress and under

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transport and International Business, the Auditor General's comment was that "An inventory of Government Property was not maintained and inspections were not carried out."

We had a big long statement by the Minister telling us about all the wonderful work she did, visiting properties, inspecting this, looking at furniture, furnishing buildings and building new offices.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is about to mislead the House. The comment about inventories not being maintained, they are about Government House, they are about Ilaro Court and, it is not a Minister's responsibility. It is not mine, Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There are public officers who must maintain an inventory of what is at Government House and what is at Ilaro Court and Embassies, Sir. How many tea cups that are there, how many kettles that are there, that is what they are talking about. The Member must not create the impression of linking it to a Minister. I object to that, Sir. I happen to be a resident at Ilaro Court, Sir, but I do not manage any Ministry.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I thank the Honourable Member for that, Sir.

I am saying that the Honourable Member for the City made out a case that she is the most scrupulous person in Barbados when it comes to the management of properties.

She had an almost two-hour statement read to this Chamber demonstrating the level of scrupulousness which she adopts and the first comment that the Auditor General can make is that in the Ministry, an inventory of Government property was not maintained and inspections were not carried out.

Nobody has said that the Minister is an Accounting Officer, but, the Minister got up and delivered a two-hour statement when no allegation was made against her on previous occasions.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it cannot be my function to be counting tea cups and saucers in any of the Missions abroad. What I am trying to do is to make sure where some do not exist, some will get now.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that comment can be found in the Auditor General's report for the last 10 years. The same comment, and it is the only comment made in respect of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transport and International Transport. One only comment. So, if he wants to come in here and waste our time picking at teaspoons and tooth picks, go right ahead. That cannot be my function.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So far, Mr. Speaker, I was required to sit in silence and could not even comment because of the procedure as the Honourable Member used to spend two hours telling me about her wonderful trip all over the world to visit some properties, because she said, she visited some herself. 3.05 p.m.

She was a big property manager then. But when it comes to the Auditor General's report the Honourable Member for the City is willing to let die record for the past 10 years govern her action. I always thought that the Honourable Member for the City said that she was part of the choice for change and that she was part of a new process. She was the one in the Chamber who from her seat, week after week, made all kinds of allegations against members of the Democratic Labour Party for failing to ensure that their Ministries, not their houses, not their motor cars, not their personal assets but that their Ministries, the Ministries over which they had responsibility, were acting in accordance with the law.

What the Auditor General is saying is that it is illegal What the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing and those who...

Hon. Miss B. A, MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member has to be very clear as to what he is saying is illegal that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member has to understand that what the Auditor General has pointed out falls under one of the categories on page 3 and it is part of the financial procedures that you keep an inventory of government property. If you fail to do it you are acting contrary to law.

I have them all marked, Mr. Speaker. I am willing to go through them one by one.

> General Support Services - $1 816 paid to an officer for registration and course fees for the Certified General Accountants of Canada was not properly authorised, nor was evidence provided to indicate that it was a legitimate charge to this subprogram.../'

> "... $10 000 paid to an Agricultural Assistant" [to complete studies.] "No evidence was provided to indicate that this was a legitimate charge against Government funds."

If we go along like this, Mr. Speaker - this is the Ministry of Agriculture - we would have a situation in which what we are doing in here is a complete joke. That we are voting for funds every year and yet people are not prudently managing the funds. It is irrelevant what happened when I was a Minister because the Honourable Members on that side had already told the public that that was the worst government the country ever had and that the Ministers were not accountable.

Therefore, if you wish to judge yourself by the standard of me, according to you, you can make up that equation, then that can hardly be a sensible answer. This is one of the worst Auditor General Reports and I say to the Honourable Member for the City I was surprised to see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport even in here.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I always thought that you would have brought an end to that. You have changed everything else. You have New Age tourism, New Age international transport, the country team approach, a new BTA legislation. Do you mean the only thing that you could not do is stop what is essentially infelicitous conduct in your Ministry? That is something that you should deal with. You spent 2 hours reading a Ministerial Statement, to Members on this side who had to sit in silence, with a lot of platitudes about the tiles that had rotted out in a building and the outhouse and all kind of foolishness...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. In 1991, when the Honourable Member who is now the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Culture - that happened to Barbados one time and I suppose worst things could happen to Barbados - he would like to tell us how the Accountant General had to speak to the fact that the inventory of Government property was not kept up-to-date. He would like to talk about overpayment to firms and individuals which were detected by the Auditor General and a whole host of other things that I can flag and underline. But we cannot operate at this level.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The only thing the Honourable Member did not do then is lock off somebody's neck or walk around with handcuffs in her hand but now somebody who is part of a group that came to change all of that... A horrendous record of financial infelicities identified by the Accountant General and devoting 5 pages of consistent evidence and proof of infelicities in the Ministry of Education. So this exercise could only be a joke.

Whether it is a dollar according to Members on that side when they are in their sanctimonious mood or $10 000 accountability is at the very bedrock of the system of government which we practise. We are to call Members to account for their performance in that regard.

The Police Regional Training School - a litany of woes in relation to matters which will be dealt with under the Financial Rules and Financial Administration and Audit Act.

In the Ministry of Education, expenditure in excess of $200 000 was brought forward to avoid spending in excess of the amount provided in the Estimates in respect of the new Ministry Headquarters.

> "Payments totalling $4 163.40 were made for supplying costumes, braid and lunches for Crop Over band for Kadooment Celebrations. There was no provision under this subprogram for expenditure of this nature."

A major infelicity by the accounting officer under the direction of the Minister because the accounting officer is carrying out the Minister's policy. If there was no Crop Over band you would not have this problem.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. I do not give anybody direction to pay money from under any Head in any Government department. Indeed, Sir, I have only listened with interest because the same Member who is on his feet is guilty of the exact same allegation of breaches in respect of his tenure both as Minister of Culture and Minister of Finance. So my turn will come to deal with that, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, having undertaken this change all we are being told is that the more things change the more they remain the same or the worst they get according to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. That is what we are now being told. That is the defence which Honourable Members on that side who have responsibility for the guiding programmes and whose accounting officers are merely carrying out their policy that is the defence which we are hearing in here.

I know the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter could not be comfortable with that at all. I assume that before these Estimates were undertaken that the Honourable Member for St. Peter solicited from every accounting

officer a full explanation in relation to all of these matters because as Minister of Finance we have all had to do this kind of thing before. This is not an error in a margin. You had that in relation to loans and putting the wrong figures in the wrong column before. These are major issues.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a project in the Ministry of Education called Computers in Education and the Auditor General tells us that having agreed that the computers in education projects was a good project I believe we supported it. We did not vote against it the last Estimates, having gone to that extent on the good faith of the defence of her Ministry by the Minister we accepted that children in schools should be getting computers and what does the Auditor General tell us:

> "The total amount for the year under this subprogram was used to acquire computer equipment and software as well as maintain computers..." [not in schools] "at the Ministry."

This is a Computers in Education project to provide computer equipment for the secondary and primary schools. The computers and the software and the maintenance of the computers is at the Ministry. Therefore, the Auditor General said these funds were not used for the purpose intended by Parliament.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition Sir, is a master when it comes to innuendo particularly when he seeks to shy away behaviour from his own... The reality is that the funds for those computers in that Computers in Education project were used to buy computers for the peripatetic teachers in the diagnostic and remedial educational policy set up to be able to be used at all 84 primary schools because we did not have funds to put computers in each and every school. 3.15 p.m.

Well Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only thing I can say in response to the Honourable Member's point is that at least I have succeeded where the Auditor General failed, because he asked about fifty something times, about fifty something times he asked the Ministry of Education. I will have to read it so that we be clear, and I apologise to those who felt that the Estimates debate would only be about rhetoric. I think we have to go a bit deeper sometimes.

The Auditor General points out in this report that he asked the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture not, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the Democratic Labour Party was in office, not when the Honourable Member for St. Peter was the Minister, not when the Honourable Member for St. Andrew or any other Honourable Member, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was Minister 48 times. The memoranda were issued to that Ministry and he got four responses.

So I am not surprised that a rearguard action or damage control is being attempted in this particular debate. I have only read what the Auditor General has written. What the Auditor General tells me he does is that he provides the Ministry with the draft comments which he is going to put in this report before he puts it in for their comments. If the Minister of Education did not respond that is the Ministry's fault. It must mean that somebody could assume that it has something to hide, and I will make that assumption until, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is proven to the contrary in the appropriate place.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, hear this, the Ministry of Education, according to the Minister's explanation, put the computer in the Ministry for the same purpose which would have been intended under the sub-programme but the Auditor General says that the explanation that the computers located at the Ministry were used for purposes of the schools was not satisfactory.

So he must have gone and examined it. The Auditor General is not a seine. He has certain statutory responsibilities and if he went, I did not go, the Honourable Members on this side did not go. It is the Auditor General. He has no basis on which to carry out such an exercise except with the most honourable of intentions in this regard.

Then, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Health: You would not believe that even in the Ministry of Health a Ministry in which the Honourable Members on that side focused their attention and particularly the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. She focused more attention than she would normally focus on the St. Joseph Hospital. Let me tell you what is happening now in the Ministry of Health. I am going to give this to the Honourable Member for the City, because she said that her job was to root out corruption and expose it wherever it existed and run people out of Parliament who do not spend money prudently. So I am going to give her the opportunity to run people out of Parliament if she still has that vim, vigour, vitality and inclination.

Technical Management Services. Payments totalling $142,376 were not supported by contracts as required by Financial Rules. Now the Honourabe Member for...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker, Sir. What is being referred to is a very serious matter because an allegation has been made, and it was made on the backbench of this Parliament, that there were people drawing money in the Ministry of Health who were neither on payroll nor had contracts of

employment and at this year's Estimates Committee, Sir, it was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Health and we refused to vote, to agree that any money could be provided this financial year until the department in question has ensured that anybody working in that section is on payroll or has a contract of employment.

This is a matter that has been going on for years Sir, because of the nature of these casual employees who are neither on payroll nor have contracts because they are casuals as regards their contract. We have sought this year arising from this Auditor General's report and I trust the Members would take that as ...

I am not going to speak about the markets at present but we have taken account of them, Sir, but that one is so grave and so grievous that we have conditioned any future allocation from this House on the matter being rectified.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have extricated the Honourable Member for St. Peter already. I know what he did and tried to do, but could you imagine that the Honourable Member for St. James South who in a moment of great eloquence, picked up by a Press that loves sensationalism, told the people of this country that under the previous Minister of Health, I would quote what the Auditor General said and what the Honourable Member for St. Peter says "several categories of workers who were engaged on a continuous basis and received substantial weekly payments were neither on the weekly payroll nor were contracts in existence for their services."

I left the debate in here, I think it was a televised debate one week and went into my constituency and heard that the Democratic Labour Party was paying people in departments in the Ministry of Health, who were never on the payroll and paying people twice for the same work as a result of allegations, barefaced allegations made in this Chamber seeking to target the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and to continue to heap opprobrium on him for the financial management in his Ministry. Who could believe that you could come in this fiscal year ...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. It is a fact that the situation that happened in the Ministry of Health, in relation to the casual employees arose under the Member for St. Michael West, and that we are certainly trying to get it resolved and under control. Later in the debate I will speak to this, and give the addresses of all the persons involved because they are not from St. James South.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is what accountability is all about and in Shakespeare's "Macbeth" these things Always return to plague the inventor to stick to the rubric and this matter has returned to plague the Honourable Member for St. James South, who in an act of great caprice sought to attribute to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, all kinds of allegations of infelicities. It is a fact now that several categories of workers who were engaged on a continuous basis...

The Honourable Member of St. James South has a gall, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Her Prime Minister has told us that he had to tell them that they are not getting another cent because of what they have been doing, and this is the kind of attitude that a Minister who should be contrite and apologetic to this Chamber for financial infelicities adopts.

This is always the problem in this country. You see, people go to extremes to apply epithets to certain people some which are not applicable, some which are, and in this respect the Honourable Member for St. James South, if she cannot in her seat understand that this is a very serious matter, can, and should humbly withdraw from the Chamber until the particular item is finished being discussed.

It is not a joke matter. It is a serious matter; that those allegations were made last year or year before and that they have persisted in the Ministry as with almost every other aspect of the operations of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which the Honourable Member for St. James South spoke about. That a Minister could tell the people of this country that having provided $70 million, which is a substantial increase in the budget for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that sometimes she wonders where all the money goes. That was a public statement attributed to the Honourable Member for St. James South, but when other Ministers were saying that there are clearly problems on the question of managing that health budget to the level that is acceptable, those were not acceptable then and the Honourable Member for St. James South was at the height of her powers. 3.25 p.m.

Even at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under new management and decapitated, no written contracts were available in support of payments made to certain suppliers and a contracts register was not properly maintained. This is the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Government committed substantial resources to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a management audit, reports. Every week the Prime Minister said people were coming to Cabinet updating him. Mr. Speaker, what is happening for the year 1996 in some cases is worse than what was happening when the Honourable Member for St. James South found her tongue in this Chamber and used it to great effect from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, several payments in respect of the previous financial year were made during 1995/96 and I assume the first year was the year when the Honourable Member for St. James South brought to book the horrendous arrears ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is about to mislead the House, and is misleading the House. There are arrears going back as far as 1966 at the Hospital, some for 1987 that are now being brought to account. In 1995 we did try to see if we could get all brought to account but it is only now by putting in place a Financial Controller that we are getting the accounts payable brought up-to-date, but this is a longstanding problem.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make this injection. A fatal mistake was made in 1988 when a then Minister who was a Senator made a decision that the Government should abolish the posts of Financial Controllers and go back to the foolishness of Financial Officers being in charge of multi-million dollar institutions.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So, Mr. Speaker, what I can deduce from what the Honourable Member for St. Peter is saying is that what you now need is a ministerial controller in the Ministry of Health, not a financial controller. Loans made under the Medical Aids Scheme were not all posted and amounts due to Government in respect of these loans could not be readily determined.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has made it clear that therefore some of the things which obtained at the Hospital in 1994 were practices which formed part of a long series of transactions over time. It was no wilful approach by any Member on this side to seek to either rape the Treasury or to undertake a programme of financial recklessness such as to endanger -1 could even say public morality, public accountability in this country.

At the Psychiatric Hospital there was no contract in respect of payment for professional services of $27 800.50. You can go right through to the Drug Service.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who is a very good Minister, if not one of the best, according to the Honourable Member for St. Peter...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The unit price paid for the supply of ready mix concrete was $1.00 more than the price specified in the contract. That kind of thing occasioned no-confidence motions, big debate, criticism of the Democratic Labour Party, and the most...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We had to bring it because of the circumstances, and there are circumstances, Mr. Speaker, in this scenario in which you cannot trivialise what the Auditor General is speaking of. They speak to the problems of financial management and the fact that in excess of $11 million fell into the categories which the Auditor General identified as money which either was not properly accounted for or which some other activity unrelated to the terms of the Financial Administration and Audit Act or Rules was undertaken. That, therefore, makes us have to question the Honourable Member for St. Peter whether he does not have to give us an undertaking that in respect of the Estimates which we are dealing with this year, that a level of financial prudence in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act Rules and the Constitution will not be observed by Members of his Cabinet. So we have a fair case to make in this regard, and Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned.

I think I will move on, Mr. Speaker, to this issue which the Honourable Member for St. Peter raised because his revenue is going to be based on the Value Added Tax. I cannot speed up the process of giving relief to those who would be most affected by the VAT. The Honourable Member for St. Peter says he has a time frame. I have to accept his time frame. The last time we accepted his time frame he waited for two years on the assumption that there would have been major changes.

Mr. Speaker, when I read last year's Estimates Debates, the Honourable Member for St. Peter made it clear that he carried out the most scrupulous analysis possible in relation to the introduction of the VAT. He employed a number of economists to look at the issue and he said he had detailed impact studies done. A lot of detailed analyses had not been undertaken and therefore to satisfy himself about all the issues, the competitiveness and so on, that he had to have these detailed studies done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter always wants to look around for an accomplice on this issue of the VAT. There may have been a consensus on the applicability of the VAT in 1993 or 1994.1 was the most surprised person to understand that the Honourable Member for St. Peter had campaigned in the 1994 election on the basis that he was introducing a VAT because having listened to all the tapes I could find, and a lot of them, and to all his speeches, I did not find a single speech by the Honourable Member for St. Peter committing Barbados to a VAT under his administration or committing us to a VAT on food so that having only heard him on the most general of terms say he was supporting the VAT, I, like thousands of Barbadians was one of the most surprised persons that he was so committed to the VAT that even where he saw hardships ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Member was so busy himself campaigning and telling people that he was about to include a VAT on food that he was not hearing what I was saying.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, having told us all of that, the .Honourable Member said he found draft legislation in place. He said he sat down and did detailed analysis. He changed the number of rates that would be applicable. He was able to make decisions about the hotel sector without information but in relation to food he now has the information. The information is not up in the air. It is wreaking havoc.

Mr. Speaker, if you talk to any 10 Barbadians assembled of different income levels, you Mr. Speaker, would be able to determine the true impact of the VAT throughout Barbados. 3.35 p.m.

I give the guarantee that had I waited for two more years that the VAT as conceived in 1993 could not have been implemented in Barbados in the way in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter implemented it. There would have had to be major changes because the economy, particularly on the basis of the fundamentals which the Honourable Member for St. Peter followed so assiduously, had improved substantially. He said that unemployment was receding and he gave a whole list to date of the most advantageous and propitious circumstances in which to implement a VAT. I cannot think, and I have looked around, the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that Grenada implemented and when I look around, I have not found a country yet in the world which has had more propitious circumstances economically in which to introduce a VAT than the Honourable Member for St. Peter. He is not introducing a VAT under IMF dictates or so he said. He is not introducing under anybody's dictate. He has an economy which is growing. He has the conditions in Barbados which should ensure that the Government can offer relief to the most vulnerable sector and the Honourable Member for St. Peter turned his back on all of them and all of that and introduced a VAT that has been pretty draconian. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has affected the private sector because the allegations of price gouging has caused demands to be particularly dampened because people are not sure of what is going to happen. They have internalised the view that there was price gouging. Therefore the inventory is going to take longer to work down. I hope the Honourable Member for St. Peter realises that because the inventory is going to work down one expects that in nine months the circumstances are not going to be substantially different to the circumstances when the Honourable Member for St. Peter introduced the Value Added Tax. Check some of those supermarkets, check the more established ones.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter does not need us to be drawn along in that scenario. We believe that we should target the poor but we also believe that there is some occasion when tax policy and not the fiscal tool of expenditure can be used to provide relief generally across the society from the incidence of a tax. We think that the way the VAT was implemented that that relief could have been given. If it was given to the hotel sector, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he had the studies and analysis done for that, I made the assumption that he was also doing the studies and the analysis to assess the impact of it in relation to the poor in Barbados and in relation to its impact on food.

We are not coming to the issue from hypocrisy. We feel the pain that members of the poorest sections of the society are facing. It is quite true. I do not think that there is any small business person that you talk to in Barbados today, from hairdresser to nut seller who will not tell you that the VAT has some impact on them. Even the small cane producers. The Honourable Members on that side can continue to argue with us about it. It is pointless arguing with us. We in this regard are only mouth pieces of the people. Go out into the communities and hear the comments there. Do not take it from me. Take it from the people that there is an urgent need for a re-examination of the impact of the VAT.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter wants me to give him some figures and I will lend him the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. We will give him a six months stint and he will come up with the appropriate rate of VAT on food.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we spoke in here on several occasions about the question of poverty. I need to return to it if only to point out how very disappointed I am and perhaps again one of the most significant indicators of the extent of which the Honourable Member's Government feel about poverty is the fact that for one whole year the Board of the National Assistance Board has not met. Now, I want to take the Honourable Member for St. Peter at his word and he might take me at my word but he cannot tell me to take the Members on his side who have to deliver those programmes at their word. It is inconceivable that for more than 12 months the Minister responsible for Welfare and Community Development in this country must have known that the National Assistance Board was not meeting; must have known because we kept saying it in this Chamber that there were problems in the delivery of programmes under the National Assistance Board. Mr. Speaker, Sir, asleep on the job obviously, he did nothing whatsoever to ensure that the N.A.B. was functioning at top capacity. So, the programmes were not being delivered. How could an elderly Barbadian believe the Honourable Member for St. Peter when he talked about poverty alleviation

when a Minister could be so callous, indifferent and incompetent as to have a Board under his Ministry not meeting for an entire year.

The Productivity Board meets and all the Boards that deliver relief to the private sector; in fact all of those Boards which have anything to do with concessions are meeting. Look at Social Services, other than the Child Care Board - the Chairman of that has the same direct contact with the Honourable Member for St. Philip North as the N.A.B. and in that Board the Chairman is not only active in the work that he does but every week he is on television. He obviously likes his job very much and I hope that he is delivering on the programme. Every week he is addressing a group but the National Assistance Board which has many creative programmes before it when we left office - Senior Citizens Homes in St. James and they wanted to put one Vauxhall... The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, not to draw him into this debate, can tell you of many of the things that the N.A.B. was doing. Mr. Speaker, for an entire year, right under the nose of the Minister, that Board has not been meeting. I have never witnessed that level of incompetence anywhere. It is unbelievable. How would anybody believe that a Government is interested?

The Honourable Member for St. Peter probably put the Poverty Alleviation programme under his Ministry because he can have no faith in the Minister of Community Development to deliver those programmes to the people when a Board under his responsibility has not met for an entire year. Every week a Member on this side can come and tell you that they have had to visit some elderly person who needs urgent assistance. Sometimes it is a small thing. The Government puts up a welfare house but the old lady cannot get down the steps at the back and just needs a bannister put in so that she can get down the steps. She may need a ramp instead of stairs. She may need a few basic items.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter has to be clear that having given these increased resources because in the last Estimates the Honourable Member for St. Peter made the point very clearly and we supported what he was going to give the welfare services and he identified them. He said that he would increase the allocation to every one of the institutions that function in the social service sector, Child Care Board, Welfare, N.A.B., N.C.B., and the Hospital.

What is going to be the difference between the pledge in here in the Estimates and performance during this fiscal year? It is our job to question these things, I do not care how offended anybody gets. There is no Minister that should be presiding over a Board established under a statute to deliver assistance and help to the most needed in our country who can feel satisfied to discover that Board has not met for in excess of a year. It has to be nonsense of the highest order and I assume that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is taking notes of those kinds of things because we cannot continue to fool people that we want to help them and that we are interested and sanctimonious about their development when the very institutions which are supposed to deliver the relief to them are crumbling through inefficiency, patronage and other problems of that sort. Imagine that the Honourable Member for St. Peter in this debate had to cast his mind back and mine to a time when at least the Board was meeting and delivering programmes even though not in circumstances which we all admire the most. In this situation it is callous and indifferent and unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

We have a big debate about poverty and alleviation and we need to see the nuts and bolts of these programmes to see whether they are going to be delivered. I am talking about some of the problems which affect Barbadians.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter talked about access to resources and this kind of thing. Does the Honourable Member for St. Peter know that in Barbados, today, if somebody goes to the School Meals Department, the Water Authority or M.T.W. or any of those agencies, even if they are in need, not just for assistance, but for a job, they are asked to bring a letter from their MP. It is a situation where years ago the MP volunteered the letter. It is now coming the other way. People are returning to their MP. They are saying if you want a job you have to bring a letter from your MP. The Water Authority, the School Meals Department - I had somebody who went there last week. The National Housing Corporation, almost every area but I can tell you about those from last week, people whom I sent to those departments who were sent back to get letters from their MP. 3.45 p.m.

You do not have to listen to me. If the Honourable Member for St. Andrew wishes to dispute it... I am not saying the Honourable Member for St. Andrew sent people to do that. I am explaining that that is happening. Now you could either work on it and change it or you can continue to attack me and give the impression that I am speaking in bad faith. The Honourable Member has the opportunity of doing that. If the Honourable Member wants the information off the record he can have it but the point is that it is the official policy of those departments and whoever those people meet when they go in, to request a letter.

Now, very often, Members on this side and I am one with that problem, if you put St. Michael, they may not know which constituency you are from, but if you put St. John you could rest assured that is the end of that. So I have to beg the people to go down by the Honourable Member for St. George North, he can tell you. I know

they do not get letters but I have to tell them that is all I can suggest because he used to live in St. John, he knows a lot of people from St. John. Now how could you expect the public to believe that you are going to have social service programmes delivered to Barbadians when at the same time those Barbadians approach these entities for some of the little things, including a job maybe, and the excuse that is being used is, go and get a letter from your MP either knowing that it is impossible or alternatively that if they got the letter they would not get the job anyway? These are again some of the major concerns which are affecting Barbadians and are affecting the perception which people have about, not only their abilities, but as I said already, their stake in Barbados, what their future is going to be like and that sort of thing.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to ensure that the many years of pleas from MPs from rural parts are finally going to be met.

I passed through every other constituency in Barbados this weekend and I passed on the perimeter of mine. Roads are being done and in St. John, in Clifton Hall, for example, they had actually started the project when the tenantry road programme came to an end. Then they put the marl and had to cover over the pipe tracks and so on and up to now no effort has been made to do that road.

I could talk about the housing project at Gall Hill. There are poor people in St. John and just because their politics differ it does not mean that they should be entirely disenfranchised and ignored. Every week ...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, if that is the attitude you have I could as well stop talking and the Honourable Member for St. Peter may as well not bother to debate the issue. How can we believe there is a poverty alleviation programme when the Honourable Member for St. Andrew's attitude is, nothing has happened in St. Andrew, so what? The point is that we are now in 1997. Is the development going to be balanced? Is it going to be acceptable to everybody in Barbados or are we going to continue to create in Barbados a scenario in which people feel, particularly because of their political views and whatever that they are going to remain outside of the mainstream of development? So I have to stare at a polyclinic, the housing development in St. John that was planned, tenantry roads, street lights, all of those problems which the Honourable Member said are going to be addressed. Can I ever expect that in these Estimates that there will be any commitment that any of those projects will be completed? Likewise on this side, other Honourable Members, events in St. Michael North West...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am glad to know that you have supported me in the past. Very grateful for that. In St. Michael North West, we have just come out of a by-election there and everybody has identified the problems and the deficiencies. So we know. We can have a consensus on it tomorrow. I do not think that the speeches of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would be any different to anybody else's if they were asked to put their case at this point because we have just come out of that scenario and there are major problems that need to be addressed. I do not think that the attitude should be, as was part of the campaign rhetoric, well another party had it for 15 years and neglected it. If that is so let us understand that Barbados is going to have major problems in relation to unbalanced development.

So are we committing ourselves to the implementation of these policies in such a way that the people who most need them are going to benefit from them and these are the kind of assurances that we want. We have had them in general terms from the Honourable Member for St. Peter but there is not that level of consistency throughout the Cabinet on how those programmes can be delivered in an objective and balanced way throughout the country. And that call is not coming from us only, as I said already that call is coming from Members of the Back Bench who have this opportunity in the Estimates, if they are here, to put their respective cases for their constituencies and we wait with great interest to hear what they have to say.

After the last Estimates we heard nothing had been done in Housing since the Government got in from a Member on that side, the Minister of Housing has done nothing and I was likely to agree. I know he did nothing in St. John. I hope that he will be able to tell us that he did something somewhere else in Barbados. It is a gap between rhetoric and performance and likewise many of us have tried to use the special development areas where it is applicable.

The people who came to see the Honourable Member for St. Peter to do with the project at Bath, came at my request and the request of another Barbadian businessman. But there are other parts to it. There is also a view point in this country that areas like that, if developed, will alienate Barbadians. Bath Beach is still viewed by a large number of Barbadians as a natural preserve for Barbadians so there are pressures to develop and also there are pressures from the environmental and other groups and romantics and I am caught straddling both, to resist development which takes natural spots out of the control or out of the access to Barbadians.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West .would be a romantic in that he is not going to

support a major hotel being built by Codrington College or anything like that so you have to have a balanced approach to these things. He does not want to sit down on his verandah at 5.00 o'clock sipping tea at age 80, when hopefully he would retire from politics, he is taking a long time but I hope by then he would have retired, to see a major hotel development which may scar the landscape. Therefore these are the genuine problems which are faced by people who represent rural constituents and the Member for St. Lucy raises them in here time and time again, what developments are appropriate, this I am not going to accept, something else I will accept.

I believe that the House needs to be taken into its confidence by the Government about what the Government feels would be an appropriate use for these areas. In other words, is Bath desirable for a golf course? If it is, what is the problem with water? What is the potential problem with water? Is that a long-term project? Is there a short-term development alternative for the area? There is the satellite station which I see there sitting down and I cannot conceive right now of what alternative usage it could be put. That is so throughout Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has a very creative plan for the Brandon Area which, I believe, he has talked with - and will have the opportunity to put to the House in due course. 3.55 p.m.

I have written to the Rural Commission about street lights and never received a reply.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Member is dealing with a point of elucidation, Sir, that I have had to have a meeting with the General Manager of the Light and Power to deal with the problem of street lights. The problem there was not the Rural Development Commission, but the carrying through of the program by the Light and Power, and I am to let Members know that all of the various stages of the program as conceived by the Rural Development Commission is now to be resolved, and will be carried through using the Light and Power as the expedient agency. It has nothing to do with the Urban Commission itself but, by the attitude of the Light and Power.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So, if we say that the fundamentals part are in place, what we now need to know is whether Government is going to give priority to those means.

Look at the problem of public transport. This is two years now. It is true that the Government has only been able to borrow the money from City Bank. But had the Government put in place, a coherent policy for the Transport Board at least two years ago, that matter could have been solved.

The solution to it now is to buy buses. So they are buying buses. The Board is imploding. The Chairman, according to the newspaper reports is ready to hang up his hat and move on. I said according to the newspaper reports, and the Board is imploding and the solution has been to buy new buses, but we could have known that two years ago.

Meanwhile, there is a genuine problem. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew faces it, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, who is not now in his seat faces it, I face it and the Honourable Member for St. Peter says he faces it. People are not employing Barbadians who live in those areas where they have to rely on the rural bus service.

A lady called me last week and said,

> "Look, I have an employee working here, she is very good and so on, but she has gotten to work at midday twice this week, and the kind of job she is doing, I simply cannot keep her. She stood up at the bus stop for nearly four hours one morning waiting for a bus."

On evenings if you come in the Lower Green bus stand, all up River Road, you see people from rural areas in Barbados. On mornings in St. Philip, it is a major problem and the Government needs to give priority, serious priority to alleviating those problems.

Because, you cannot say that you are creating jobs in Barbados and the Honourable Member for St. Peter says that is part of the Government record and yet, something that is going to pose the greatest threat to workers being able to keep their jobs is not being addressed, and that is the problem of public transportation.

You cannot say that you have high quality health services for the elderly and yet, they cannot get to the Health Centres because we do not have a network of transportation. They rely on public transport. So, we really do need in these Estimates, and I assume the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, in one of his virtuoso performances which are longer than usual will give a full explanation.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In his presentation, I hope he will speak to that issue because all areas of rural Barbados are being severely affected by the

complete run-down situation of the transport system, and you see there is not consistency on Government's part. I was not allowed to meet with the officials of the Transport Board and the Minister explained why.

He said that if. the Leader of the Opposition or an Opposition MP is meeting with the officials the chief policy maker has to be there. But yet, there are other departments which send out cyclostyle letters to us requesting to meet us to discuss development projects.

I recently received one from the Ministry of Tourism and I wrote to the Minister and told the Minister that her officials should know that all of the MPs in this Chamber are identifiable people.

Part of the problem that we face here in Barbados, is that the needs of our constituents are not being met and outside of discussions with the Minister, there is no other means by which one can get recourse to the major problems which are being faced.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not intend to detain the House for much longer. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Peter had dissentiously made a confession without making it that the job plan as conceived by him originally has essentially failed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not talking about the numbers. The Honourable Member for St. Peter took the clear position and it will be dealt with more extensively in this debate, about how we can create jobs in Barbados be it expansion of existing enterprises and the creation of new ones, and we are offering many incentives to the private sector generically and also for foreign investors to come to Barbados, and yet the Government itself has had to take up a substantial portion of that slack to create those jobs.

Which means the taxpayers of Barbados are paying twice. They pay by way of the incentives and then they have to pay by the increase in expenditure which has some relation to taxation in this country.

That is a serious matter. It is very serious and I want the Honourable Member for St. Peter to revisit his job strategy on that basis, because, implicit in all that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has said here today, about jobs and about Hey woods and about other kinds of developments in the private sector, is that he has come to the realisation, which great economists came to many years ago, that the traditional private sector in this country has neither the ability nor the inclination to undertake any major job strategy in this country. They will not do it because they have neither the ability nor the inclination.

I want to tell you also, that I am disappointed about the sale of Almond Beach Hotel. Yes, it was sold and I was the person who signed on the dotted line. It was sold at a time when that was the highest bid that we had, but more than anything else, it was a Barbadian company that bought it and it was the first time that that major company of which the Honourable Member for Christ Church West was once a Director and he can confirm that it is the first time that they committed major resources in the tourism sector, and I thought that was a positive development. The third point that I want to make is that they appointed a black successful tourism manager to head the operation and to be Chairman of the Board.

I felt in my heart, and I still feel that all three of those reasons were reasons enough at that time, for Heywoods to be sold. I spoke about the price already together with the strategy which they had to put the hotel back on its feet and the opportunity to give Barbadians shares in the operation. I am not even sure if sticking me with a pin now, and I knew about the decision when they came and told me sometime last week, would produce any blood when it comes to the issue of the sale of Heywoods Hotel. I genuinely thought, and I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central speak to it and the Honourable Member for St. Peter, that it was the first time that you have seen a shift in investment. Normally, they wait around and fool around or even rape a sector until they get the last use out of it and then expect the Government to take it up and put the pieces together until they can regroup and get back in. 4.05 p.m.

It is the first time that they went into the sector before the operation had even been able to be assessed against the long-term viability. By the way, it is one of the most successful assets that they have so we should be lucky. When we look at their other operations, we know that Super Centre and those other operations are not as successful but if all the Barbadian private sector is going to amount to is real estate and any time that a creative opportunity presents itself to contribute and mold the sector and develop it they are going to walk away, no wonder Barbadians have to create and have more faith in foreign investment.

This is a problem that we are having in this country. The average man in this country is now coming to the realisation that their fortunes are better off sometimes except for the long-term alienation of the assets but, on a day-to-day basis, are better off sometimes holding the hands of a foreign investor than holding the hands of some of those people in the traditional, private sector in this country.

I have nothing to say on it because I was also foolish enough, even though they do not have the mental intent

at this stage, to advise my two children to take a few shares, a very limited amount. The reason why I did that was for this. I never grew up in a household seeing the annual report of anything. I know there are a lot of young children who do now. Thank goodness the children of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and others as black people in this country you can go in their house and on their coffee tables at least they should have the annual report of some of the major corporations in Barbados.

You can only hope to develop a culture of investment in this country if you expose the youngsters in this country to the same kinds of information which everybody else has. I bought a few shares on the understanding that they would get to see the annual report of CIBC, Almond Beach, etc.

I am hurt to think that what they thought that they were going to invest in is now no longer what I had anticipated it would have been. Essentially, what you have in Barbados is what is almost a mortal blow for a number of reasons. It is a mortal blow because of the fact that people held the hand of that company. I held their hands as Minister of Finance and other people held their hands to do what they did. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter gave them some concessions too.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You cannot always have good judgment. Michael Manley thanked God he had the quality to say that he had made an error and to move on. For two years you could never have said I made a bad judgment. You can say it now, because the wrong decision has been made, but if Almond Beach had continued under BS&T and we continued to have faith in it, it would have been a flag ship, a pilot project, essentially, for major Barbadian investors in this country. Because somebody made the wrong decision you are entitled to taunt me and tell me I made a bad error. Well, you taunt me.

Even when you know, sometimes you have to let optimism and hope and faith in people inspire you to do things which other people do not want you to do and I did it on that basis.

A mortal blow has been struck there and a mortal blow has been struck in the sense that the company which is chaired by a very successful, articulate, black chairman in a board which has been under siege for many years and criticism for its practices is the... They had their major assets under his control. If they pull those assets from under him and leave him, not just him, they pull all of us, because there is no other successful black manager in Barbados who is going to feel that he has any confidence functioning at that level.

Do people really understand the impact of some of these decisions? I cannot explain why the decision is made but what I can explain is the impact that it would have had on a large number of Barbadians and that is why I am saying that we have to have a better understanding, particularly in government, of how the private sector in this country is operating.

We are going to have to ensure that our dealings with them, apart from being transparent, that we lock them into certain kinds of arrangements. If not, precisely what has happened in this scenario will happen time and time again and many Barbadians will be frustrated having made the effort by the decision of a few to consolidate their positions.

I am also concerned and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to address this issue about the impact of trade liberalisation in relation to those companies. Having pulled out of an investment like that one has to remember that the company which was the majority share-holder in Almond Beach Hotel derives most of its profit from an operation which, faced with trade liberalisation shortly, may find itself in major problems.

I am talking about Banks Breweries and the other operations which they have. Perhaps even Roberts. You are talking about a company which essentially is cutting off its nose to spite its face because when one expected that it was shifting its investment into areas that it could consolidate and move on, it has, in fact, pulled back and obviously is looking at other issues which are not as significant.

I want to know what impact trade liberalisation will have in relation to the Barbados economy and what the Minister foresees as the mechanism which will have to be put in place against the context of these Estimates to stave off the worst effects of trade liberalisation.

I believe Mr. Speaker, that we have dealt with the broad principles on which these Estimates as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said have been conceived. These Estimates have been conceived against a process in which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has diagnosed that the Government needs to focus its attention on poverty alleviation and targetting resources to those who are least well off. We came to that conclusion 2 years ago and have been urging on the Government that this stance was the most appropriate stance for it to adopt, particularly in times of hardship.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what we now have to see is the extent to which Government is really going to be able to deliver against a background of very poor accountability, against a background in which people have lost faith in the welfare institutions in this country, against a background where promises have not been met with the kind of

performance which was anticipated and against a background of Barbados experiencing good levels of economic growth. The economic fundamentals are in order and the opportunity now exists for wealth redistribution. This is very important.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter asked us to hold hands with him on issues like this a long time ago. I think it was during the St. Michael North West by-election. All of us can identify those areas of hardship and we demand from Government on behalf of the taxpayers of Barbados and particularly the disadvantaged that Government makes a major effort to address the critical problems that they are facing in almost every area of their lives. 4.15 p.m.

I hope that these Estimates will truly represent that kind of departure. That I am circumspect in my ambitions in relation to these Estimates comes from the fact that delivery of those promises has been slow, and delivery of those promises has been handicapped by an inability of Members of that side to truly understand what poverty alleviation is all about, and that is my major concern and we debate these Estimates against that background.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Three weeks ago I made a statement to the effect that these Estimates this year could well determine the state at which Barbados enters into the 21st century and the platform for further development which would exist at that time.

The Estimates, Sir, reflect an assessment of the Barbados economy which I think is quite reasonable, not only from the various figures put out from the various agencies, but from what one sees from day-to-day. However Sir, there are many areas that I would have liked to address in the economic aspects of the Estimates, but because of the limited time available to me I would have to concentrate on other areas.

One area that stands out to me is the remarkable growth in Government's revenue over the past ten years or so, and when one compares that with the fact that eight years after 1989 we are now about to achieve that same level of output as existed in 1989, this certainly suggests to me a level of over-taxation in Barbados which, in my view, must be addressed at some point in time and should not be addressed as some part of the Arthur re-election campaign of which these Estimates are only phase one.

Let it be clear, Mr. Speaker, that what we are witnessing here today is phase one of the Arthur re-election campaign and phase two will be coming with reduction in the level of over-taxation within twelve months, Mr. Speaker. The only constraint on that is what would be the yield on the VAT. The only constraint is if the VAT does not achieve the levels of revenue which he anticipates.

So therefore Sir, I am perfectly clear, I understand in a very fundamental way, the political dynamics of these Estimates and what is to come. I also understand the social dynamics of what is going on here, and I understood very carefully the level of rhetoric I heard today on areas of the social sector; but who am I to complain, Sir? I cannot complain because many of the fundamentals in monetary policy and fiscal policy which we have advocated over the years have been adopted by the Government. Many of the social sector, social sector new philosophies I heard advocated today can be found in the two manifestos of the National Democratic Party. They are two documents that will have far-reaching effect on public policy of this country over 25 years and although, Sir, we have limited representation in this Parliament, this does not represent the number of votes we got at election. Nevertheless, I feel very satisfied that we have been able to make our impact on the political life of this country that we have influenced in many ways policies taken by those who have ears to listen and brains to understand what we have been trying to say for a very long, long time.

My main caution, Sir, I am not going to focus on the levels of revenue and expenditure at the moment anymore, Sir. My one caution is to look at the area of financing of the deficit. I notice the very heavy reliance this year on domestic financing which is reasonable in view of the level of the reserves and so on. I do not have a fundamental problem with that but what I do warn is this. We have had a very unfortunate experience over the past 20 years in Barbados of 3-4 year-periods of growth followed by 3-4 year periods of decline, 3-4 year periods of growth followed by severe decline and the severity of these declines have related to some extent to external factors but the depths of the declines have very much related to how Government expenditure has been handled and how Government expenditure has been financed.

So if in the middle of this re-election campaign in ihe next two and a half years we recognise that the expectations of these Estimates are not being met and that this financing package of the deficit is not appropriate, I sincerely hope that the Minister of Finance would show a level of responsibility to pull back and change course along the way in a timely manner; not from behind but up in front.

I know that the Honourable Member can be beaten at the polls without the economy being in disarray. I do not want to see this economy go in to disarray for electoral reasons. There are many other ways in which your

Honourable Member can be beaten, and we have to get into the habit of winning elections whilst the economy is doing progressively better and better. That is the kind of philosophy that I am committed to, and that is why we make our views on the economy and on social development in Barbados available to everybody, so that they can pick and choose what is best for Barbados.

Just two points I want to make, Sir, particularly now as a major step has been taken in respect of Government's taxation to introduce the VAT from 1st January. I wonder whether the time has not come and the Constitution Review Commission should probably give some thought to this to shift our fiscal year from January to December to coincide with what is happening at the Central Bank and what is happening in the international community. That is one point.

The second point is whether we should not amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act in such a way that all our long-term amortisations can be treated in the way in which they treat the short-term amortisations, the treasury bills and so on, so that we do not get this confusing picture in relation to deficits and this kind of thing.

The third thing, whether the Minister should not take the opportunity this year since his main revenue is going to be coming from the VAT system, and looking at the question of introducing the Estimates at the end of the year and the budget at the beginning of the year, shifting the whole lot onto the calendar year so that the information that comes from all sources whether it be the international institutions, the Central Bank or from Government that it all comes in relation to the calendar year making those adjustments as well. In relation to the way in which amortisations and so on are handled in relation to the actual functional deficits and this kind of thing.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Think about it. No, I am not s.aying... what I am saying is to give some thought to shifting the fiscal year so you get some uniformity of presentation of figures, so what comes out of the Central Bank is similar to what comes out of the Government finances and you have some uniformity not only in temporal terms but also in presentation of the numbers. I am quite sure that many Members of this Honourable House will be quite confused when they see a deficit as calculated based on the Consolidated Fund and see a deficit presented on the basis of the Central Bank and they see another deficit which takes into account the surpluses of the National Insurance Scheme and all this kind of thing. Only a few people in this House would be fully seized of really what is happening. It is not right. It can all be correct and be dealt with decisively at one point in time. That is one suggestion that I make. We criticize but we also make positive suggestions. 4.25 p.m.

Now, Sir, in that area of property taxes, I wish to know what is the real policy of the Barbados Labour Party. I want to know whether this document which was made a document of the House in 1991 should not be amended because I see here on page 9 of the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto, "BLP 1991 Manifesto, The Road to Economic Reconstruction - Special Proposals...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Barbados Labour Party has a Manifesto Committee that reviews, and has reviewed each succeeding Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party throughout its 60 years of existence and that 1991 policy was reviewed and amended by the Manifesto Committee of the Barbados Labour Party in 1994.

Mr. SPEAKER: So you are really answering the question?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Yes. The Government is now being guided by the 1994 position set out in our Manifesto in 1994, not a 1991 position.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I have the position of the House, Sir, to write "As amended" on this particular document? "As amended, see 1994 document."

Now,'Sir, on the revenue side, the area of corporation tax - and I believe it is time the Government revisits that issue of a lower rate of corporation tax for small businesses.

I recall, Sir, when I was Minister of Finance, I had established a committee headed by Mr. Grenville Phillips who had come up with a recommendation defining what is a small business and also making a recommendation at the level of corporation tax. It seems to me to be unfair to ask a small business, especially early in its life, as soon as it begins to make a profit, to be paying corporation tax at the same rate at which large businesses pay corporation tax.

Another area of the revenue side that concerns me, and this impinges very fundamentally on attempts in this country to alleviate poverty. We are talking and I sincerely hope I have enough time to deal with this issue of poverty alleviation because we have been in the forefront of the struggle to get policies articulated in this area.

We have a system in this country where through electronic gambling, gambling on a daily basis, we are removing about $100 million a year from poor communities in this country and we see a total of $30 million coming back to the Treasury by way of taxation. It is a major hole that needs to be plugged.

I remember years ago when I slapped a tax on the one-armed bandits there were people who made all kinds of threats on my life and what's not. The net effect of that was to remove the one-armed bandits out of the rural and out of the shops in the communities in this country so that if people wanted to play the one-armed bandits at least they had to take the trouble of going to where they are located now to play them.

I think it is quite wrong. We are undermining everything we are doing. A lot of the money we are going to be putting into the hands of poor people might well be just feeding more and more money to those gambling machines with that gambling going on almost all day. It is sad, Sir, some mornings I stop at 7.00 o'clock on my way to work at a certain place in Bay Street and when I stop there everybody in the queue in front of me and in the queue beside me are buying gambling tickets, at 7.00 o'clock in the morning, and all from one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Barbados.

It is something that needs to be looked at. We have to ask ourselves in the context whether or not this is a legitimate type of development which public policy should be fostering in this country because it seems to me that in national terms and in terms of dealing with issues of poverty that there is a net negative return to the communities in this country. I say no more on that. There is more I can say but I do not have enough time.

On the issue of the VAT, again under the revenue item, I have no doubt whatsoever that VAT has to be removed on the food of poor people in this country. However much the Minister might theorize on this particular issue, he is going to find that VAT on food is going to be an albatross around his neck.

There are other areas, Sir, which I would like to deal with but I cannot deal with them now. I am midway in the only 30 minutes I have to speak on this major issue. I want to say this, so I would not forget.

I think, Sir, that we have to make sure that some effort is made in this country to see to it that all the constituencies in Barbados have something done over the next two years. I have not been demanding much. I have not been demanding much because I represent a constituency where I have been for a long time. We have had all the roads done, a lot of infrastructure put in, natural gas, lights, a whole lot of things I have managed to get done over the years. I have not tried to jump ahead of other newer Members of Parliament.

All I have asked for is to have the roads in Bannister Land and Delamere Land resurfaced. They were dug up by the Natural Gas Corporation when I got natural gas put in there way back then. I have been trying hard to get it resurfaced and I just cannot get those roads resurfaced.

The Minister of Public Works has promised and promised and I hope it will be done this year. I have been trying hard, Sir, to get a pavilion at Gully Hill in Carrington's Village which the Honourable Member for St. Peter would know very well. I have tried really hard. I have put up the lights there out of my own pocket and I have paid the electricity bill every month. I spoke to the Minister responsible for social services and said: "Look, I have been paying this bill for 10 years, over $10 000 and I pay it out of my pocket in electricity bills." No quarrel. I said: "Look, at least take over and pay the lights. What I will do, I will go and put up lights elsewhere in the same constituency and make the capital investment on behalf of the constituents." I have no problem with that. I cannot get it done. I pay the $1 000 in electricity bills every month now for about 10 years. I pay it at Carrington's Village and Gully Hill. I pay out of my pocket. The bill comes to me.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is not the point. Let me tell you something. Those lights are just more than permitting people to play. They have added considerably to the security of that area. They have made sure that those youngsters can play up to 9.00 and 10.00 o'clock at night. When they get tired, they go home to bed and keep out of trouble. It is a very important investment I have made on behalf of the people of Carrington's Village and cannot get any help.

At Valery for 10 years we have been trying to get a pavilion up there. What was done was that the first World Bank Education Project was put in the building there. Then that was succeeded and another project went in, then another project went in and here we cannot get a simple pavilion put there. These are the three things I am asking for, Sir. In return I will undertake to go and put lights elsewhere in the constituency and pay the bill for another 10 years to keep that going. It is unreasonable. I do not know about you but I told my constituents yesterday that I regard this year as the beginning of my political career. So if any of you have any designs on me just bear this in mind. This is just the beginning of a new career. 4.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, does this indicate that the merger has taken place.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It means that there will be new levels of growth, even higher levels than seen in the economy.

Now, Sir, I want to speak on this issue of Almond Beach. I have always been very cautious about the private sector in Barbados in relation to the Tourism Industry.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They were in the tourism industry in Barbados before anybody else. They sold off all their assets in the tourism industry. They made a fortune out of the infrastructure in this country in this respect that whereas a lot of poor black people went and put themselves in a lot of debt on the south coast to bring people in here, they were the suppliers of goods and services to those hotels and they made their money as a result of the efforts of those people. Almond Beach represented the first opportunity in many a year that they had to make some contribution and show some confidence in the hotel industry on which they had grown fat for many years. They got it at a price which they had criticised in the past and I have no doubt whatsoever that the constraints of the economic times might have forced the previous Government to sell it at that price. In my view, it should not have been sold for less than $60 million. They got it at a song. Then they went abroad and imported all sorts of things into this country through their subsidiary companies and they took out substantial profits on the way to reaching a final figure as the cost of renovations at Hey woods. Then on the level of revaluation from $34 million to $87 million they went public. That is the level at which Barbadians bought shares in that company. Barbadians brought those shares because of the tax concession which were granted in the budget of that particular year. The ability to buy new shares in new companies. Now they turn around and are selling those shares in a situation which I consider to be nothing short of speculation, scandalous speculation as far as I am concerned.

I will tell you why I feel very strongly about that for another reason. I was on the other side of the House, the principal spokesman on finance during those years when Heywoods was being built. I harassed the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, day in and day out on the amount of expenditure taking place at Heywoods. He had to come in here and defend public policy. He spent years working on that and today to see people come in here and in a matter of a few months making profits of over $40 million. I think it is disgusting, scandalous and word must go forth from this House that we are not going to tolerate anybody in Barbados abusing public facilitations and abusing a public asset in that way for their private benefit. They are some things about which you have to feel strong and express yourself strong.

The Minister of Finance has statutory responsibilities for the Stock Exchange and he might choose to use different language but I know how I feel about it. In point of fact, those workers who bought those shares, they have a choice now. If they make a capital gain and if they sell their shares they are going to lose the tax benefit. That's automatic under the law. If they keep the shares they are in a situation that they do not really know what is going on. That is what is happening to those people who put their money in Almond Beach and that is why I look at the people, I knew who they were, I look at the extent to which they had increased the valuation of that property and I did not buy one share in it. Because that is how a whole lot of them have gone public in Barbados over the years. The first time I bought a share in a public company on my own behalf or on behalf of my children, I bought a few shares in Life of Barbados because all my insurance is with Manufacturers Life and that was a case of a Barbadian company taking over the portfolio of Manufacturers Life which holds my life insurance policies. I figured that it was reasonable and it made sense to me. I have always felt very strongly about anybody using my money to their advantage because I can use my money better to my advantage whether I drink rum, whisky, lick it out or do whatever I want to do with it but nobody is going to use my money to their advantage. I will give my money to the poor people in my constituency, I will do what makes me happy but nobody will take my money and use it to their advantage.

I sincerely hope that this Honourable House, during these Estimates will make their position known in the strongest terms in relation to what has happened at Almond Beach so that no one will have the gall in the future to try to come and utilise public assets in that kind of way ever again in Barbados. They have to understand that even if they can do it legally that there is a moral responsibility on which they have reneged in a very serious manner. I believe that the Commissioner of Income Tax in this country has a duty to make an evaluation as to whether the capital gained in the increase of the value in that property from $35 million to $87 million, whether it can be regarded in that short period of time as a natural accretion of value and in the light of the subsequent sale whether it can be regarded as trading in property and trading in sales and therefore all the profits should be subject to Corporation Tax to return some of the money that those people got out of the concession of the taxpayers in Barbados. I am quite sure that under the laws of Barbados that is a situation that the Commissioner of Inland Revenue should be looking at very carefully. If a private individual had bought a property today and sold it tomorrow the Commissioner of Inland Revenue has a right to intervene and say that that is now natural accretion in capital value, this is speculation and the profits on it can be taxed. Similarly, you should be able to tax the profits when you have a double increase in capital appreciation in a short period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to one or two other areas. I still have about ten minutes and I will make the best use of it, Sir.

Poverty Alleviation, Sir. We have campaigned hard to have a Poverty Alleviation Fund available to this Parliament. I am tired of begging the Welfare Department and begging the National Assistance Board to go

and do things and they are a bunch of lazy people who would not go and do anything. My own constituency office was under seige for several months where I had to put fire victims in my constituency office before I could get a little board and shingle house for them back in Carrington Village. I do not agree with the Government on this issue of rural commissions and urban commissions. You know how I feel about that because these are people appointed by Central Government. I think there are grave dangers involved in that kind of exercise of political patronage. I myself believe that the people need to be empowered. I believe that some form of elected body at the local level is necessary as central government becomes more and more complex. 4.45 p.m.

We may be a small country but the issues that a Prime Minister or a Minister of Finance has to deak with are in no way less complex and very often they do not have the infrastructure as bigger countries and they have to work longer hours. In point of fact it is important that the people be empowered at the community level. At the moment the only elected individuals that can deal with this issue of poverty at the community level are the parliamentarians. We have been elected to Parliament and I hope that a parliamentary committee be established, whether it be under your chairmanship, Mr. Speaker, or under my chairmanship or whoever, as a third party. I am not asking for it. It does not matter. I am not dreaming about anything. What I am saying is that there is a role for new political parties in this Parliament and if it is a question of fairness of allocation of resources then His Honour the Speaker or perhaps the newest political party represented in Parliament might be the appropriate person to ensure that there is fairness and that parliamentarians, every parliamentarian, I am not saying parliamentarians should handle the money, but they should have the right to say that I have an old lady in a house who has broken her leg this morning because her foot went through the rotten floor boards and she is now in hospital and I want those floor boards repaired in 7 days by the time she comes out of hospital and she does not have to go to the NAB or anybody to get it done in six months or 9 months or tell her she has to wait on next year's allocation to get it done. Mr. Speaker, I am really serious about this issue of poverty. It is important, since we do not have local government then the parliamentarians should be empowered to do something about it, give orders to somebody to do something about it and let there be maximum accountability on behalf of the people of Barbados that those funds are being used efficiently. It should be divided equally among all the constituencies. That is the way I feel about it and that .could be an important thing.

Sir, on the question of targetting, I am saying again and again we have called for a supplementary pension for those people who only get an old age pension and have no other source of income. Quite clearly people cannot live on that small amount. It is ridiculous to be giving people who have incomes on retirement $100 000 a year, $75 000, a year the same old age pension as somebody who has zero income. All you are doing is reinforcing the differences in the society.

Now, I accept, Sir, that no matter how well off they are many people feel that they made a contribution to the society and they like to get the old age pension however small because they feel that it is public recognition of their role in the development of the society, but having satisfied any aspect that additional funding should go by way of supplementary pensions to those people who have no other source of income.

In our health services, Sir, we are having all sorts of problems where in point of fact in many ways what is intended for the poor a whole lot of other people are benefitting from. I call for a national pensions plan. We are looking at the long term. Forty years from now, Sir, we should be looking at a different scenario. There should be somebody in here and I should not have to be speaking in here 30 years from now calling for a supplementary pension because there would be a national pensions plan in place that would be dealing with that particular problem, giving people who are working now the confidence that in 30 years from now there will be a different Barbados in which every Barbadian would be guaranteed a better minimum pension based on the investments of the period when they were working.

Similarly in education, I am going to say this now, I do not care who gets vexed. When I went to Harrison College there were a few blacks among us. When I left there were fewer. I have noticed some changes taking place over the years in the social class in the complexions of those people who are benefitting from the public purse for their education and who do not need any contribution from the public purse for their education. There are people who are not even Barbadians who can come here and get free secondary education. Where can a Barbadian go and get free secondary education? We behave as though we are the richest people in the world. This is nonsense and it is time that we have to sit down, think through and make sure that whilst there should be no barrier to anyone seeking education in Barbados that there are certain levels that have to be dealt with. What was appropriate in 1961, because in 1961 I can tell you what you were addressing - the only people interested in secondary education in 1961 were black people. I went into Form 1A at Harrison College. I was 10 years old and the average age of the class was over 20 years old. These are people who went to Form 1A and were superannuated and these are the same people now you are calling on to make decisions about private sector led development in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, ask the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I am telling the truth. That is a fact. Free secondary education in this age now has a slightly different connotation because different categories of people now are recognising the advantages of free secondary education and taking advantage of the public purse. People who should be contributing to the country in various other ways. However I do not want the word to go out there that I am against free secondary education. What I did say is that there are categories of persons in this country enjoying free secondary education on the public purse and many of them are not even Barbadians.

Do you know something, Sir, some of them do not pay any taxes at all. Mr. Speaker, you are not going to believe this. Some of these people work for international institutions. They do not pay any taxes and if they have to pay 10 cents on a bottle of rum they write the Ministry of Finance complaining that they were charged 10 cents. Ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs. If they have to pay 10 cents on a bottle or rum or any purchase in Barbados and there is any confusion about whether they should have paid it or not they will write an objection to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their children will be enjoying all these facilities and they would be working tax free for double what the Prime Minister or triple what the Prime Minister is working for which would be about twenty times what I earn.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have had your extra 10 minutes.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I cannot presume any further on your good nature, Sir, but there is a lot more I would like to say. I sincerely hope, Sir, that the opportunity comes. At this point let me say this, Sir, I understand the political dynamics and the social dynamics in which these Estimates have been cast. 4.55 p.m.

Let not those dynamics, however important, cloud one's impression during the coming months over the necessity to maintain an appropriate fiscal stance, so that the gains which the economy have made over the past few years would not be frittered away. This can easily happen and it can happen in a very short period of time. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise with a certain amount of pleasure in this debate. I would wish to start it by stating that perhaps if I did not know better, having listened to the three speeches that preceded mine I might have considered that I was listening to speeches from a Government of national unity with perhaps certain internal rumblings thereto, because there has clearly been stated on all sides today, an agreement to the general economic path that is being pursued by this country and one that seeks to lay out a path for sustainable growth so as to ensure that what has been our lot over the last, certainly in post-independence Barbados, of periods of prosperity marred by then periods of decline, would become a thing of the past, so as to ensure that when we sit down to deal with issues as they relate to distribution, and to deal with issues as they relate to those who are least capable of taking care of themselves in this community, that we are capable of so doing with the confidence that the economy and the Government are running in such a way that you would not have to come back in a few short years and make those same people the butt, Sir, of your adjustment process as certainly took place in the last few years.

In those circumstances, Sir, I believe that we have come a long way, and if there is no other signal that is going from these Estimates it is recognition that all three major political parties have basically agreed Sir, on the basic tenents of the economy and to ensure Sir, that there will be full participation by all sides in a constructive way, on those matters that will carry us forward toward underpinning that sustainable growth.

As I have said, there would be some internal rumblings as is the case with every family, and, in those circumstances, Sir, we would wish therefore to be able to take issue with some of them and at the same time, to be able to build on some of the comments and suggestions that have already been made in this debate particularly, as they relate to the behaviour, Sir, of certain sections of the economy, of the. society, be it the non-governmental organisations, or be they Sir, the private sector as was stated already.

Before I deal with that Sir, I want very quickly to deal with the question of accountability, because, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made a great deal in his speech about accountability.

It is unfortunate, Sir, but one cannot gainsay the comments that were made by the Auditor General in his report for 1996. Certainly those comments have been noted by me and I am sure by other Members of this Government, but, insofar as they relate in the name to the technical breaches which have continued to occur, we Sir, we are committed to ensuring that those technical breaches can become a thing of the past, but it requires a number of actions ranging from:

1. The reform of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and Rules.

2. Proper training of persons, and

3. Proper placement of persons who are effectively and appropriately trained in Ministries to be able to deal, Sir, with the day-to-day management of the finances of ministries.

And I say so in the context Sir, that it was an unfortunate decision that led to the abolition of the post of Financial Controller in 1988. A post which required persons to have professional training to be able to be in charge of the finances of ministries such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Public Works, ministries that have budgets in excess of $100 million and in our case, Sir, in excess of $200 million. Ministries Sir, that require more than an official bookkeeper and a vote bookkeeper at that, but one that requires Sir, persons who understand not only basic accounting but management accounting, Sir.

In those circumstances, Sir, we believed that as a matter of course and urgency that these arrangements have to be put in place.

What is unfortunate about the Honourable Leader of the Oppositon's comments Mr. Speaker Sir, is that if you were listening to him you would have believed that they began in 1996 with this report.

Every single report, Sir, that I have been able to find in the records of this Honourable Chamber, Sir, refers to the same comments: "no proper inventory of Governments property kept; inappropriate charge to this sub-program; no reconciliation of accounts; purchasing directly instead of through central purchasing; no proper contracts to support expenditure; improper use of salary accounts" and indeed, Sir, lack of documentation.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order Mr. Speaker, Sir. If the Honourable Member will concede that the Barbados Labour Party came to office to change all of that, then we would net have to debate it anymore.

I concede that there have been scenarios like that before, but I wish her to concede that this Government said that it was its platform duty to change all of that...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON:...but then, we do not need to debate it. I am asking you to live up to your standards, that is all.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Honourable Member was listening to me he would have heard that I started off by conceding that there are things which have to change in relation to the management of public finances, e.g. change in the personnel who are allocated to manage those resources and the training that is necessary, but by the same token, let us not refer to $11 million in unauthorized expenditure in 1996 by the entire Government. When he served as Minister of Finance, he presided over a Ministry which the Auditor General says had $14 million in unauthorised expenditure in his Ministry of Finance alone.

So when we are bandying about the figure of $11 million for an entire Government let us remember that he presided as Minister of Finance over unauthorized expenditure for $14 million in his Ministry alone and that comments related to "no proper inventory of Government property," the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister already said so. But having said that we agree, Sir, that matters must change and we, Sir, have sought to do it.

You know what is particularly noticeable, and I am going to make this a document of this Honourable Chamber, Sir, because, I think now the point about the consensus must be seen and the point about the mandate of the Labour Party, and what we came to office on. We did not have to wait for the Auditor General's report to start the process of reform of the Financial and Accounting Systems, Sir.

I am going to make, Sir, a document of this Honourable Chamber, a Change Order and details of a Contract to Reform the Financing and Accounting Systems of the Ministry of Education, dated the 26th April, 1996. Where Sir, we found when we came into Government a contract with the IADB to reform every section of the Ministry of Education except the Financial and Accounting Systems, to reform the personnel section, to reform the records section, to reform the pedagogical section. They went through and chose every single section of the Ministry of Education except the financial and accounting system which was the subject of negative comment in every preceding year thereto. 5.05 p.m.

Sir, because of our concern for the very same thing that I just referred to we specifically called in the IDB and the consultant Edusystem as well as Systems Barbados and Peat Marwick who is a local partner and asked them to reform the contract, adjust the contract to extend to the financial accounting systems. On April 26, 1996, a document which I will make a document of the House from Edusystem, the consultants under the project, starts off by saying, "Please find attached change order Oil for the revision of the educational financial consultancy to an accounting information system consultancy to ensure the reform of the system.

So we did not have to wait for the Auditor General's Report to be published in January of 1997 to be able to deal with problems which we knew and still know exist within the Ministry and to which we are committed to reform and which have been the subject and the plague of every single Government ministry, certainly since the early 1970s.

To move on, Sir, I started by saying that there was a general consensus in relation to the manner in which the economy was being managed and the direction in which the economy had to go. One of the things that there seems to be an appreciation of and for which we are grateful is that the very world in which we live is changing so drastically that the structure of our economy is going to be seriously affected in terms of how it can respond unless there are internal adjustments in relation to what in fact constitutes the productive sectors.

Government has, therefore, to take sensible decisions as to how it can prepare itself for these changes. We know that by the year 2000 there may well be no successor agreement to Lome 4. We are aware that by the year 2006 the Free Trade Association of America which calls for reciprocal treatment and freedom of movement of goods and capital and services will mean that many countries in the eastern Caribbean including ours which rely extensively on taxation from imports and whose economy is not so structured as to be able to withstand that type of liberalisation not to mention its private sector entities which are unable to compete that these are serious considerations that can impact the very quality of life that our people can benefit from over the next 15 to 20 years.

For we have already had the limited lesson that those sectors in this economy which have been performing well have been those sectors that do not have to rely on the protectionist measures or the imposition of quotas or access to preferential markets as has been the case with sugar and other manufacturing commodities, but the sectors such as tourism such as the informatics sector such as the international business and financial sector that have more or less competed on their own without access to these preferential markets and subsidies and quotas that other sections of the economy that have been the traditional mainstay have needed in order to be able to succeed.

Therefore what it says to a government is that if we are going to be able to withstand the changes that are taking place in the international economic world we must prepare ourselves and to a large extent, Sir, we must prepare ourselves in terms of our ability to service the expansion in these sectors that have been doing well, basically the service and knowledge based sectors, and that to do so we must have the quality of the educated person, that we are capable of producing who can in fact service these sectors and who are capable of ensuring that we can be competitive.

To a large extent, our policy as a government in respect of human resources training has been able to produce that type of person while ensuring that we can sensitise that person to be sensitive to their responsibilities in their family, in their community and in their country and to ensure that they have a moral commitment to the development of this country as well as a moral commitment to those among this society who are least capable of taking care of themselves.

These Estimates in a very real way reflect the continuation of that vision, reflect our ability to ensure that we are capable of expanding the level of training while at the same time improving the quality of training of our young people to be able to man and "woman" those industries that are going to be the basis for our economic growth as we move into the 21st century, while at the same time ensuring that those who are least capable, either because of a physical or mental handicap or because of socially deviant behaviour or because of learning disabilities are capable of being caught within the various safety nets that we, either as a government, provide directly or that are provided by the non-governmental organisations which are assisted by the environment and some measure of Government subsidies.

To that extent, Sir, I am happy to be associated with Estimates that see an increase in the subsidies being provided to institutions such as the Learning Centre and the Challenor School so as to be able to undertake responsibility for meeting their deficit, of an institution such as the Thelma Vaughn Home, all of these institutions which failed to benefit from considerable Government financial assistance in the last few years particularly as a result of the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes.

We believe, Sir, that it is our duty, particularly when we as a Government are unable to provide proper institutions for these persons that we can, in fact, provide the opportunities for them to continue viable operations while still encouraging them to raise funds from non-governmental entities as they have been accustomed to doing. We have also for the first time this year introduced funding for a Children at Risk programme which will seek to take those children who are suspended and/or expelled and who currently are allowed to stay at home without responsibility to attend anywhere and bring them into an institution which seeks to deal with the very reasons that cause them to be suspended or expelled in the first instance rather than banishing them from the school plant because they are too difficult to be handled and at the same time their problem may worsen largely because they are not receiving professional assistance for the very problem that caused them to behave so in the first place.

We have therefore said, along with the secondary school principals, that there needs to be an institution that caters towards bringing these children out of the secondary schools, working with their problems while ensuring that they are still receiving academic tuition in respect of whatever level they are at but ensuring that their

difficulties can be remedied where possible and then allowing them to go back into the secondary schools. 5.15 p.m.

So that within the context, Sir, of providing care and training are the types of programmes that we are putting in place for those who are least capable of taking care of themselves. It has not stopped there, Sir. Many members so far, Sir, the speaker that has spoken before me has spoken extensively about the Poverty Alleviation Fund.

It is not only the Poverty Alleviation Fund of $10 million, Sir, that we have provided in the Estimates for those who are least in a position to take care of themselves. We have provided for the very first time, $5 million under an Urban Development Commission, which will see to it that we can deal with problems in urban Barbados in a holistic manner, that instead of coming in and just doing housing and leaving, or coming in and putting a road and leaving, or coming and fixing a drain and leaving that you can take a community, address the problems of that community in a holistic manner as it relates to its housing, as it relates to the conversion of derelict housing into habitable housing, particularly where that derelict housing has been the subject of public health nuisances as well as crime in many instances; as it relates to drainage, as it relates to their capacity of the tenants to as many of the persons living in these areas live on tenantries to be able to have access to the land, and to have access to the land at a price which represents a fair market value price and which represents, Sir, an element of subsidy in the same way that those who benefitted under the Plantations Freehold Purchase Act, Sir, were able to benefit. They must recognise that they cannot be put on the same basis, however, since 1980 is 17 years ago and since the value of the plantation land in many instances was not the same as the value of land in St. Michael which tends to be near the commercial districts and to a greater infrastructure of roads in those circumstances.

We therefore feel that the role of the Urban Development Commission is to facilitate the holistic development of a particular community so as to improve the quality of life of a person in that community, in such a way that that person feels as though he can go forward and fully participate and benefit, Sir, from the very same improvements that all of us agree should take place in this economy, provided we continue on the current path.

We therefore feel that it is necessary for that, but it doesn't stop there. We hope, Sir, to have established too, an Urban Enterprises Fund, where persons with small projects can go and have access to funding; to be able to get those small projects off the ground in instances, Sir, where the private financial community of Barbados still requires these people to bring collateral from their navel string right back down in many instances which are unfair, in many instances where the banks know that it is impossible, in many instances where they would lend to other people the same amounts of money without request for the same collateral simply because of knowledge of who they are or even in some instances the complexion of their skin and the quality of their hair, Sir. That is a significant feature, Sir, of this country unfortunately.

We therefore feel, Sir, that those in urban Barbados must have access to small amounts of funds which they are not now able to do, unless they come to a politician or to a member of the family who is doing well, and who is in a position to help them out to be able to get a small business or a small project, in some instances, off the ground.

Sir, we also are seeing to it that the rural development gets an additional $5.2 million, and that the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, our budget is capable of supporting other projects in which there will be general participation by Barbadians in terms of ownership, in terms of their capacity to expand their fortunes financially and economically, Sir.

Indeed, Sir, I believe that these types of projects, the Honourable Member for St. George spoke about it in relation to his concern about persons at the community level not having the knowledge of the access to tax concessions; but the reality is, Sir, that that is already being addressed by us, Sir. The Ministry of Finance has the ability Sir, to offer the concessions but very often what is the case, is that they themselves are not seized of the knowledge and perhaps what is more needed, Sir, is a public education programme as to the types of activities that would, in fact, draw tax concessions.

So it is not a case of seeking to disadvantage anybody because he is a small person or because he is in a community. We also said in the White Paper on education, Sir, and it is a matter that we are pursuing; that where projects are put forward for the rehabilitation of primary schools in terms of physical work, that in the same way persons can seek to access books and other educational materials duty free, that we would consider community projects seeking to rehabilitate primary schools in those same ways in terms of tax concessions. We said that, Sir, as long ago as 18 months ago.

Now, I started, Sir, by making these points in relation to the question of what Government had to do in terms of training programmes, in order to be able to meet the needs of a changing economy so as we can compete in the 21st century, given the changes in the International Economic Order.

What is of some concern to me, Sir, is that while we as a Government, and we as a Parliament seek to

to discuss the necessary changes that we have to make, we are not seeing the same level of discussion, nor the same movement in the private sector to the extent that would convince us, Sir, that they fully understand that those areas which continue to rely on subsidies and preferential markets and quotas, are going to be those that are going to be most seriously hit particularly as we move into the 21st century.

Sir, the classic case in relation to Almond Beach, to which everyone has spoken, is the closest and perhaps the most recent one at hand; and I believe, Sir, in fairness to him it is the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who made the point that it reflects a backward move in terms of their understanding that the strategic interest of that company cannot be in the preservation of businesses that rely on preferential markets and quotas in order to succeed, whether it be Roberts Manufacturing or whether it be Banks Beer Holding as he refers to.

I say this, Sir, what is particularly worrisome is that when they chose to come to the public of Barbados, for the basis of raising capital by way of the share issue, they stated in their prospectus that it was their intention to mirror the Almond Beach name and to carry it throughout the entire Caribbean, in relation to the acquisition and development of properties, under the brand name of Almond as part of the expansion of investment in tourism, with a full understanding that tourism represented one of those areas which we in the Caribbean can compete with significantly.

Sir, they did not stop there. In the Annual Report of Almond Resorts, which I will make a document of the House, on page 9, dated September 30,1996 it reads:

> "We have been researching expansion opportunities in the region to form the basis for an addition to our current product line. This strategy is geared at strengthening our market position, creating greater synergies and earning capacity as well as diversifying our product offering. We expect to do this by way of options for outright purchase suitable for resort properties, joint ventures and management contracts. Within the coming fiscal year, (that means right now) we will be seeking to achieve this objective."

That is what the same Board on which the same Chairman of Barbados Shipping & Trading and other members of Barbados Shipping & Trading, who sit on, sat down and proposed to the shareholders of that Corporation in September of last year, on the expectation that Cuba was opening up or in the Dominican Republic, or in St. Lucia, or in Antigua or even in Rockley, next to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

We are now hearing that for the basis, and on the basis of what was a sweet offer, they have said "yes, let us go," and that they have said so without being able to tell the public of this country, but more importantly, the shareholders of that company, and equally more importantly, the workers of that company what they plan to do with the capital gain and profits they are making from this year. 5.25 p.m.

Are they still in tourism? Are they putting it back in to selling toilet paper and selling flour? What are they going to do with it? This is in the context of a company that knows as a parent company that among the shareholders of Almond Beach there are 275 employees who own shares in that company, 275 black Barbadians who picked up little hard acquired money, who picked up money that they had to work hard for and sweat which they could ill afford in other circumstances to invest but which, because of their confidence in the product and the job they were doing, and because of the public concessions given by the Minister of Finance last year for persons purchasing shares in public companies, and the belief that they could get the tax allowance, they put their hard earned dollars and purchased shares, 275 employees. What is the gratitude for their loyalty to their employers and to the parent board? They could pick up and because the money looks good they could sell.

Sir, I would not go so far as to say that the comments made in here about prostitution recently might otherwise be applied to them. I would not go so far in here to say that because when one talks about selling to the highest bidder, the first thing that comes to mind is prostitution. I must be satisfied that black Barbadians have reached a point in their history where they are not prepared to sell out to the highest bidder and where they are capable of understanding that the ownership and control of major assets in this economy which will continue to do well as we move into the 21st Century cannot be sold out for a song and dance just because somebody comes and raises dollars in front of you.

I would hate to think, Sir, that the Chairman and the Board of that company would think that a short-term capital gain can replace the long-term sustainable growth and fortune of people in this country, of the country itself and of the workers, not to mention their own shareholders.

Sir, look at the outturn figures as of September 30, 1996 in their annual report. Eight point five million dollars in pre-tax profit largely achieved by further tax concessions given by successive Governments in order for them to be able to make this money. What is more, Sir, occupancy levels of 86.3 per cent when the rest of the Caribbean was at 66 per cent and where Barbados' average was at 56 per cent.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and I am glad to have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. John speak in the manner in which they have spoken on this issue. In my view, Sir, it is an issue which requires unanimity. It is an issue on which there must be a clear and single voice to the people of this country that we are not prepared to sacrifice our long-term sustainable growth for a song, for a piece of change, or for a lack of change because at the end of the day I do not know which one of us can leave in here and go and live in any other country. I do not know which one of us in here can run and move money at short notice and at the end of the day whether this country is going at 4.5 per cent or receding at 5 per cent we cannot go anywhere else and live.

I therefore feel that when we have a successful example of how a tourism resort can be managed which show yields that are in excess of the average in the Caribbean, that we have a duty of replicating that example rather than cutting it at its knee.

I have spoken emotionally on this issue, Sir, because I feel emotional about it. That combines with other people who feel the same way. We welcome foreign investment, Sir, because at the end of the day we recognise that we do not have all that it takes to be able to develop this country from within, but when people bring their money to this country, they must understand that there are rules and morals which this country holds dear to its heart and that we will not, whether it is spurious and foolish allegations about restricting access to beaches, whether it is spurious and foolish allegations about restricting access even to beach facilities that it cannot happen in this country.

There must be a delicate balance between understanding that while we welcome investment and money that it must be in the context of what we are capable of living with as a country and as a people. I therefore am a happy person this afternoon, Sir, that there has been unanimity generally speaking on this issue as to the behaviour.

I am not going to get into whether the Managing Director in fact knew that they were selling the property or whether the Board of Directors made the decision behind his back when he was away. You know that and I know that but I would not talk about that tonight. A man who has made successful returns for you and that company that you are going to wait until this black Director is out of the country for you to be able to take a decision. I am not going to get into the fact as to whether there is a split between the black and white Directors on the Board of Barbados Shipping and Trading. I am not going to get into those facts this evening.

I sincerely hope that the Press of this country will investigate whether there is not a black/white split on the Board of Directors at BS&T on this issue just as there is a black/white split on the same Private Members' Bill that the Sandy Lane property owners want the people to bring and that the blacks are against the bringing of any Private Members' Bill. I say this, Sir, not because of any desire to incite racist talk in this country but because there are some things happening that we have to stand up and take notice of and let our voices be heard as to what we are prepared to accept.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I am not clear in my mind that the Honourable Member is not seeking to mislead the House. The Honourable Member has indicated that some blacks or whites are divided on the Sandy Lane Board. The information available is very clear and it has not been made a document of the House. I am prepared to make the information a document of the House.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Because the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have the correct information here. Mr. Speaker, I am seeking to correct the records. The Honourable Member has made certain statements.

The facts are that the Resolution passed by the Sandy Lane Property Owners said clearly that the members of the Sandy Lane Property Owners' Association express their gratitude to Sir Harold St. John, member of Parliament, who has graciously agreed to introduce and sponsor the aforesaid Private Members' Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order, Sir?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member misled the House saying she does not know who is going to table it. It is clear. It is expressly stated in this and I am prepared to make it a document of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, that is no point of order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am glad that the Honourable Member has raised it because he also forgot to tell the House that a member of the Democratic Labour Party, the former Deputy Prime Minister, also received a copy to table before the last election and similarly St. John has not done it so do not come to me in here with poppy talk.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member is speaking out of her head or something. Nothing was ever produced to identify the former Honourable Deputy Prime Minister with any

association whatsoever with the Sandy Lane estate. This Resolution was passed by a *bona fide* and registered association.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! You have made your point already. The Honourable Member has 2 minutes to wind up, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, as usual the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has forgotten where the truth lies in these matters, but I would not deal with that, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I take objection to that. I have sought to correct the House. There is nothing to tell any lies about. I have nothing to fabricate. I brought the information in here that is available to this entire country and I object to your coming in here and telling me anything about any lies. 5.35 p.m.

As I was making the point, Sir, there are certain matters that they require a clear statement from those who have the opportunity to either govern or be associated with the Government or Parliament of this country in terms of Barbados future development. There is no doubt that as we move into the 21st century the new international economic order has required of us as a Government and as a country that certain decisions be put in place to ensure the sustainability of sectors that would otherwise have to operate on a competitive basis. We, Sir, as a Government believe that we have been taking these steps in relation to ensuring the sustainability of these sectors, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: We, Sir, believe that as a Government we have been putting the measures in place to ensure the sustainability of these sectors but it also requires us to do so with an understanding that there must be a sense of well-being on the part of all Barbadians whether in terms of what they are and the extent of which they are capable of participating in this economy or the extent to which they are capable of taking care of themselves. We believe, therefore, that the measures taken in relation to the social programmes leave us with the opportunity as a country to be able to ensure that those persons who are least capable of taking care of themselves will now have the opportunity to do so. We have put $25 million altogether in programmes related to poverty alleviation and to poor housing and to welfare in this country in this year's estimates. We believe that they who suffered the most during the 1991-1994 period of stabilisation and structural adjustment must now benefit in a substantial manner from the bounty that is becoming available as a result of the economic prosperity occasioned by the economic growth over the last few years. That is the purpose of these estimates, Sir.

We sincerely hope that those who are being targetted specifically will benefit in the fullness of time during the course of this financial year which will start in April because they have borne the brunt and they must now benefit from the bounty. Thank you Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 6.00 p.m. I am taking the opportunity now so that Members can be aware that tonight we will close our debate just after 7.00 p.m. before dinner, and similarly tomorrow night and Wednesday. As usual, on Thursday, the Cabinet will meet so we will not start until 2.00 p.m., but on Thursday night Honourable Members should be prepared to work until 10.00 p.m. or 10.30 p.m. Of course, on Friday, the guillotine normally would come down between 7.00 p.m. and 7.30 p.m at the latest.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is suspended until 6.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am very happy to have the opportunity to make a contribution to this year's Estimates debate. My happiness comes from the fact that it is now some period of time since the Barbados Labour Party has assumed office having been recently endorsed by the electorate. These estimates are, in truth and fact, the first occasion when there is freedom of manoeuvre to implement the political programme of the B.L.P. Many people do not appreciate that in our system of Government, because of the need to ensure stability in our country, that it is necessary to preserve a measure of continuity in Government's activity even if there is a change of Government in the interim.

It would be most irresponsible of any Government in Barbados, of any political party, there are only two, when it succeeds another Government to jettison all of the programmes that are in the course of implementation at the particular period of time. It was for that reason that the Government when it assumed office had to carry out a number of programmes that were in the course of implementation by the last Government. We also had a very unique situation because as far as physical works were concerned, on this occasion we had programmes

which were stopped by the previous Government because of their inability to finance there closure. We had to finish the Ministry of Education building; we are in the course of finishing the school in St. Thomas and they are countless other programmes. They were D.L.P. misconceived projects in the sense that the time they were implemented, they were implemented in order to gain political favour but they were not justified by the state of the economy at the time. Sir, let us forget about that.

This year, Sir, I say that when you analyse these Estimate the B.L.P's programmes become obvious. I am very happy as I analyse them to see that both the productive sectors and, in particular, the social sectors in Barbados are being given additional appropriation. It would be for the Ministers in the individual Ministries whose heads are called on this occasion to explain in great detail the new features of the programme since I am only looking at it as a whole. Of course, I represent a constituency too. I would like to compliment the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries for the provision that they are making to improve the physical facilities at Oistins Town. The Honourable Member knows that. I am very glad to see that there would be provision on this occasion for, and at long last, implementing the policy of providing an adequate refrigeration capacity so that ice can be bought at Oistins Town by the vendors as well as the fishing boats thereby relieving the great congestion which occurs in Bridgetown because of the lack of ice facilities at Oistins. 6.10 p.m.

In addition to that it is well known that the jetty received some damages in 1991/92 when they had unusual weather in August and that consultants' reports had to be commissioned in order to ensure that remedial works were done. I have already discussed with the Honourable Minister that by reason of the great development that has taken place in that area it is necessary now to do the planning for the expansion of the existing jetty so as to go into deeper water, because what has happened in fact is that larger and larger boats are now mooring at Oistins and they cannot be accommodated with the existing draught. So therefore, Sir, I welcome that.

I also welcome the fact that part of my constituency has already benefitted from the very enlightened policy of this Government in creating the Rural Development Commission. I am not one of those politicians who do not understand that being a Member of Parliament in the context of Barbados where there is no local government, that an MP in this country and in this type of governmental system is placed under tremendous pressure, more pressure than in developed countries, because he has to look after the totality of the interests of his constituency and we do not share that responsibility with any other elected politician.

Very often our job as an MP is to ensure that the people who have to administer agreed government funds carry out that in a humane and efficient manner. That is a unique burden that falls upon a Member of Parliament in a country like Barbados where there is no local government and I keep telling people sometimes you have one day to be dealing with the failure of the Sanitation Authority to remove a dead dog in a constituency and the next day you are dealing with very sophisticated international trade matters. That is the nature of the work that is placed on an MP. We have already received from the Rural Development Commission consideration in the form of what I would call tenantry roads and also one or two street lights and I am hoping that in the coming years more of these very important matters would be dealt with.

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture can testify to this. I look forward to the Rural Development Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture implementing a programme which was very dear to my heart. I have always felt that the Government of Barbados should lead the way in ensuring that some of its lands are farmed by people who genuinely want to farm and who face serious shortages of land. The Government of Barbados owns in the Scotland District, in parts of Christ Church and in other parts of the Island quantities of land which could more usefully be farmed by fanners with a security of tenure and with help in the form of professional advice than land being farmed directly by the Government. Everybody knows that in that great productive period of 1976 to 1986 that it was started in the very Honourable Member for St. Michael South East's constituency. Allotments for gardens were given. I do not know of a city of any importance, whether capitalist or communist, that around airports and around cities that there are not allotment areas for urban people if they wish to participate in small fanning; not one that does not make provision for it. Therefore I hope that now we have a little manoeuvre, now that we really do not have to go down a blind alley in order to implement unfinished projects so as to prevent eye sores, that this Government would take the initiative.

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture knows my views on that and he knows that I will not allow a situation to continue until that policy is implemented. Not that I have any power to make him implement it. At least I have the power to constantly talk about it so that it will not fall on deaf ears.

My friend from Christ Church East, a constituency which he shares with mine, at Fairy Valley, and particularly at Coverley, would welcome this and the whole of the Scotland area lends itself, even in the area represented by the Honourable Member for St. John. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. John would be glad to know that some of the land owners in his area who have abandoned land, particularly that famous Trust,

would get ahead with the plan for implementing the small farming project.

What I am trying to point out, Sir, is that the Government in this society has to take the initiative and provide the prototype machinery and perhaps then the rest will follow. This is a very peculiar society. Everybody is studying that the market is going to do this and the market is going to do that. I have to remind people that if the Barbados Labour Party did not build the Deep Water Harbour they would never have had a deep water harbour because the merchants had nearly 300 years to build it and they never built it. That is a fact; so therefore if we want to have a small farming lease the Government has to do the work. Why we feel so strongly about this is that we have looked right through the Caribbean and in other areas and I know that in St. Vincent and in St. Lucia considerable sums of money have been spent on research into type of leases and I have already volunteered to give any amount of help in that area to the Ministry of Agriculture because we have to get on with that job.

Now we have also, in this area, I like to speak on this matter because it borders on my constituency - we also have the area of Graeme Hall and some other areas where serious decisions have to be taken by the Government. In the area of Graeme Hall we have the question of the swamp and I want to say that my constituents would regard me as failing in my duty if I did not point out to this House that a decision on that area of great importance has to take place and that it will require the efforts of a number of Ministries, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Agriculture. Graeme Hall, St. Lawrence, what is called the Stream, is an important area for tourism, it is an important area for agriculture and I mean intensive agriculture for vegetable growth. It is one of the few areas that has brackish water. It is flat. It lends itself to the most intensive cultivation of vegetables and it is time that a policy decision is made as to whether that area is to be farmed by the- Ministry of Agriculture. In such case sometimes there is always grave doubt as to what are the receipts and what are the expenditures because they say it is experimental developmental farming. I do not know what developmental they mean or whether we are going to get some of our top quality well trained agriculturalists and give them the opportunity to farm that on a most intensive basis. I know they would not be paying any VAT because those small farmers do not pay VAT. So that, Sir, I look forward to the implementation of this.

There have been proposals for the development of the Graeme Hall Swamp into a bird sanctuary and things of that kind. One of the things that we have, Sir, and I want to talk about it because I find that it is frustrating both to Members of Parliament and to others. Sometimes good proposals are put but the bureaucracy is such that it takes very long to reach the decision makers. There is nothing more frustrating than that. Taking that you have politicians who want to do something, you have people who would want to do something, but the bureaucracy... We must untangle the bureaucracy. It is no use voting all of this money and do not untangle the bureaucracy, because the money will not be spent, and if it is not being spent, some of it will be wasted. 6.20 p.m.

I am not here to curry favour with any votes, Sir, I have passed that stage. So I can speak very freely. My position is, Sir, that the decision making process in this country, like in many other countries, has to be reformed in the light of the last part of this century. People are making decisions faster and faster, but Governments do not seem to have reformed their machinery to make these decisions faster and faster and, it is wrong. It is very wrong. So that, I hope, Sir, that the Government continues with its policy of reform.

I have a fundamental point to make, Sir. There is some concern in this country, about the rising level of debt. There are people writing in the newspapers now and accusing the Government of increasing the national debt, because there is a deficit of 3%.

I would like to point out that an overall deficit of 3% is small in relation to the deficit of many countries. As a matter of fact, my understanding is that in the European movement toward monetary union the criterion for the fiscal deficit is 3%. So anybody who knows or has read anything about this would know that is not a very large deficit otherwise that would not be the criterion. So that the point is, in order to ensure that the deficits do not get out of reasonable proportion and promote instability and lack of confidence, increasingly people are going in for joint ventures and bill operation and transfer people BO or BO interest schemes.

That involves a radical shift in thinking too, for the public sector people because, instead of being in total control of a project they are partners in a project. And I want to say this, Barbados is not unique in the fact that we are not able to do this very quickly because I was only reading recently that in the United Kingdom while they are implementing what is called the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) they are finding that despite the fact that you had a Conservative Government in power that was promoting it for 14 years, that the bureaucracy is still trying to stifle it. So that just shows you. Maybe it is a question of the vested interest not wanting to lose its position. But we will increasingly in Barbados have to borrow to have

to utilize these new techniques if we are not going to stagnate and if we want to maintain a reasonable public sector deficit.

So I welcome that there are a number of projects in which this is being put forward, and I welcome it for another reason. I welcome it as an alternative to going to the multilateral financial institutions. One of the most interesting things that I have read recently, Sir, is the fact that a professor who came here not so long ago to deliver the Central Bank's lecture, I think he is a Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has recently written an article in which he said that middle income developing countries should cease to go to the IMF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, because they are only holding up the projects for such a long period of time that they increase the cost of the projects, via an increase in interest rates and changes in currency and that they themselves should try and do the programmes of joint ventures with the private sector so as to get them off in time. For that has been our experience.

I do not want to mention about the sewerage scheme. Because we went out with one thing in 1986 and we thought the thing was going to start in 1987. This is 1997 and it has only just really got off the ground. So that is illustrative of what we have to go through and the other point I am going to make and I am making no apology for saying it...

My view is that these people have very cleverly captured certain decision makers in the Civil Service, by the promise of future jobs, and my view is that the people who have to advise the Government are more advocates of the policies of these institutions than advocates of the Government.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not want to call names, but I could point to some examples. I have been in Government long enough to know that you have to be strong and you have to fight, because I constantly have to say, and I will always say it... People must recognise that politicians have a finite time in office; other people, public sector employees do not have any finite time; they have a career in office, and you cannot even get rid of them when they are bad. So that is the position.

I hope, too, that the Government will increasingly make use of these modern methods of financing some public sector projects and maybe Sir, they should publicize it, otherwise some of the people who are now going into this area of economics, like some of those who are now writing to the paper on economic matters that they will begin to understand that it is not so easy.

You see, these people who come from centrally planned positions would understand that when you are dealing now in a different area, an area which the central planners themselves have not been able to grasp judging from their performance, that this is an area which requires careful study. They must not get scared because the Government is incurring a fiscal deficit. The biggest business in Barbados is the Government, it will always be, and they must understand that there are some things that will never, ever happen unless the Government take the initiative in this country. So that is another area that I hope will really be pursued.

I talked about Agriculture and I have to talk now Sir, about the area of Tourism. But before I talk about that Sir, I understand Sir, that special attention was requested of the Press to analyse my role in respect of some Private Bill, or some document that is being circulated.

Firstly, I want to say this. I have no fear at all of any role that I have ever performed. About two and a half years ago, one of my good lawyer friends asked me about certain procedures in the House of Assembly for a Private Bill, because they have been promoting a Private Bill and they have had difficulty with the Clerk of the House, on the grounds that the Clerk was telling them that there was a procedure for a Private Bill. I told them of course. There was a procedure. I believe I saw three or four Private Bills promoted in Barbados in the course of my 30 years in politics. And, I rang up the Clerk and I said "Don't we have a special Private Bill procedure?" and he said "Yes." And he referred me to the Standing Orders and Honourable Members, particularly the younger ones should understand that you have to read the Standing Orders. You cannot be a Parliamentarian if you do not know the Standing Orders, although there are many who do not know them.

There is a whole procedure which begins at page 66 down to page 70 as to how a Private Bill is promoted. The essences of the rules are that you have to have what you call petitioners who must justify the Bill in a petition. The essence of the rules is that the Speaker is in control of it that it has to be advertised, that it goes to a Select Committee and that the Select Committee itself has to hear representation from every Member of the House as to whether they agree with it or not before it is passed. So therefore there are elaborate procedures in the rules of the House to ensure that people just cannot come into the House of Assembly and produce a Bill that affect private sector or public sector interest. So there is not a snowball chance that any Bill can be promoted in Barbados that will affect the fundamental rights of Barbadians in relation to beaches. I want to remind Honourable Members that it was the Barbados Labour Party from the 1940s which has been fighting this issue. The Barbados Labour Party acquired Accra Beach. Throughout Barbados, I, as Minister

of Tourism, had a map prepared of every public access to the beaches in the whole of Barbados and it was continuously monitored. 6.30 p.m.

I do not know what happened to it, but I know that when we came back into office and I told one of the younger Ministers that that map was there they said that when they asked the people they said they had never heard of it. They subsequently found it. I go on record as saying that it is the fundamental duty of the Government to monitor that continuously and where they feel - like what is going on on the west coast - that there is tremendous pressure taking place on the public access, they must go and acquire greater public access.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That was a foolish song. You know that. The man wanted to make a few dollars out of the emotional issue.

Bay Street in St. Michael. Under the Minister of Tourism we insisted at the Cabinet level that we acquire the site between where the old ice factory was, right up to Dr. Trieloff s place. My only disappointment is that the Democratic Labour Party when they were in office, after we got Dr. Trieloff s place for death duties because they did not want to pay the death duties and the Government took the property in lieu, that they did not lick down the buildings to expand it. They went and built a new building on it. Well, we cannot lick that down now.

The point ,is that the greatest window to the sea, the greatest beach access possible, an integral part of the Bridgetown Development Plan, is there in Bay Street and the Barbados Labour Party ensured that that land would come into public ownership to join with the Esplanade. I would like to see a development along there.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We do like Brazil. We have to develop the other side. You have the road and then you have the magnificent beach.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The Honourable Member is saying that I back him on Heywoods. I do not back him on Heywoods and I will tell you why. When we were planning Heywoods, over the resistance of the World Bank, we had a public right of way running from one end of Heywoods to the other. That is a fact. It was the only hotel that was a partial implementation of this concept because you had your hedge, your public pathway running over the whole alignment and then you had the beach.

You may have a different view, that you could surrender that and that you could build another parallel road and that you could have a big beach facility in there. That is the view taken by that Government. That is a fact. Therefore, I have no fear at all of anybody saying to me that it would be possible for them to say that I am a participant in any exercise to deny people beach access. Far from that, I have told young Ministers here that I am witnessing a situation taking place in other parts of Barbados, particularly in the Maxwell area and we have to be very careful that the few beach accesses that are there are preserved.

We took an old graveyard in Maxwell Coast Road, put in an access - what was then Parks and Beaches - between the Dover River and Manuelita so as to ensure that perpetually peo^ from Maxwell Hill, St. Lawrence and everywhere would be able to have access to the beach. I was born there. We had fights over those programmes years and years ago. So it is foolishness for anybody to say any Bill, private or public, can come in here and deny people access to the beach. Real foolishness!

It cannot be done and will not be done. If they are doing it without a Bill that is another matter. I know they cannot do it without a Bill. I know that no Bill is going to allow them that.

Sir, I just want to make the position clear that no private Bill can be passed without going through this procedure and it is an elaborate procedure.

I want to make it clear. I do not do law work for the House of Assembly. A Member of Parliament cannot be the lawyer for a Bill in the House of Assembly. That is a breach of privilege of the House. Don't you know that? A Member of Parliament cannot be a lawyer for the promoters of a Bill. That is one of the fundamental things on which you cannot compromise your position.

On the call-in programmes they have that foolishness. I do not bother with the call-in programmes.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. At no time did I make a presentation in this House to say that the Honourable Member was the lawyer. What I said was that that association expressed their gratitude to Sir Harold, Q.C., Member of Parliament, who has graciously agreed to introduce and sponsor the aforesaid private Bill in the House of Assembly.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am very glad that the Clerk reminded me. I have a document in my hand. Apparently Sir, this is the origin of it. In July 1989, correspondence took place with respect to... I was asked the procedure and I drew it to their attention because

they were having an argument with the Clerk and I said the Clerk was perfectly right. This is it here - July 9, 1989. It said:

"The covenants which governed..."

So it is a matter relating to the covenant in 1989 and the intervention of the Honourable Member was quite correct here because when I was asked I said that you had to have the support of Government and Opposition, because my experience was that you could never get a Bill as a Private Members' Bill in which the Government did not want to vote for it because the Opposition does not command a majority. So that is the position.

We have had Private Members' Bills in here. The Synod was promoted in a Private Member's Bill. I remember a Mr. Leroy Miller trying to get a Private Members' Bill through to deal with certain covenants on Maxwell Plantation introduced in here by the Hon. Philip Greaves.

At that time, when it was advertised and the objections came, he said that in view of the objections he was not prepared to proceed with it. The Honourable Members forget these things.

Sir, I just wanted to make it very clear that my position is clear that procedures that are set out in here. When I see the Bill and I look at it and if it is a Bill that I think is desirable I would promote it. What is wrong? Any Member of Parliament is entitled in his capacity. I want to make it clear that I am not scared of any criticism for promoting a Bill. I have promoted Bills on more than one occasion. I was in here when the late Tom Adams promoted a Private Members' Bill to reduce the age... I say this. No Bill can possibly be promoted by me that has anything to do with restricting people's access to the beach. Utter junk!

Now, Sir, the other point that we have and the last point that I want to make is that I feel that the efforts that are being made in the productive sector are valiant efforts, particularly in relation to the promotion of industry. I know that there is a theory on that side that industrial development has no future in Barbados. I believe that there may have to be shifts in impetus because we have to remember that many of those industries, like the those that we have today, the screwdriver industries - in today's paper you see a classic example, people selling television sets and saying that they are depending upon 70 percent duty. They are dependent for survival upon a 70% duty. In the context today of trade liberalisation that cannot make it. 6.40 p.m.

So therefore, I do not know whether you have been saying that you have to be expressing it so. So that is the position. What I say is that you have to be very selective and I am satisfied, having regard to the fact there are niches that you have to identify and to exploit, that there are still opportunities in Barbados.

So that I welcome the new initiative for expansion of the industrial estates, and I would conclude by saying that the divide in industrial policy is very clear. The Other Side never believed in giving the industry duty free entry of raw materials, we believe that is the correct policy. That is all I am saying, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I do not have time to explain as fully as the Honourable Member would obviously like, but the whole purpose, Sir, of introducing the Value Added Tax, was to produce that result. There may have been a time when duties were placed on the raw materials imported by manufacturers but the ultimate objective of the introduction of the Value Added Tax which your side normally credits to the Democratic Labour Party was the removal of duties on those inputs. That has always been our position. That was the ultimate objective of the tax reform.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is a good point for me to end because that illustrates the divide.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. Before the Honourable Member sits down could he explain to us how the success of the concessions and raw materials is manifested in a 1.7% drop in manufacturing?

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Well the Honourable Member must look at that 1.7% drop in the context of the great increase in what it was the year before. So you have a 20% increase and you have a 1.7% drop. That is how you must look at it. You must look at it that way. So therefore, Sir, the divide is very clear. Despite the introduction of Value Added Tax, our method of implementing the Value Added Tax is such that it is not inconsistent with giving duty free treatment for raw materials.

The only thing is this; that the agricultural industry has got the duty free is not reflected in the prices from the plantations and that is one of the quarrels we have to investigate. If you have duty free entry of inputs they should be able to absorb the 15%. That is the point, Sir. Thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Resolution. Sir, today we are talking essentially about allocation of resources,, We have

been talking from since last week, I believe, about allocation of resources. We are talking about interest of big business versus the interest of the small, poor, black man. I am happy to see, Sir, we are speaking one language on this matter. Sir, all of us who have had a history of having to struggle, those who were born with no gold spoon in our mouths would appreciate the role of the state in the allocation of resources; would appreciate the role of the state in the redistribution of wealth. I remember, Sir, when we did Economics, myself, the Honourable Member for St. James North and a few others, we were taught, Sir, when we did Public Finance that in developing countries the idea was to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor. We were taught, Sir, about progressive taxation, we were taught, Sir, about regressive taxation. We were also taught about proportional taxation.

In those days we held the view that regressive taxation was not the kind of thing which we wanted to pursue. I believe, Sir, that philosophy still obtains. At that time, Sir, we were also taught about the big six, we were taught about the big conglomerates, we were taught about multinationals, we were taught about their attitudes, and we all held a view then that under perfect competition their motive was one of profit, a heavy profit orientation, and that the state had to intervene in order to provide social service for those who did not have access to that kind of power, because of the birth from which they came.

Sir, after listening to this discussion, I think that we have gone full circle. When in those days we were just distributing along social welfare lines, and we went too far out to sea and we found ourselves in recessionary times. Then we went through a stage, Sir, when we had to redress the balance; and so draconian measures were imposed to bring things in balance.

Sir, we have gone through a stage where we felt that we needed to get the help of these big businesses. We have been generous towards them, but today, Sir, we are seeing a repeat of history where big business is saying to us we are not concerned about social implications. We are cpncerned about profits. That is what they are saying, Sir.

So therefore we have reached the stage again, Sir, where we have to say that the role of the state is to intervene, and the state has to realise that the state has a bounden duty to protect the interest of the average poor, black man who will never have the opportunity to sit in the boardrooms of the big business of this country. This is what this discussion is about today.

I was taught it, I believed it then, and I continue to believe it and I am happy to see the kinds of people in this House today who have shown that they have come full force around and they have to hold the view that big business is concerned about profit motives.

I am not saying that to say, Sir, that we should not cooperate with big business. We have cooperated with big business in the interest of the poor black man, but when big business begins to think that because they have the money they can do whatever they like, they have to understand that this is a number's game and that we are in the majority; and if we have to put pressure on them to do the right thing, we as a country will do it. We as poor black people will do it, and we as poor black people will do it, Sir. This is what the message is, loud and clear; that we will have to do whatever we have to do to protect the dignity of the people of this country.

I am not talking about race. I am talking about economics. I am talking about the economics of enfranchisement, of those people who have benefitted from free education, or those persons who have benefitted from the services under the Skills Programme, from the Vocational Programme, from all of these programmes this Government has put in place.

We are talking about giving these people a chance. When we can tell these people that they can invest, that they can buy shares in business and then be slapped in the face, Sir, I believe, Sir, that it is about time that we recognise that we have to put more regulatory measures in place in order to avoid the kind of situation that we are seeing today, Sir.

We are talking about allocation of resources. We have had a situation where a Member of Parliament complains that the resources are not being allocated in order to benefit his constituency, Sir. Sir, one would hear these kinds of things because Members of Parliament are expected by their constituencies to represent them to the extent that whatever they want they feel they can get, but all of us have to be reasonable, Sir. At the end of the day, allocation of resources remains a key issue in every constituency, in every region, in every parish.

I want to make a general point that deals with a point of principle. I believe that if the general populace must have a sense of fair play it must be seen and must appear to be that resources are being allocated fairly and proportionately, Sir. I am not saying, Sir, that there are not times when one has to redress imbalances, whether it is to redress from white to black, or whether it is to redress from south to north or north to south. If resources are being allocated to the north because in previous years they had been allocated to the south, I have no problem with that. But I believe one has to watch the balance. 6.50 p.m.

We are not saying that there does not come a time, for example, when the people in the rural areas, places like St. George South with all those bad roads and places like Bush Hall with all those bad roads, and in Belleplaine with all those broken down bridges and so on, we are not saying that one should not give a little weight to that side. There comes a time when you have to give a little weight to those sides.

Sir, I believe that if you are sharing a cake, I feel that while you might give certain members of the family a little bit more because one might be a little hungrier than the other, everybody should still get a little piece of the pie so that at least you feel a little comfortable in the stomach and you do not have any babies crying in the night. Everybody has to get a little piece of the action and feel they are getting a little piece.

What I am saying, Sir, is in terms of the allocation of resources. I am happy with what has gone on so far but I am saying equally as well that I believe it is time the people in the south get just a little piece more in the next year or so. This is all I am saying, so that, for example, I am hoping I will get my land acquisition in Inch Marlow. I am hoping I will get my roundabout at Lowlands and that the rural development programmes will be expedited in Christ Church and that we also get some natural gas in the area of Christ Church. We have the extension there where we can get some natural gas. I will not dwell on that, Sir, because I know that decision makers have a hard task in allocation.

Sir, I also want to deal with the issue of redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. We are speaking about the age of poverty. We are speaking about all these programmes for poverty. It seems to me as if the agencies that were supposed to look after poverty are non-existent. What is happening to the Welfare Department? What has happened to Community Development? What has happened to the National Assistance Board?

I am asking that, Sir, because I believe the answer, perhaps, lies in the focus. All of us understand the needs of the poor and we have all been asking for resources to be allocated to the poor. We have to get to the core of the problem. How are we going to distribute...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir I would like to draw to your attention that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is treating the Honourable Member for Christ Church East with utter contempt. He has asked a question. What has happened to the National Assistance Board? He could easily have got up on a point of elucidation.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not going to stand up here and allow you all to treat the back bench with such disrespect. It is total disrespect.

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, what we are looking at are the mechanisms for dealing with poverty. Funds have been there in the hands of various agencies but we need to look at the method of distribution. This is not a new idea because the Government has been carrying out a study to look at ways of dealing with the social services so that once this study has been completed, hopefully, we will not be looking at structures but we have to look at systems for helping the poor with the kind of facilities they need.

I think there is slowness, when we have to go through all this bureaucracy. I have heard it mentioned in here that perhaps we should go through parliamentarians. We should have committees set up. We should go back to local government, all these things we are hearing but I believe the answer lies in finding an efficient mechanism of dealing speedily with matters relating to the poor so that when I ask for light, for example, for a guy from Silver Sands, when I ask for a fellow who is incapacitated and he has to be in a house without light I should not have to go through all of these procedures. There should be somewhere where if it can be done, it can be done in the shortest possible space of time. One should not have to be spending one's time running all around and being sent from one agency to another and at the end of the day you have to go back around the full circle. There has to be some way to do that efficiently.

Sir, we are talking about the allocation of land. We are looking at land use policy. We are looking at the beach. What is our attitude to the beach? We all as a group believe, and we are totally of the view as we always have been, that the "beach belong to all ah we." I want any upstarts in this country who believe that we have become so open-minded in our cooperation, who would think that in the interest of a dollar that we would betray our people and we would deny them access to the beach, we want to let them know: "No way." It is preposterous to bring such a proposal to us. We in Barbados hold the view that "the beach belongs to all ah we" and the tourists understand that too. There are no private beaches in Barbados.

When we look at land use, when we talk about housing our people, we have a situation in Barbados where there are thousands of people who are looking for houses and housing units. Every day somebody is coming asking for house spots, asking for housing units and you would love dearly to give these people a house spot, you would love to give them a housing unit. You write letters,

you call up people and all that happens is that most of these people are being given the run around.

I believe these people in the National Housing must be the greatest diplomats in the world who could keep people running around for 5 years and 15 years, having them running up and down. That is foolishness. You have poor people coming down to National Housing week after week when they know they do not have a house. They know they do not have any land there. That is adding insult to injury. That is putting salt in the wounds of these poor people when they know they do not have it. You are fooling them and having them coming back to me confusing me.

Let the people know the truth. Tell the people if you have a house spot you are going to give them one, if you can give them one next week, next year or whatever. But it is unfair to have people going down to National Housing week after week and cannot get a house. The officers in that department must be the greatest diplomats in the world to have people coming down to them week after week after week with all different kinds of stories. I believe the answer lies in getting more land and I know we are working in that direction. Today I was asked to indicate if there is any land in my area so that there would be more house spots and more houses. I feel that we are making a great effort in that direction. I also believe that the agencies involved in these exercises have to find some way of dealing in a better way and in a speedier way with people instead of making mock sport at these people. It happens in too many departments. 7.00 p.m.

Sir, I mentioned earlier about distribution and wealth and re-distribution of wealth from the rich to the poor and somebody mentioned to me about VAT. Sir, it is true that back in the seventies when we did economics we would never have supported the VAT based on what we learnt. It is equally true, Sir, that in these modern times the world is going in such a way that the international big wigs have been recommending that a tax such as VAT is the one. This allows for a freer flow in the international markets since it leads to greater globalisation and all these big fancy things. In the old days back then we would say "no way".

Barbados is just a dot in the scheme of things and sometimes, Sir, we have to be guided by bigger powers. Sir, it is good to see that even though we have VAT, what we are looking at is to see how we can minimise the impact of VAT on the poor people. The view is held that on certain items you have a reduction but when it comes to food which is a recurring item, which therefore impacts on disposable income especially of the poor, one has to be careful. That is why the Prime Minister gave a package of benefits to the poor on December 31st. I have heard nobody talking about the package that the Prime Minister gave on December 31st.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is misleading the House, Sir. He is giving the impression that the incentives given were only given to the poor and that is not true. The rich will also get the increase in pension. Sorry, they have received increases also, so it can't be for the poor only.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am saying, Sir, that these Honourable Members seem to have forgotten about these package of benefits to the poor which were brought on December 31st. However, I believe that the Minister of Finance is well aware of the impact of VAT. He understand that with any new measure one has to be cautious. If you are going to do any marketing exercise, you do a model first. With most things you start to try it out first. The Prime Minister has indicated that he is allowing VAT a little time to see how it works. When he realises that he has enough revenue, I have the greatest confidence that he will do something to alleviate any burden that they might be on the poor while at the same time maintaining the social services like free education and a good health service and at the same time giving $10 million to alleviate poverty in this country. Can you want something better than that?

Sir, what we are saying is that in everything you have to give it a try first. This is a Government of order. The Government understands that it has to start at this position and then ease the squeeze rather than ease it now and then have to screw it tight later on. We believe that you start on good grounds like in an negotiation procedure and then you have latitude to deal with it in a way that creates goodwill. This is essentially what the challenge is about. It is not about VAT, it is facing the challenges of creating a system which allows a distribution of wealth, a distribution of resources so that the poor are not further impoverished in the future and at the same time being able to facilitate business in a way that more jobs can be created. I am sorry, Sir, that I did not have a chance to expand on job creation because at the end of the day everything hangs around job creation and I am of the view that the Ministry and Trade should be given a few more dollars if it is to play a great key role in job creation and in helping small business. I believe there is a case for the Ministry of Industry to have some more money in the move towards greater job creation through bringing more businesses to Barbados so that we all can have more riches flowing from the poor upwards.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, tomorrow morning we expect to start at 10 o'clock

and I would like to move that this House be suspended, not adjourned, until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. I am advised by the Clerk that Members should feel free to leave papers or documents and they will be perfectly secure here.

I beg to move that the House be suspended until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that. 7.10 p.m.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the following question:

Question No. 52: To ask the Minister of Health and Jie Environment: Will the Minister please state -

(a) the name of the principal contractor involved in the implementation of the South Coast Sewerage Project, and

(b) the names of all persons who tendered for the contract for the construction of the said sewerage project and the respective bidding price of each?

Question No. 53: To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister please state:

(a) whether each phase of the South Coast Sewerage Project was individually budgeted for,

(b) the budgeted cost of each phase of construction of the South Coast Sewerage Project,

(c) the actual cost of each phase completed, and

(d) the total cost of the said project to date?

Question No. 54: To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister please state -

(a) whether any study or report on the impact of the construction of the South Coast Sewerage Project and the residents and business houses in the immediate vicinity of the project has been done.

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative,

(1) the name or names of the person or persons carrying out the study or report,

(2) the date of the said study or report,

(3) the cost of the said study or report,

(4) if and when a study document or report will be made available to this Honourable House?

(c) the criteria, if any that were used in determining the location for the South Coast Sewerage Treatment Plant,

(d) how connections to business houses and residences to the South Coast Sewerage Project pipe system will be financed,

(e) whether the technique of micro tunnelling has been employed in the building operations of the South Coast Sewerage Project and if so in which areas has this technique been used?

Question No. 55: To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister please state:

(a) if an outflow pipe is part of the South Coast Sewerage treatment plant,

(b) if expert advice has been received on the length of outflow pipe at Needhams Point from the South Coast Sewerage Treatment Project

(c) if the answer to (a) and (b) is in the affirmative then,

(1) what was the length recommended

(2) is the length of the said outflow pipe in conformity with the recommendations and if not, why not,

(d) if a difference in the level of pollution of the discharge of the South Coast Sewerage Treatment Plant outfall point at Needhams Point from the discharge of the Bridgetown Sewerage treatment plant outfall pipe is projected?

(e) If the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, the reason for the difference in the level of pollution?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Question No. 56: Will the Minister please state:

(a) if there have been any changes in the approved design of the Greenland Landfill and if there are any changes, what are those changes?

(b) the capacity of the Greenland Landfill?

(c) if raw sewerage will be disposed of in the Greenland Landfill?

(d) whether an impact assessment study has been done in relation to the Greenland Landfill site and if so, does it identify the amount and impact of raw sewerage on the Greenland environment, and

(e) the estimated amount of raw sewerage to bedisposed of at the Greenland Landfill during its projected life span from the South Coast Sewerage Treatment plant?

Question No. 57: To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister please state -

(a) if any material is being excavated from the Greenland Landfill, the nature and type of such material, whether the said material is being transported to any other location and if so, where to, and

(b) if such material is being transported to any other location any financial arrangements which have been made for the said transportation or for storage or otherwise of the handling of the said material and what are the details of those financial arrangements?

The question that the House be now suspended until Tuesday, March 18, 1997 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 7.20 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I enter this debate at a time when we are dealing with projections. I want to say from the outset certain things about certain projections that have been made in this Assembly yesterday.

When one listens to the Prime Minister of Barbados, one gets the impression, Sir, that all the glorious things that he has spoken of, that they are so glorious that one cannot trace them. I want to say from the outset, Sir, that when one looks at the Estimates of this year one would easily realise that the revenue has not been projected to the true value of what we will receive in the country. I am saying from the outset that the revenue for the financial year 1997 to 1998 is going to be considerably higher than estimated by the Prime Minister of Barbados and that the expenditure in these Estimates is going to be much lower than estimated by the Prime Minister. One cannot fault him if he has adopted the policies normally adopted by accountants where you underestimate revenue and overestimate expenditure. I am glad that he has been a converted person and that he has been following the accounting trends and principles and he has now moved away from the economic trends and principles.

When one listened to the Prime Minister yesterday one got the impression that when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that goods and services had increased by over $100 million that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was lying to this Assembly. I am saying Sir, that if one looks at page 3 of the Estimates, one will see $476 700 000 in the approved Estimates 1996 for Goods and Services and when one looks at the Approved Estimates for 1997 one will see $591 million. That is not all, Sir, there is also what we would call a trickle down effect where in the incomes and profits, when one looks at the Approved Estimates for 1996/97 one will see $377 100 000. When one looks at the 1997/98 one will see $414 700 000.

It is clear, Sir, that because of VAT, the Prime Minister of Barbados will rake in over $100 million, and we are only using conservative figures, because we on this side and also some of them on that side would know that the revenue estimated in these Estimates have been underestimated. I am also saying that the Prime Minister of Barbados misled this House yesterday when he said that the actual intake, the receipts from VAT have been only $22 million. I am challenging him on this. I will tell you why, there are two reporting periods e.g. the people who paid for January...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Prime Minister clearly stated that VAT was showing receipts of $22 million per month. He never stated that it was the only amount taken.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You can try to convince some people but you will never be able to convince them. If there are two reporting periods and the ones who reported for the month of January have reported $22 million what happens to the people who have to report

report for January and February. There are people who still have to pay VAT for January and I challenge anyone to tell me that I am lying. Some have to pay January and February in the month of March. The Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot disown this. He would have to agree because I am saying that the collection so far might be $22 million ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. We can best understand why they had to fire the Honourable Member as the Financial Controller of the chicken industry. The estimates for VAT for the first three months ate set out in the Estimates of revenue at $68 million running at a rate of $22 million a month for the first three months, Mr. Speaker. $22 million a month! From yesterday, the Honourable Member is so insistent on talking foolishness in this House, Sir, and pandering to his foolish ego.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, the Honourable Member restrain yourself, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is set out in the Estimates. If he reads the Estimates he will see under the column Goods and Services - Value Added Tax revised Estimates 1996 to 1997, $68,800,000 that is the amount projected to be realised from the VAT for the period the 1st January to 31st March.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that the actual collections so far was $22 million and he said it in this Assembly yesterday. I am challenging him to bring answers to prove that I am lying.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I said nothing of the kind. I said that the VAT was yielding $22 million per month and if the Honourable Member wants to face a whole debate on his faulty hearing I would suggest that he sees a doctor to find out if he is hearing correctly.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member said just now that he said, that VAT was yielding, not estimated to yield, that it was yielding. So it means that he knows what it is yielding. It is not an estimate. I am saying that the only way he could know is from the reporting period the 21st February. If he wants to get up on a point of order, let him get up on a point of order again.

Let me get to the crux of the matter, Sir. The Prime Minister said in this Assembly yesterday that he could not zero-rate food because if he zero-rates food, Sir, that the poor people and the rich people would benefit from it. He gave concessions, he gave additional money to the pensioners and I want to find out if the rich people did not benefit from that too. Further, Sir, I want to turn to Roman 5 of the Estimates and tell me if this applies to rich or poor people. Under the Head 159 - Revised Estimates for 1996/97 - $7 500 000. Revised Estimates for 1997/98 - $50 000 under the Head-Taxes for Luxury Goods. Are you speaking about poor people. The Prime Minister has given those people, and we know, Sir, the ones who benefit from luxury goods...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member is speaking from a position of mass confusion. The Democratic Labour Party imposed a tax on luxury goods used by a wide cross section of the society. We have abolished the tax on luxury goods as part of the exercise of introducing the Value Added Tax. A large number of the commodities were just basic goods. I do not want to embarrass the other colleagues because there was even the attempt to treat deodorant as luxury goods in Barbados. If the Member does not understand what he is saying, let him ask people for help.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, lobster and shrimps, large refrigerators, deep freezers, are those the things that you expect poor people to buy? If the Prime Minister feels that because he can afford them that the poor people can afford them too, no problem.

I am saying, Sir, that in one stroke the Prime Minister gave the so-called people that he did not want to give benefits to $6 950 000 on luxury goods and that was not all, Sir. The surtax on imported goods that the rich had to pay, he removed it from $4,200 000 to $1 600 000 and you want to look after poor people, Sir? 10.15 a.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member knows not of what he speaks and is misleading the House. The Democratic Labour Party imposed a surcharge on goods that it removed from licences on the understanding that the surcharge which was set at 100% would have been reduced sequentially in order, and that we are in the process of reducing the surcharge on goods that were unlicensed. Under WTO rules, Mr. Speaker, you cannot use non-tariff barriers to protect your industry you have to convert it into tariffs and in many industries in the economic stabilisation period the Democratic Labour Party administration took goods from off licence and they imposed a 100% surcharge with the understanding that each year the surcharge would drop first from 100% to 75% to 50% and then it would be abolished. What is being reflected in the Estimates is the sequential reduction of the surcharge in compliance with the policy which the Democratic Labour Party itself put in

place. The notion therefore that we are doing something to support rich people is nonsense and if the Member, Sir, does not know what he is talking about he should have the humility to ask.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will only be guided by these Estimates and I am saying, Sir, that if the Prime Minister really wanted to help the poor people that the pensions and the concessions that he gave out, because there is the effect of VAT he would have done a Ways and Means study and he would have gone around to find out the poor people that really wanted an increase in pensions, but people in Sandy Lane received the same amount of money as the people in Josey Hill or in Checker Hall, people whom, in a sense, $10 meant nothing to receive the same increases as the people in Bush Hall or in St. Peter and he tells me about not knowing figures and admitting it in this House on more than one occasion, and has always accused me of being the financial controller of the sugar industry. Well I am the financial controller in here today and that is why I am going to deal with this today. You have given me the credit and I have accepted it, Sir. Today is the day.

I am saying, Sir, he said yesterday and on many occasions that VAT would have been revenue neutral. Hansard will prove me correct but you know, Sir, in about 5 different speeches one minute he is saying it would bring in less revenue and the next minute he is saying that if it brings in more what he would do and give him 9 months time. I am going to tell you, Mr. Prime Minister that the only MP in this House that will benefit from VAT is the Honourable Member for St. Michael East because he happens to be an undertaker and if one listens to the obituaries on mornings one would understand why VAT is causing so much havoc and the undertakers are the only ones who are gaining from the VAT.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter told the House yesterday that I said that VAT would bring in over $100 million and more. I have already told this Assembly, Sir, that in estimating revenue you are always conservative because you tend to under-estimate revenue and you tend to over-estimate expenditure. Any accounting firm in Barbados could tell you that. If that is not the policy you follow I feel sorry for you, that is why you cannot rely on your figures if you are going to do it like that. Sir, when one looks at the approved estimates of revenue for 1996 to 1997 the approved estimates were $1 264 602 634. When one looks at the approved estimates ...

Sir, I made an error there. I turned one page too many. When one looks at the approved estimates of revenue, I was quoting expenditure before, and I have already apologised to the House and that is why you have to apologise to the House for causing poor people in this country to suffer. One will see that the approved estimates for revenue happens to be $1 503 901. When one looks at the total receipts for 1997-98 one would see $1 641 269 591 and these are not my figures, these are figures on page 8 of the Estimates.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House the figure of $1 641 269 591, that is the expenditure that he calls receipts and if a Member of this House will call expenditure receipts, Sir, he is in a state of total confusion.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member has just done, he has told the House that page 8 of the Estimates that says total receipts is actually corrupt and wrong and if that is so, Sir, I am saying I cannot rely on the Estimates presented to this Assembly by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. Sir, if you look at page 8 the total receipts, I can only say what is printed in here, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I rise on a point of order. Government receipts reflect tax revenue plus borrowings, loans. If he reads page 8, Sir, he will see that total receipts are made up of revenue, foreign financing and domestic financing and total receipts must be equal to total expenditure. For the Member to come to say that the amount of $1.64 billion is the revenue is total confusion. If he does not understand what to say, Sir, ask a question. I am prepared if he asks a question to answer politely.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I said total receipts, I never said total revenue. If the Prime Minister has a problem in listening he should not blame me for that but I am saying, Sir, the Prime Minister knows that he has underestimated the revenue and if I am wrong I want him to get up on a point of order and say that I am lying to this Assembly. 10.25 a.m.

I challenge him, Sir, because, Sir, he would say that I am lying now and one year from now you would hear that the revenues of the Government were much higher than estimated. I sat in this Assembly and I have heard him on two occasions, telling this House that the total revenues were higher than he estimated. I have heard him even this year, he stated in here that even though, Sir, they came for supplementaries on top of supplementaries, they still had more money and how well the economy is doing.

We told them last year that he underestimated revenues and the evidence is here, Sir, Just like last year, Sir, we were told in here about a container load of

air-conditioners and as I sat in here, Sir, I doubted the statement and I said I would have waited until the Auditor General's report came, Sir. I have perused that whole report and I have seen nothing about any civil servant bringing a container load of air-conditioners at the Government's expense as was stated in this Assembly.

The records are here now, Sir. We can only deal with records. I am still looking for the page in the Auditor General's report that caused four men to be fired for a container load of air-conditioners.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: But, Mr. Speaker, time is longer than twine. People can make statements, they can challenge me as long as they like, but a year from now, we would know who was lying. I want to say something now, today.

I do not believe that concessions should be given to people because politicians want to pin-point people for votes and this attitude where you want to give grants because you know there is a list of people that you can go back to, because, they are old people and people in need, and tell them, "Look, when you were in need, I gave you a grant because of VAT and you should vote for me." I do not believe in that policy, Sir.

I believe that there should be a clear policy where you do not necessarily have to identify people, but this is a policy the Government is practising where they could identify people later on to get votes.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You can talk what you like. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I am not talking to you. I would never say that to you. There is an aside and you cannot hear the asides, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I never hear the asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, you never hear the asides, Sir, and the people speaking them never hear them either.

Mr. SPEAKER: You proceed, Sir, you proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: What I am saying Sir, that the Prime Minister in this Assembly said that the reserves are over $600 million and I want to stop here and pause, because the Prime Minister makes statements in here and feels because he is the Prime Minister he can get up in here and say anything and people have to accept it.

He said the reserves were over $600 million. Then, later in his speech he said that the merchants of Barbados, because of VAT, refused to import goods during a particular period of time and I sat and I listened to him.

It is obvious that if the merchants were scared because of VAT and they did not import the goods that the reserves of Barbados will have to be high. I am going to tell the Prime Minister that there comes a time in one's life when the merchants will have to start importing goods and that the reserves there were fictitious reserves because the true impact, as the importation of goods, is not shown in those figures.

A couple months from now when you see the drop in reserves, take it from me, you will see the drop in the reserves, and you know why, Sir, because the merchants would have gone back on a spending spree to rebuild their stocks. So much for that, I want to get to the meat of another matter.

I saw a headline today that somebody plans to block a sale. I do not know if it is true or not, but I will say that, I do not care who buys Almond Beach, it will remain in Barbados. I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that if people are about...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You cannot move the hotel plant, what is surprising about that? I forget. I cannot listen to you all. So talking about blocking a sale or something like that, Sir, might create a particular problem for this Assembly, Sir.

I am telling you Sir that when you see some people going on the road to destruction and you block it and the destruction comes, you will have to take the blame for the destruction. I am saying that it was a very good stroke by the Honourable Member for St. John when he decided to sell Heywoods to a local company.

I will repeat this, there were a lot of people who criticized him and I was surprised to hear, yesterday, a lot of them admitting that it was a good policy after in 1994 how they treated the issue, I was surprised to hear a lot of them. It is not his fault, if there are not people in the private sector who are competent enough to realise that you cannot sell off your flagship. I am saying that Almond Beach is the flagship of BS&T. What I said in 1994 about companies like BS&T, they have just proven me right. There are some people who can set up their own

destruction. I am saying, Sir, when one follows the trend that is going on in the world, one cannot understand how a company like BS&T can be selling off any project that has to do with tourism.

Two or three years from now when BS&T becomes like Plantations Limited, I would not like anybody in here to blame the Honourable Members on this side, so we are warning them now. We were proud to sell them because it was a local company. I want you to know that you are the Government now and you can decide whether a foreign company can own Almond Beach or not. It is not the Democratic Labour Party that can decide that. The Barbados Labour Party, you will have to decide that, even though I would advise them not to get involved in the squabble.

I would say, let the market trends continue, because at the end of the day when the Democratic Labour Party is given the Government again, the fall out from BS&T will be taken up by small businessmen in this country. I am saying, that we have always charged the private sector in this country of not doing anything to help economic enfranchisement. I am saying the sale of Almond Beach is helping the economic enfranchisement of small black businessmen. When the destruction comes, the only people you will have to rely on are those small black businessmen to pick up the slack. You take warning.

During the Special Development Areas debate, Sir, I said, and I will repeat it now, the Government's objectives were wrong. I believe they should have given the opportunity to most small businessmen to get involved in the small Special Development Areas Bill, but, they did not listen to me. The reason why I said it Sir, is because when the country is in a crisis, the small businessmen remain at home to keep the employment intact. But when it is in crisis the large businessmen can move their capital out of the country and, they ignored me, and that is why those large companies can set up businesses in areas where there are special incentives.

The small businessman who wants to set up an investment in Checker Hall where there will be a villa, a small hotel, he has no concessions. But a company like St. James Beach Club could go and buy Heywoods, because they have the capital. They know which area to go in and buy, but my poor people cannot do it because they do not have the capital to outbid anyone.

I heard people yesterday talking about the highest bidder has failed.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you, Sir. The policy of the highest bidder has failed this country. I was shocked to hear it coming from that side, because I have been preaching that in this Assembly all the time, Sir, where the Government has been selling out to the highest bidder. Now, their own Members are now realising that it is a bad policy. The converted, I say to you, you are welcome to rejoin the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I am also saying that the Special Development Areas cannot be only for Speightstown, St. Lawrence Gap, Bay Street and those areas, Sir, because there are areas in Barbados where poor people live and they have a right too, to have special concessions. If the Prime Minister feels that only rich people have a right to concession, he is wrong and I would keep pushing on behalf of poor people.

Mr. Speaker, it was me who talked about the pillars on Sandy Lane Road, it was me who talked about the private beach in Heywoods.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It was me, you could talk what you like and I am saying how I feel like saying it, "me" or "I" it is up to me. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that no one on that side said one word about it and that is why you are going to get proposals now coming from the Sandy Lane Group now that they have their Government in place and they can get whatever they like in here.

If a small man attempts to block his land, you can hear that a Minister is prepared to bring a Land Acquisition Bill in this House to make sure he is deprived of his land.

Do you remember the case at Flat Rock in St. George? But, can you tell me if we had any land acquisitions in this country to compulsorily acquire the land on Sandy Lane Road where a man puts pillars to stop poor people from parking to go to the beach. Is this an Assembly I must be part of, Sir? I say, No, bye bye.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD. Mr. Speaker a few years ago, I went into one of my favourite small book stores and I picked up a slim volume, browsed through it and then decided to part with my scarce cash and made the purchase. It was a book called the Road Less Travelled. I believe the writer was either a psychologist or someone in

the social sciences. I believe so, but I speak subject to correction. This volume subsequently made its way into this Chamber by way of a budgetary presentation by the Prime Minister of Barbados. 10.35 a.m.

He said he was going the road less travelled during that particular presentation. I am not sure whether the road was less travelled or riot because what I have noticed since then is more of the same thing. Today, I intend during this presentation of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to go the road less travelled.

If I am not unduly critical of the Government, if I do not send out any barbs against individual Members sitting over there, it is not only that I am not inclined so to do. I think it is more that at the time of Estimates, it is perhaps time that we shift our focus on to the fundamental problems facing our country and how as Members of Parliament, Members of this House of Assembly we can concentrate on the fundamentals in our country and the problems that we have to solve.

We cannot solve them by simply fighting each other turning a blind eye to the realities of the situation and hoping that out of a kind of competitive nihilism that we *can produce or extrude good for Barbados out of that situation.

I think we have to be realistic. I am noting that in this year's presentation if in no other the Prime Minister did seek to go a road less travelled. The more we listened to him the more we should have recognised the transition that is taking place to realise a recognition that the measures taken for the development of Barbados were sound measures and that the task which we face as legislators is to try to consolidate and build upon the foundation that has been laid.

The first thing that we have to recognise is that there is widespread dissatisfaction with how we are going about our business. Time was when during the Estimates both the public gallery and the official gallery used to be filled with persons who were generally interested in the discussion and those who had a special interest from their official point of view. It appears that they care for none of these things now and the more we shout the less interest is being shown.

I think the Estimates represent a crucial process in our democracy, in our enquiry into the policies, the processes and the projects that Government proposes for the good governance of Barbados and how the Opposition responds to those particulars.

The second point I wish to make is that the dissatisfaction to which I refer is one that is widespread now and will find not only a heartbeat but will find an echo of agreement among all MPs. I put you in a special category, Sir, because you are looked after in a special way.

All of us have dissatisfaction about how the money that we vote is allocated in the constituencies. What we are presented with for the year 1997 to 1998 calls for an estimated current revenue of $1.297 million and $1.6 billion in total expenditure for a deficit or excess of total expenditure over current revenue of $343.7 million.

Now the fundamental question is, how much of that money for 1997-98 or how much of the allocation in the current year has been spent across the constituencies of Barbados. I know there was a time when myself and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, my good friend, used to agree that we have to find a way of making a better allocation of the resources because we are elected as MPs, but we have no say in what goes on in our constituencies. We have no access to any discretionary spending in our constituencies.

I was also pleased to note the conversion of the Deputy Prime Minister a few weeks ago. I believe she made a similar point that there should be some funds available. 10.45 a.m.

Sir, I say this is the road less travelled, and it is time that during the Estimates we are asked to refer to the principle underlying the expenditures that we are dealing with and I think we should be concentrating more and more on that. Now we are told that these Estimates are a reflection of the policies of the Government, and we have now a governmental slogan of "Poverty Alleviation" as the key directing influence on the policies of the Government.

I agree, Sir, that poverty alleviation is a desirable goal and a desirable objective. No one can quarrel with the objective and goal of poverty alleviation, Sir, poverty reduction and some people even speak of poverty eradication. Sir, that is like motherhood. Everybody believes in that.

Asides.

Whether they are mothers themselves or expectant to be mothers or certainly they had or have mothers. So we agree with poverty alleviation just as we agree with motherhood. The question, Sir, is that what we have here is a very adroit and clever move. I do not have any hesitation in saying that and I will give praise where

praise is due. A very clever move, to construct an assailable bridgehead into the ramparts of democratic territory in Barbados, Sir.

Aside.

Let me explain, Sir, let me explain because sometimes our politics is not seen from these perspectives. The Government started out with the slogan 30,000 jobs, 30,000 jobs, Sir, 30,000 jobs.

Within the framework given, Sir, that was impossible of attainment, and there used to be some mathematical miscalculations as to what progress was being made in that particular regard, but realising that was impossible within the framework, it has been quietly dropped, Sir, quietly dropped, and the emphasis is now being placed on poverty alleviation.

I said it was a clever move, Sir, because nobody can fail with poverty alleviation. You only have to find one dilapidated house, with an old person sitting on a rock which is the step, very much in need of some support, and you come in with a little meals on wheels, with a few boards and nails, and galvanise sheets.

You correct that, you strengthen the house, you provide the food and you bring the cameras, and the journalists. This was the picture then, this is the picture now, and you have the policy working, poverty alleviation. If you do it in St. Peter, Sir, all the better, it has maximum demonstration effect but it does not deal with the overall situation throughout the country.

We all recognise, or should recognise that this is just the other side, the other side of the same coin. Because creating a lump sum, how much is it? $11, $10 million? Poverty alleviation, and the Minister responsible for that social sector should really hang his head in shame. He was also my good friend. He was very anxious to get into the Government, Sir. One day I was at Ilaro Court I heard my telephone ring.

Asides.

He would not even allow me to get out of the building, Sir. This was Mr. Cappie Greenidge calling Ilaro Court asking for Owen Arthur. I was answering the phone at Ilaro Court, you know. He was calling up there for Owen Arthur, Sir. 10.55 a.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member is not misleading the House. It is a fact. It did happen.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has said that you could not wait to get him out and you also called. Which one do you mean?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Let me pass on, Sir. I am ashamed, that we are providing in these Estimates a lump sum of money for poverty alleviation and the only note around that particular vote is that this sum is for the alleviation of poverty. It is a classic circumlocution.

The subprogramme is alleviation of poverty. Then the note is: "This sum is for the alleviation of poverty." "Circumlocution, Sir. More than that, Sir, it is not under the responsibility of the Minister who has major responsibilities for this area and you would expect that there is collective responsibility and that the Minister responsible should have the major share in this particular dispensation because it is the Minister who is deemed to have access to the professional personnel trained in social work, community affairs and related issues and that money is not there. It is somewhere else. Where are the economists and calculators and those in the dismal science who will deal with that?

Sir, there is nothing that I am going to hear from over there about increases in the vote. I am aware because I have read it and I am aware. The Minister tries, Sir, even though he turns up a little late for some functions but he tries and you can be sure that there is always an elegant speech there when he is there.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am saying that he has performed.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed orderly, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, he has tried and is trying but you cannot build blocks without the mortar. I sympathise with him, Sir.

Let me come back to the cleverness. I almost called it legerdemain, Sir, if I knew the meaning of the word, a kind of a sleight-of-hand.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The word "sleight-of-hand" being applied to a Minister who has introduced the Estimates cannot be parliamentary. It cannot be in my humble submission.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Yes, because he has referred to a particular vote under a particular Head so he must be referring to a Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I said I am going the road less travelled and I do not know how to send forth barbs and direct criticisms of my friends. I know how to take them but that is the situation. I said it was a clever manoeuvre, if my friend is taking objection, because in the end at this time we should really be concentrating on productivity and the creation of wealth in Barbados. What we are seeking to focus the minds of everyone on is distribution. I wish to warn that before we can distribute, we have to create. I am not satisfied that we are quite there yet where we should be as far as economics is concerned because whichever of the synoptic gospels it was, or at least two of them say: "The poor ye shall have always with you." That does not mean it is a static category because some people move in and some move out of the category. But that does not mean that we do not have to take the measures to try to alleviate and, if possible, eradicate poverty.

Sir, an unsuspecting Barbados may think that this now is a new thing but the Leader of the Opposition attended a conference in the early 1990s on Policy and the Social Sector. One of the main themes was the eradication or reduction of poverty. I myself was the representative, not only for Barbados, but of the Caribbean, on the 7th and 8th Replenishment of the Resources of the Inter-American Development Bank. One of the major policy-based themes of those replenishments was a thrust into the area of poverty reduction by the bank. 11.05 a.m.

Let us understand what is happening now. I believe after being very un-cooperative with our efforts in dealing with the Inter-American Development Bank and refusing to attend sonte of the functions organised, they are now trying to position themselves to benefit from the funds which our support help to put into the IADB for poverty alleviation. Sir, I realise time is pressing on but employment generation is a key factor. All of the macro-economic aspects still have to be put in place or still have to be developed in that particular area so I want to urge the Government to make sure that they continue to build on the solid foundations that have been made. I regret that I do not have time to develop that point a little more but I am just wetting your appetite, wait for the March issue of the Constituent and you will sea indepth discussions of these topics.

Sir, I hope that during these estimates we will be able to get on to the area of foreign policy because nothing seems to be going right in that area. We need some statement inside of this House, Sir, on the foreign policy area. We need it. I hope there will be a full debate on it, Sir. I sincerely hope that this Government does not cave in to the pressures of the United States on whatever it is, some rider something or another.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am not speaking about that, Sir, because I promised not to say anything on that subject because as a Member of Parliament we are into a major dispute, apparently, with United States and up to now this Government has not placed anything before the legislators on the question of a rider something or another.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There is no agreement. Trinidad has an agreement. Dominica has one. St. Lucia has one. Barbados has no agreement. A draft has been tendered but it is at the level of official. Can you bring a document to Parliament that you are still negotiating?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You can make a statement anytime on the position and you have not done that. If you want to wait until you have an agreement and then bring it to the rubber stampers it only indicates your view of Parliament. I am saying that it is wrong that you are in dispute.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. This is just what the United States Government would like to hear. That we are in here throwing these accusations across the floor at each other because you see in the newspapers or you hear that something has been reported on the television. Let us keep our heads in all of this. There is a negotiation process which is on the way at the technical level. This Government has not got anything to hide. This Minister has brought whatever is needed to be brought before this House and you better believe that any agreements will come before this House. Not at the negotiating stage, and that is where we are. We are not going to be railroaded by the U.S. Government and we will not be railroaded by the Opposition. So do not get up with speculation and a lot of foolishness for irresponsible reports to be going out of in here.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You want me to say that I have received information as a Member of Parliament on the proposed agreement. If anybody can say it, why can't I say it. There will be another time for these matters, Sir.

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

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: I had no real intention in speaking on this debate as it stands right now but Mr. Speaker, hearing the kind of statements and the accusations coming from the Other Side, I believe that since I am in here to represent the people of St. Michael West Central and the elected Member of Parliament that I should say something on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1950s the late Grantley Adams went through the length and breadth of this country and he put a case out there for the poor people of this country. Grantley Adams along with people like Mencea Cox and Ronald Mapp, Sir, walked the length and breadth of this country and fought for something that they believed in. Sir, it was very successful for those pedple. Today, I am proud to know that I can sit with the Barbados Labour Party as the elected Member and fight for the continuation of the things that Grantley Adams fought for. Today, Sir, I see it as a watershed for this country.

I sat in here yesterday and I heard the Rt. Hon Prime Minister of this country make a presentation in the Estimates and I can say that the Barbados Labour Party has yesterday declared war on poverty in this country. We should therefore come together as allies to make sure that we alleviate poverty in this country. I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South talking about a fund should be there to take care of the constituents and I am wondering what happened when they had the opportunity to do it why it was not done for the people of this country.

I have heard the Member for St. Lucy talking about vote catching and things for old people. If that is vote catching we intend to do a lot of it because we have to alleviate the problems that exist and that these poor people are faced with in this country. I intend to walk the length and breadth of this country and do anything that I can do to remove the poverty from the doorsteps of those people. If you want to call it vote catching, call it vote catching. At the end of the day, those people will be maintaining a higher standard of living. We have looked at the situation carefully and we are going to work on it.

I worked in a by-election campaign last year and when I saw what was happening in that constituency, one could not believe what they were seeing. The Prime Minister then said that he had to make sure that he would do everything legally in his power to make sure that that kind of poverty is removed from this country. 11.15 a.m.

I am glad to see, Sir, that the Members of this side are coming together to support the Minister responsible for Welfare. The problem did not start with the Minister, Sir. He did not bring the problem. He is doing what he can with these Estimates to remove the problem.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party, whenever they open their mouth they are always talking about poor black people as though the Members on this side are not black people also. I do not understand when people can use those words when they are about to capture votes from the poor people. All of a sudden they are the champion of the poor people and those on this side do not care anything about poor people.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I did not intend to speak but as we go along on the other heads and as the Estimates debate develops, Sir, I will make an intervention on the other parts that I want to make. I thank you.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, when I left the House yesterday I certainly left with the distinct impression that there was a large measure of agreement between the Opposition and the Government's main spokesman on the state of the economy, on the thrust of policies one can spell out from the Estimates and on the direction in which the country was going.

Indeed the Honourable Leader of the Opposition claimed, rather incorrectly, that we had adopted completely the policies of the stabilisation period, we had benefited from those policies and we had now entered into a period of consolidation and that therefore if there is any benefit to be gained it must be for the Democratic Labour Party.

He went on further to say that some of the policies which we are now pursuing, he must admit that they would have pursued them, but he may have argued about some of the methods but that the soundness of the policies were not in dispute. Then I think where he parted company is when he went on to say that if he is to believe the rhetoric then he must see the performance on the draft. Now that is the state of the debate as set out by the leaders in this debate.

Obviously overnight the Democratic Labour Party has taken a new guard and its guard today as enunciated so far by the former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, is that we should be concentrating on the creation of wealth and by bringing to the House the social measures which we are now bringing that-it is a clever manoeuvre clearly brought forth for political purposes.

I said *sotto voce* that this was an unworthy statement coming from the Right Honourable Member. Normally I expect him to be politically sagacious but I also expect him, Sir, to show balance in his judgement on these

matters. Surely one must admit that during the period of stabilisation, particularly those 3 drastic years, that the lack of economic growth in this country resulted in the aggravation of poverty and added to the numbers who went outside of the safety net.

I am going to repeat it, Sir. I do not speak in the rough pejorative language of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to grab headlines. Sometimes the statements which I make are ignored but in my view I do not care whether they are ignored by those whose duty it is to help educate the public, the point is that they are correct and they show some foresight and proper analysis of this country.

One has to say that the period 1991 particularly, starting as early as 1990 up to the period 1994, in fact only in the last year of the Democratic Labour Party did we receive any economic growth during those years. That was a very sad period for the poor of Barbados. It is nothing that we on this side can gloat about. It is nothing that the Democratic Labour Party would feel proud of. I am not accusing them of deliberately setting about to create poverty in Barbados but the reality of the position is that with the decline in our economic standards, this has an overall effect on worsening the degrees of poverty which existed in Barbados and it would be a ridiculous lack of understanding by the Minister of Economic Affairs if he did not choose the correct time when growth has shown some consistency to then address the problem which had worsened under the Democratic Labour Party.

Now, Sir, poverty in the Caribbean area ranges roughly from 38% of the population, ranging from a high, just an average, of 65% in Haiti to a low of 5% in the Bahamas. Barbados, the Bahamas, Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis are singled out as the countries that have the lowest percentage of poor and the worst degree of poverty.

Now, Sir, economic growth is fundamental to reducing poverty. Unless you have economic growth in a country you have not got the wherewithal to attack the social sectors nor have you got the wherewithal to increase what people put in their pockets. 11.25a.m.

The evidence has shown the countries in the Caribbean which have sustained growth rates and invested heavily in the social development, such as Barbados and the Bahamas and St. Kitts have relatively low levels of poverty.

Sir, we boasted for many years of our high human ethics and this is a correct boast. Obviously, if we are to continue on that path we have to show substantial economic growth.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South inferred that this Government is not attacking the problem of growth and this is a false charge.

The Prime Minister began his statement by pointing out that the economy grew at 4.5 percent last year, one of the highest growth rates in the Caribbean and a higher growth rate than was achieved through Germany. Relatively speaking, a higher growth than was achieved in the United States last year and people have to say, and it shows, that we are recovering after four years of consistent growth.

Therefore, if the economy is being stabilized, a Government could then use other measures to attack the real problem which exists and continue to exist in our community.

Sir, we politicians sell ourselves short. I have been in this House now for over 25 years, and I am not going to let it go home that Barbados is worse off today than it was 25 years ago. The Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party ^who ordinate the Government would have achieved nothing. It is folly to put that into the minds of people for short term political gain.

In fact, Barbados has made tremendous progress ever since the riots of 1937 when the Labour Party started the process of transferring to the people real power, political first and economic afterwards. That is when the process of elimination started. Today, if you go around Barbados and look at the indices of growth you will see it reflected in a higher standard of health care.

There are fewer children in Barbados dying prenatally or postnatally than occur anywhere else in the Caribbean. That is the indices of the standard of living and the reduction in poverty. There are more children in Barbadian schools and there are more school places in Barbados and a higher standard of literacy in Barbados than there are in any of the other countries of the Caribbean, including the very Bahamas which has a higher GDP than we have. That has been one of the instruments of eradicating poverty in Barbados.

There are better houses that exist today in Barbados in the mass of the population than existed 25 years ago. Although we have had, and still continue to have some really awful housing conditions for a minority of the people in the community, yet Barbados counts high, if you use that as some of the levels as to whether we are attacking the problem of poverty.

Now, Sir, in one of the Central Bank's report a year ago, one of the leading West Indian professors wrote an article and I am sure, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West will probably have it at his hand there. Nobody can gainsay, and this is a fact, in which he says why Barbados had done much better than Jamaica and Guyana is that the successive Governments spent a high proportion of their resources on education and health. This has made a tremendous difference to us.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE. I would tell you why there is a big hullabaloo and that is why I said I thought there was a measure of agreement. Mistakenly, there are some people in the Democratic Labour Party's inner Councils who believe that an election is shortly around the corner. There is another Member of the House who is in the NDP who will engineer one if he can. He is always out shopping for Members as the Democratic Labour Party so well recognised when he shot himself over there as the Leader of the Opposition, in the foot and ended with one, just himself, leading a Party. So we have that sort of situation.

All of a sudden you have people, even in my constituency canvassing house to house, Sir, saying they are going for an election.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I heard the Honourable Member say, and presumably alluding to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who is not in his seat, that the Honourable Member had engineered himself into being Leader of the Opposition, Sir. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is well known, Sir, that the Honourable Member, who is now speaking, was Leader of the Opposition and for reasons which are known only to himself, gave it up to the Honourable Member of St. Michael South Central. It does not now fall well from his mouth to give the impression that the Honourable Member from St. Michael South Central, who is on record of saying he did not wish to be Leader of the Opposition, engineered it. I think that would be improper.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: This point of order is untrue. It is unworthy of the Honourable Member to make that statement, because the Honourable Member said I gave up the Leadership of the Opposition. The Honourable Member must realise that, unfortunately, the Constitution of Barbados allows people to cross the floors. It has happened with the Democratic Labour Party after the back street abortion speech where there was a desertion of members and at one time it was even being canvassed whether the Honourable Member would have joined with the Honourable Member of St. Michael South Central. Well Sir, he listened to my counsel and he stayed where he was, in the Democratic Labour Party.

If he had listened to my other counsel, he might be leading the Democratic Labour Party today, but he was not trustworthy, Sir, that was the problem. He is not going to put me off the point, Sir. The point remains that some members of the Democratic Labour Party feel that there may be an election in the air, and as for the Member for St. Michael South Central, time is running out so he is fast, fast creating the type of climate that he believes would result in an election in Barbados.

I said the empirical fact was, for instance the chap who ran against me, I do not even recall his name, is going from house to house and telling people that he is coming about the election. He expects an election soon. I do not know for what reasons. He must have some plans or he has some forecast that I am not going to be in this House for sometime that I am going to die, or something of the sort, Sir. I can tell him that I am in extremely good health and I have no intention of leaving this House for sometime to come, so he could well believe that is so, Sir.

Sir, it is obvious that at this time, if the economy is growing that the Government will have to start allocating resources to deal with the problems that arose out of the period of adjustment.

Now Sir, what does poverty result from? There are several causes for poverty. Last week I said that one of the causes is unemployment. Sir, during that period, the last three years the Democratic Labour Party ruled, unemployment in this country soared, so that was a direct creation of poverty. If people are not earning wages, and if they are out of work, then they have nothing to spend and they cannot look after their basic needs. One has to acknowledge that. The Government has since been able to get unemployment to decrease. That is one of the measures being used to attack the problem of poverty in the country.

Poverty results, Sir, from bad housing conditions. The figures clearly show, under the last three years the Democratic Labour Party's rule, a low construction of public housing for those most in need and we saw the problem of homelessness beginning to assume a proportion that is worrying in this country. Let me say this, Sir, there is not a widespread amount of homelessness as some people think. Yes, we have a percentage of homelessness, but it is not as widespread as is being advertised. What we do have, and particularly in the urban areas of Barbados is some substandard housing. That has resulted among other things from our failure in successive governments to tackle in a meaningful way the question of urban renewal.

I hear some attempt to draw the Honourable Member for the City into this debate, but one of the things that they must say of the Honourable Member for the City is that any attempt at providing low income housing for the poorest in this community, and improving the housing conditions occurred during her tenure and at her insistence, when we were the Barbados Labour Party Government. 11.35a.m.

Go and look at Kensington Lodge or come up town and look at Pondside and look at the other measures that we have!

They do not like to hear facts, Sir. People would like me to get up in the House and use pejorative language and go with all of their rhetoric of the poor black people, poor white people etc. etc. and all those sorts of statements; but if you get down to hard facts and the basic issues in this countr>% they do not want to hear that.

Sure, we have poor black people in Barbados and sure we have poor white people in Barbados as well and poor brown people in Barbados. We have a duty as Members of Parliament to remove that poverty wherever it exists.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Honourable Member is talking about poor white people. There are no poor white people in Barbados. Do not try to equate any poor white people. Do you think two people in St. John barefoot are poor white people?

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I had credited the Honourable Member with some common sense. I must now withdraw that. I must put him on the debit side, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member credits me with no common sense because I said there are no poor white people in Barbados.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member again gets up and talks foolishness in this House. If he understands... I will take back the word "foolishness." He misleads the House, Sir.

The Honourable Member hardly goes into the constituency of the parish of St. John or indeed he does not go into the pockets of the constituency I represent or pockets of other constituencies in which poverty has no colour. Poverty has class in that it divides us into classes but even within our own country poverty has no colour.

The Honourable Member gets down that lonely road, I will ignore him, Sir, We have a matter of urgency to attack the poverty where it exists. I believe it is unfair to the Minister for Labour, Community Development and Sports for Members on the other side to try to single him out for criticism, for the simple reason that one cannot judge his performance as to whether the National Assistance Board met or not. He can give the figures when he gets up.

Under his Ministry in the last year more was done for a larger number of poor persons than was done in the last 3 years of the Democratic Labour Party. Give them the facts when you get up! Do not let them get away in this House or anywhere else with nearly pejorative language! Deal with it!

Whether it was in making available to poor people assistance to pay for electricity rates, assistance with clothing, assistance with water rates, assistance with spectacles and dentures and assistance with home help, an increase in the amount given by way of maintenance grants, increase in the pension amounts in all of those fields this Government, under that Minister, performed better last year than the Democratic Labour Party performed in its last 3 years.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. It is not normal of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to mislead this House but he has misled this House because I cannot believe that he would say that poor people and poor old people have been treated better under this Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order? Could you make your point of order, please?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House because he is claiming that everything that the poor people have been complaining of has been solved; and it is not true, because the poor old man in Half Moon Fort with the mahogany tree on top his roof for $2V_2$ years whom I wrote the National Assistance Board about still has the same problem.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, I love to hear the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speak, because he provides me with comic relief.

I do not want to waste the House's time because I can say that there are several cases. Let me give you instances. You know how easily we forget. Since the change of Government we have increased the weekly allowances payable to those who fall into the category of the poor in this country, not once but twice.

The weekly rate for children under 16 from April to December last year was $12. From January this year it is $25. What are the number of recipients? 4997.

The weekly rate for children over 16 years - $15 up to December last year. $28 from January this year. The number of recipients 397. The maximum rate for disabled persons - $120 in December last year. It was less under the Democratic Labour Party, $33 from January 1997 and the number of persons benefiting more than at any other time - 1425.

I am only giving some of these facts but the Minister must give the facts.

We are not saying that we have found the solution to every case that is bad in this country. My own constituency of Christ Church West will have cases that we have to deal with, but it is a mistake to come in the House and give the people of Barbados the impression that the intent of the Barbados Labour Party is to play politics with the serious conditions that we have to be serious about. The Barbados Labour Party has always as a democratic socialist party attacked poverty at its roots wherever we can. We have attacked it throughout the whole island.

Again, even the smacking of a bit of economic sense and the Honourable Member claims that he has done accountancy will tell him that on the macro side that if you attack macro problems and achieve growth that you are attacking that problem.

I listened to the Rt. Honourable Errol Barrow in here who represented a constituency for 27 plus years, the constituency of St. John. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition now represents that constituency and you heard him. He took up the lead after the Rt. Honourable Errol Barrow died and you heard him talking despite the fact that the Rt. Honourable Errol Barrow was the Prime Minister of the country and the main allocator of the resources you heard him talk in this House of the difficult conditions that he has in St. John. Three hundred old people he said he has. 11.45 a.m.

St. John had some of the worst conditions under the Democratic Labour Party. What is the Honourable Member talking about? I have been in this House when I appealed to the Democratic Labour Party, for instance, to construct a new housing area at Bonnetts because 54% of the people in that area had no basic utility of water, light, or anything of the sort, when I first came in the House.

The then leader of the Government, the Rt. Hon. Errol Barrow, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, told me I could talk as much as I like, that he will not be doing anything until he says it must be done, and we had to wait until there was a change of Government in order to attack the problems in Bonnetts.

The Members must remember these things, Sir. I am against that approach to politics. I have always been against that approach to politics, because Barbados is too small that if we are to be a homogenous community, we must make sure that we deal with the problems regardless of the person's politics, regardless of the person's colour, regardless of the person's race, regardless of the person's creed, regardless of the person's sex and regardless of the person's political loyalty.

That has always been the stance I have taken on this matter and it is a stance which has guided the Barbados Labour Party in its approach to solving the problems of this country, Sir. So when I hear the Members today wanting to cast aspersion I must speak out against that, Sir.

Sir, it is not true that the Minister of Social Services has been deprived of the resources and that they have gone elsewhere. If we look at the Estimates of revenue, we will see, Sir, that there has been a substantial increase in the votes available to deal with aspects of poverty in the country, whether it is in welfare grants, I am not by any way condoning a statutory board not functioning properly.

None of us will condone that. The Minister has not condoned it because he has now fired the Board. He has fired the Board. He had the guts to do more than the Democratic Labour Party used to do when they had problems in their position, Sir. He has fired the Board.

If you look at the Estimates, Sir, you will see, Sir, that transfers are now 155% increase, transfers to individuals, transfers to subsidies, 65.75% increase. So there is really a genuine attempt on the part of this Government to solve the problem. I look forward to the day when we do not see a dilapidated house with old citizens, decrepit, and suffering, and people using the picture in order to make capital out of it. I do not want to see that, Sir.

I was brought up by a lady who was in the forefront of alleviating poverty when she introduced hot meals to the school, when she helped the children, the late Madam Elise Ifill Barrow. Embedded in my system then, is a genuine appreciation of how to deal with the poor. I was born in a poor home, as many of us in this House were born.

We have not allowed our conditions, and our parents did not allow our conditions to prevent us from rising

above that state of poverty. We have to provide the opportunity, as legislators, to make sure that people rise above that state, and we must never exploit the state for short-term political gain; because in the long run it is unchristian and it is unworthy of us, Sir.

I therefore commend the Government for trying to make a genuine effort, a genuine effort to deal with this problem. I appeal to the people of Barbados first not to misuse the resources. There are some who will misuse resources and secondly, there are many of us in the community who need to have a social conscience and instead of wanting to grab, particularly the special interest groups in this country, instead of merely grabbing for themselves, they must understand that they too, have to share, because otherwise the country will not progress but will retrogress.

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: It is impossible to consider the Estimates before us without simultaneously considering the economy, and talking about the economy, Mr. Speaker, I was amazed yesterday to have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central say that the economy had become so strong and had performed so exceptionally strong, that he would have to turn to other political strategies by which he could try to unseat this administration.

He came close, Mr. Speaker to describing the Estimates this year as the first stage in the re-election campaign bid of this great party of ours. He was at pains, Mr. Speaker, to say that the economy was sound, that the national performance of all the indicators in the economy have been doing well, and that he had very much hoped that the day would have come when the type of economic performance which we now see in Barbados would have been recorded. Talking about the state, Mr. Speaker, our economy as it is today and I shall be presenting evidence and some documents during the course of my contribution.

We witnessed a situation now, Mr. Speaker, where the foreign reserves of this country are at a record high, meaning of course, Mr. Speaker, that in a situation where all the major economists in Barbados normally urge that we should have three months'reserves, we have doubled that to a degree, Mr. Speaker, where even though economists in Barbados would say that three months' reserves are good enough, we now have six months' reserves, meaning of course, that we are in a position to service the foreign debt component of our national debt, meaning too, Mr. Speaker, that our currency is in good health, and meaning of course, Mr. Speaker, that the type of confidence that Barbadians have wanted to experience and to manifest in the economy is now here with us.

We have a situation too, Mr. Speaker, where the first time in a decade we have seen unemployment fall to below 15%, in a situation, Mr. Speaker, where, at the same time we are seeing incremental increases in investment. If you permit me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that these incremental increases in investment are for the national good, from the point of view that the increased investment is going to impact positively on the total national income, at the same time creating employment, at the same time producing a spin-off effect for our revenues, because as new investment comes inevitably Government derives revenue out of it, and in the long run so long as such investment is informed by an export driven component, which it is, our foreign reserves should do even better.

I recall, though, Mr. Speaker, reading on the weekend that some political agitator, who is not a Member of this House, who hangs around the City of Bridgetown, and who may never ever be a Member of this House, certainly not in my lifetime, was lamenting the level of the national debt.

Mr. Speaker, it is often necessary, when debating the question of the national debt, first of all, to see what its magnitude is, then to see what potential it bears for the rest of the health of the economy, and what the wider implications about the national debt are.

There are economists, Mr. Speaker, who have presumed that up to 7% budgetary deficit of GDP is workable. The deficit that we have, Mr. Speaker, is much less than 7%. It is a workable 3%, and the debt situation of Barbados is where the Government is in a position to adequately service this debt, in fact, even has room if it wanted to, to attract further debt because, unlike the period 1991-1993, Barbados is now credit worthy again. Barbados had reached a point, Mr. Speaker, between 1991 and 1993, when we had lost our credit worthiness and have had to turn to the International Monetary Fund to rescue us.

I recall people in the Central Bank between 1992 and 1993 being so nervous as to indicate that the desirable level of reserves that this country should have, had fallen so dramatically, that the future of this country had been in doubt, and we therefore had to turn to the lender of last resort, for embattled Governments as we did under the previous Democratic Labour Party administration.

I listened, Mr. Speaker, to the contribution of the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South. The Rt. Honourable Member, the last time he presented a financial statement and budgetary proposals in this House before dismissing himself as Financial Minister and handing

over to a junior, actually brought something called structural adjustment mitigation. 11.55 a.m.

No Honourable Member who was in this House between 1993 and 1994 would forget that the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South brought something in here called Structural Adjustment Mitigation. It was a nebulous idea. Even if it was designed to address the question of poverty, it did not. So what did we have? We had the spectre of poverty, to which I will advert later on in my address, still lingering in Barbados.

We had a situation, Mr. Speaker, where, if you will permit me, I shall turn to the Central Bank Report where the Central Bank is saying that where economic activity grew by an estimated 5.2 per cent during the first half of 1996 compared to an increase of 1 per cent in the corresponding period in 1995. It goes on to say that a recovery in sugar output and vibrant growth in tourism provided the main impetus for the improved performance but there was also sustained increase in activity in the non-trading sectors of the economy.

It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that tourism output expanded by an estimated 5.8 per cent especially between January and June, 1996. Indications are that this report is not only accurate, which I accept it to be, but that this report is saying that up until recently, indeed, up until now, the economy is very much on a sound track.

It mentions at page 2 under Agriculture that sugar production grew by 53.5 per cent to reach 59 100 tonnes compared to 38 500 tonnes for the last year. It says that this performance reflects the general recovery in the economy.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, to paint a good picture of the economy mentioning too that construction activity in the economy has returned. There are those in Barbados who believe that once construction is going well in an economy that the heightened activity in construction is always a sign that the economy is working and going properly.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of this debate so far, I have heard Members refer to the role of the State in addressing the question of the disadvantaged. I have heard reference to all types of roles that the State is supposed to play.

I remember a philosopher called Nozick, not a good philosopher, who said that there should be something called minimal Government and who said that beyond regulation, Governments should stay out of the economy. Naturally, Mr. Speaker, I disagree strenuously with Nozick because in any economy coining out of a colonial experience the State does have a role to play, particularly in the question of addressing the plight...

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: This man Nozick was saying, Mr. Speaker, that Government should play a minimal role. He believed in total and complete *laissez-faire.* I am saying that any society coming out of a colonial experience, a society that is a reasonably young society, certainly a young nation that has had a history of disadvantage facing several of its members, is a society that will have to empower and enable the State to address the plight of the poor.

I want, Mr. Speaker, with your permission to look at this whole issue of poverty and I want to look at it properly. I have come across instances in the literature where people say it is extremely hard to define poverty. Certainly all of us when we see poverty understand and know what it is. In terms of an academic definition, everybody says it is hard to define poverty and it is hard to pick up the true measures of poverty. However, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this. Recently a World Bank Report said that no fewer than 25 000 in Barbados are really, really very poor.

I am now going to turn to a piece of literature, Mr. Speaker, which will show this Honourable House, especially since it is composed of politicians, what poverty really brings in its wake, what trail follows poverty. Mr. Speaker, I am looking at Oscar Lewis, a famous anthropologist who addressed the question of poverty. I want all politicians in this Honourable House, and even journalists to note what Lewis has said about poverty and the culture of poverty. He said:

> "On the individual level, the major characteristics of poverty are a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependence and inferiority, a strong present-time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification, a sense of resignation and fatalism."

He said:

> "On the family level, life is characterized by free union or consensual marriages, a relatively high incidence in the abandonment of mothers and children..."

No doubt the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is going to address that.

"... a trend towards mother-centred families and a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives. There are high rates of divorce and desertion by the male family head resulting in matriarchal families headed by women.

On the community level, the lack of effective participation and integration in the major institutions of the larger society."

Mr. Speaker, this is what the culture of poverty does and can do to a people. In these Estimates here, the Right Honourable Prime Minister in his wisdom, supported by all of us on this side, has decided that the time had come to produce a virulent attack on poverty. As he said so and as the programmes to take place will be implemented, I must never forget the Democratic Labour Party saying that they, in the height of the structural adjustment programme were going to mitigate poverty or soften its effects on the poor in the community.

I will never forget that because even as the Democratic Labour Party said they were going to mitigate the harshness of the structural adjustment programme, what they went on to do after having made that declaration it was quite clear that the whole business of poverty was never properly addressed. So much so that we today in this great Barbados Labour Party administration are left with the responsibility of dealing with this problem of ensuring that those who are marginalised and those who feel helpless in this community are given an opportunity to live properly, to fulfil themselves and to be able to make some progress in life.

Of interest too, Mr. Speaker, is that the said Central Bank Report from which I quoted earlier also has something on poverty. At page 45, and if it is not yet a document of this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, I am going to make it a document of this Honourable House. At page 45 in the Central Bank Report from which I quoted earlier, under the head "Poverty and Inequality" - A Review by Samuel A. Morley, Poverty and Inequality in Latin America, The Impact of Adjustment and Poverty in the 1980s written by Roland C. Craigwell, Morley begins by comparing the macro economic performances of the main Latin American countries and the policies these countries pursue. He notes that the 1980s was a development disaster for Latin America. Overall GDP *per capita* fell by 10 per cent.

Morley goes on to say that "the decades of the 1980s for Latin America and parts of the Caribbean was a disaster decade as a result of structural adjustment policies."

, also on page 45, Mr. Speaker, Morley notes that "a general consensus is that tempered poverty alleviation through income transfers or subsidies is not a viable long-run strategy for poverty reduction because most countries are not wealthy enough to afford it."

He goes on to say that what we need is to make as much as possible out of sectors where there are labour intensive industries that have a potential for absorbing a high proportion of the votes. 12.05 p.m.

Having spoken, about this thing about poverty perhaps I can mention that as far back as 1991 at page 40 of the Barbados Labour Party manifesto of 1991 - a manifesto issued during a campaign where we in this great party offered the public of Barbados programmes to address poverty. At page 40 we promised electricity and water toilet system in every home. We did not win the 1991 election, Mr. Speaker, but since 1994 in my rural development commission, we have identified persons who are poor, persons who are old age pensioners, persons who are handicapped, single women with huge families whose sanitation facilities at their houses are substandard and we have started a programme by which we are giving effect to that manifesto pledge to which I referred earlier.

We are also, Mr. Speaker, promoting a measure of self-reliance in the rural development programme by making available capital for persons who would otherwise have been unemployed, and would have been turned down by commercial banks in Barbados, to set up small businesses and in instances where they want in excess of $25 000 they have to give an undertaking to employ at least one person. We are doing this, Mr. Speaker, to assist the poor to live better and also making business people out of people who would otherwise have been unemployed. We are doing our best to make sure that the human resource potential of Barbados is developed and that in consequence, economic activity will be encouraged and persons who otherwise may have been marginalised are given an opportunity to live in their country.

I want at this point, Mr. Speaker, to also mention that when one looks at these Estimates of expenditure one would note an increased allocation for training and for educational activity. No doubt the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will say that the Estimates of expenditure go a long way to promoting greater training for Barbadians.

I am only mentioning about training for the reason that out of our first post colonial post slavery experience we have had a system of society and education in Barbados where a large number of persons remain lacking in skills. Any political administration, not just this one which is going to be given the responsibility for running the

affairs of this country for the next 25 years is going to have to address this question of large numbers of persons being unskilled.

I am saying that what we are doing in these Estimates this year, Mr. Speaker is providing more money for training so that people who would otherwise, have been unskilled get an opportunity to absorb training to become skilled and be able to compete on the labour force.

There are increases in resources for training. In addition, Mr. Speaker, generally speaking, the whole tone and quantum of money in the Estimates suggest that there are increases in human resources and allocations. We are looking at the rationalisation of the social services and the Government is looking at the whole question of the delivery of the social services to see how that delivery can be improved and to see how those in need of special help can get more help and how the delivery of that help can be improved.

Getting back, Mr. Speaker, to certain aspects of the Ministry for which I am responsible, we expect that later this year, no later than July that work would start at the Cheapside Market, a market to be funded by a measure of counterpart financing out of this year's Estimates as well as some Chinese finances. We are looking too, Mr. Speaker, to continue to do our best for the Scotland District area. This is a very sensitive area and in recent times the effects of the elements have been so severe that we had a situation where we are forced to pay more close attention to the Scotland District than ever before. In fact, recently to stave off a veritable emergency in the Scotland District we had to seek supplementary funding and places like Bruce Vale and Spring Vale have been given some attention and we expect, Mr. Speaker, that during the next financial year we are not only going to spend money to preserve the Scotland District but we are also going to set about to make sure that the economic components of the Scotland District programmes namely, the question of preservation of the soil will be so conducted as to increase farming of vegetable and fruit and flowers.

We believe that the Scotland District also bears enormous potential for eco-tourism and I believe that one or two people have shown an interest in developing eco-tourism in the Scotland District. Similarly, I am aware of a proposal in respect of the Scotland District where there is a group being urged on by Professor Oliver Headley which is going to be seeking special incentives to develop a project along the East Coast which is going to impact positively on energy, put young people to work and give young blacks a chance to be able to run their businesses. I believe they are about to make an approach to the Ministry of Finance to apply for the special development concessions that this enlightened administration has introduced.

Mr. Speaker, we also in the Ministry continued our direct assistance to farmers. Recently a co-operative of small farmers out of the St. Andrew District has been formed and has been getting ready to produce agricultural commodities in the Scotland District. I expect that very shortly they shall be receiving substantial assistance like other fanners in getting their production activities going.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on certain observations made by the Honourable Member for St. John. The Honourable Member for St. John at no time yesterday criticised the Estimates, at no time said that the Estimates were not addressing issues, at no time said that the Estimates were burdening the poor and increasing the coffers of the rich or that the Estimates left out fundamental allocation, but he went on to spend a lot of his time looking at the Auditor General's Report.

Mr. Speaker, this thing called ministerial responsibility is an interesting thing. Very often what comes to a Minister is very much determined by what the civil servants determine should come before the Minister. Mr. Speaker, I will be honest with you. Never, ever have any audit queries ever come to me or been addressed to me. Secondly, I am not the Accounting Officer and even though I am going to go on and say something that is going to suggest that I am about to ensure that proper systems are put in place. Even when the draft Auditor General's Report came to the Ministry, it was not shown to me. Very often there are files that come to a Ministry that a Minister just does not see. I am not saying that if there is misbehaviour and misconduct among public officers, it should be condoned. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is this. When it comes to the question of financial management, government departments do not receive the best possible financial management. What I have done, Mr. Speaker, since the Auditor General's Report is to inform the Permanent Secretary to stay on top of the situation to ensure that when a query comes, that it is answered properly and to ensure that there is no abuse.

I have actually told the Permanent Secretary repeatedly to ensure that on the question of contentious matters that he himself should take responsibility for following through what is happening with them and making sure that every rule is properly observed. 12.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that things have happened, yes, that were completely outside my knowledge but in my responsibility I have asked the current Permanent

Secretary to ensure that such things do not happen again. I remember the first time I saw an audit query in my life I asked the then Permanent Secretary about it and his words to me were, do not mind the foolish Auditor General he says that every year. Mr. Speaker, I am giving the House the undertaking that much as the whole concept of ministerial responsibility suggests that a Minister should be aware of everything, I have decided to tell the existing Permanent Secretary to ensure that he does his utmost to make sure that we do not get problems such as what were referred to by the Honourable Member for St. John, recurring again.

Mr. Speaker, with these observations I am indebted to you. Thank you very much.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the real thrust of these Estimates is in the direction of poverty alleviation. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that in these Estimates I can see increased resources for the social services. Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency where there are lots and lots of poor people and very poor people. Mr. Speaker, I can safely say without any fear of contradiction that very often it is poverty that is actually hampering many of those poor people from attaining their full potential as human beings.

I think it is virtually unfair, Mr. Speaker, that certain people are not allowed to reach their maximum simply because they have been born poor and we allow them to remain in that condition and we never try to help them.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I recall that during the first time that I was campaigning I came across a young girl who has a fantastic brain, very, very bright young lady and doing her CXC's and so on. From my conversations with her I realised how profound she was as a thinker but the house in which she lived, Sir, was deplorable to say the least. Mr. Speaker, that young lady did her CXC, she then went on to the Community College and I must admit that from time to time, I used to assist her because I was very sympathetic and I knew that with a bit of help what she could have achieved. I have an inkling, Sir, that she had potential to be, with help, if she were not poor, she would have been a Barbados Scholar. She managed to gain two Bs and a C in her A-levels and one of the things that touched me was when she got the results she said thanks, were it not for you I could not have reached the stage. That touched me, Mr. Speaker, because I knew it was poverty that was holding her down for all those years that she was at primary and secondary school.

I have just said that, Sir, to highlight the fact that it is within my knowledge that poverty is really and truly stopping a lot of our Barbadian citizens from reaching their true potential.

Mr. Speaker, the social services sector, in this country, has taken a beating and Mr. Speaker, I must say that successive governments have always been cutting social services whenever we have a problem. Whenever there is a problem of adjustment it is the social services that we always cut. It makes it much more difficult for whoever is the next Minister of the social services. It makes it more difficult, Mr. Speaker, for all of the various problems that get there and accumulate. Every time you get a situation you rush and you cut the social services. Mr. Speaker, I feel that the perception is, look when we put money into agriculture we try to get back something whether it is from the produce or whatever but we try to make money. In manufacturing it is the same thing. We put money in tourism and we say we will try to get a tourist dollar from it but when we put money in the social services we tend to think we are giving something and we are not getting anything back in terms of dollars and cents. I do believe that is not the right approach because what we are trying to do when we put money in the social services, we are trying to improve the lot of Barbadians and, Mr. Speaker, there is no price that you can put on the improvement of our human resources.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only has it taken a beating in that respect. I do believe, and I make no apology for it, that whoever holds the Ministry of Community Development and the Social Services will tell you that that Ministry is always regarded as the Cinderella ministry and for the first time, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we are seeing an improvement in the line of thinking.

Mr. Speaker, when I assumed office as Minister responsible for Community Development and I was taken to where the Child Care Board was housed it was appalling. I wondered if the Government of the day or the previous administration was really aware of where the Child Care Board was housed. When I was walking there with the Director and one of the officers, and this is no lie, Mr. Speaker, they were telling me, Mr. Minister step here, do not step on these two, step there. That was the situation over there. 12.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker when it comes to the staff, the morale was low. Mr. Speaker, I knew about four of the persons who worked at the Child Care Board, because I had worked with them, I knew them personally.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have connections with them.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Sir, I have connections with them.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, they used to leave, what I consider to be comfortable houses, good houses, those four that I know, and they would go to work in those surroundings. Mr. Speaker, honestly, when they wake up on mornings and think about what they had to leave and where they had to go, I am surprised that they used to go so often.

Mr. Speaker, the clients who came into the Child Care Board and the ones who now go to the Welfare Department, very often end up being in surroundings where they get sick sometimes when they are out there. Mr. Speaker, the problem is, that you treat the Ministry as though it is a Cinderella Ministry and by doing this, what we have actually done, is to cause a pile up of a lot of the problems. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that the parros that we talk about, that the homeless that we talk about, the people on drugs, the crime and so on, a lot of that is there because we have not paid enough attention in the past to our social services.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do now in this Administration, trying to look at poverty and trying to look at the social services and saying "here is where we are going to zero in, these are the people we are going to target" is like a breath of fresh air. For the first time we are seeing something positive happening.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, that we can always test the pulse of a Government. We can always try to find out the way that a Government is thinking, whether it is a compassionate Government and whether it cares about people. I believe that we hear more shouts in this Honourable House about the small black man and the poor from that side than we hear from this side, because they are always, always shouting. They shout it, they shout it, they shout it.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: When it comes to action, there is no comparison whatsoever between what we do on this side and what they do on that side.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order...

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I believe, Mr. Speaker that a Government is judged by the way its treats its most vulnerable citizens. I think so. If you want to know whether a Government is a good Government or whether it is a caring Government, look at the way in which it treats its most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we are trying our best to improve the lives of Barbadians. Indeed Sir, so concerned were we, Mr. Speaker, about the right people receiving what is justly theirs, the social services which this country provides, that we have commissioned a study to see whether or not the people for whom they are intended get them and to see whether we can try to prevent some of the collision that goes on in the social services.

Mr. Speaker, a classic example of what I mean, Sir, let us take the Thelma Vaughan Home. When I assumed office, Mr. Speaker, that Home had not got any subvention under the last administration, year after year after year. There were about three years they did not get a cent and, Mr. Speaker, from the very first time we came into office, they got $120 000.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The Honourable Member for St. George North says, he is who brought it to my attention.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I remember getting at least seven letters from people who said how badly they were treated with the last Administration and that they wanted some help. I do not remember individually who they came from. Mr. Speaker also, the people who actually run the Organisation were at the point of closing it down, and at that Organisation, Mr. Speaker, we have some of the most underprivileged...

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I don't care...

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay...

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, you had at that Organisation, disabled and disadvantaged children and so on. It would have been a catastrophe if they were asked to close the Thelma Vaughan Home.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, in this year's estimates, we have made provision for the Thelma Vaughan Home in the sum of $120 000. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, we have been looking at the Democratic Labour Party, and we have been looking at the last administration and we have been saying that they cut people salaries, severance pay and all that. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more we could have said

about the cuttings and so on which they did and we have never really sought to highlight it and to bring it into the public.

Mr. Speaker, there are children who go to private schools and to the secondary schools who live in the Homes in this country, and at one stage they were getting something like $1. The ones who went to secondary school would get pocket money every day and then the last administration slashed it and the poor children when they left their homes and so on and went to school without a cent in their pockets. They used to get $.50 at one stage and they slashed it. What we have done now, we have made sure that the private school ones we give them something, and we give the ones who go to the secondary schools $2 every day. So we make sure that they get something in their pockets.

What they are using it for is really an exercise in thrift, because a lot of them try to see, if at the end of a week, they can perhaps save $8 out of the $10 that you give them. But all that, even those little children were disadvantaged, this is the point I am making, under the last administration.

Mr. Speaker, where the NGOs under the Welfare Departmentare concerned, when I say NGOs I mean like what we call the ex-service men, the Barbados Association for the Disabled, Council for the Disabled, Barbados Association for the Blind and so on. When you added up, Mr. Speaker, what the last administration for the whole of 1992-1993 under the last administration, they gave of $10 000 for everything right through Welfare, all of the NGOs.

The following year they gave a total of $10 000 right through all NGOs to the Welfare Department.

For the years 1994-1995 the same thing, $10 000 for all NGOs right through to the Welfare Department.

Mr. Speaker, in the first year, we gave $35 000 to the Welfare Department and said, give those to your NGOs. The following year, $35 000 and this year we are giving $45 000. It just shows how you think about them. There was no Sherbourne to be built but we were thinking about the people.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Only God knows what speech it is. Mr. Speaker, no one can deny, Mr. Speaker that this administration is making...

Asides.

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, he cannot distract me. Let me go on. The people of St. Philip North have sent me here Mr. Speaker, no Harry, no Dick and certainly no Tom is going to run me out of distance.
12.35 p.m.

As a Government, Sir, we have given concessions to the disabled and when I say concessions to the disabled, I mean that things like prostheses for disabled people, all the implements they would want to use. One of the first things this administration did was to remove the duty from those things so that disabled people can get them at a cheaper price. We did that as a Government.

We have set up a Disability Unit, and I want to say that the disabled people did not spring up overnight. There were disabled people under the last administration but we have said that this particular group in itself we can help and we have done that, setting up a unit.

When we looked at sporting goods, that was to help the poor boys who play cricket and football but who could not afford to buy their goods. We removed the duty from sporting goods. This administration, Mr. Speaker, has gone as far as to tell West Indian cricketers, old and young, that they can each have one car. We thought that this is a way of showing that we care for what they have done for this country. Where FURN is concerned, those people who come back from overseas who have done so much for this country we have told them that they can bring their personal assets, including their motor cars and so on. We have done that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is misleading the House. This Government imposed a draconian Value Added Tax on sporting goods and it cannot be said by Government that it has removed duties or relieved the sporting community of any taxation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on another point of order. The Honourable Member has misled the House saying that for the first time Barbadians who had played for the West Indies were allowed to bring in a car free. That is not true. That has been going on for many years. It was going on before I came in this House in 1978, as a matter of fact. It is an untruthful statement and he should not mislead the House.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I do not understand the •point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is making. I believe that this is a policy. I do

not know if the other members have knowledge which I do not, but for the first time I know this is a policy in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, where FURN is concerned, where people can bring their cars and their tools and so on back home I know that in many instances people have saved over $10 000 because of this policy.

It is not only that, Mr. Speaker, but for the very first time, and again I may hear that they did it before, homelessness is being addressed as a real issue in this country.

The homeless on the streets are being addressed in a manner that I have never heard of it being addressed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, we have wherever possible tried to cushion the impact of the VAT on pensioners and those who are on welfare because we realise that persons in those categories would be to some extent at a disadvantage and we are now giving them extra, on an average, $13 per week. We believe that this is a way to help them in terms of any increase which they may face in dealing with the Value Added Tax.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go into the whole question of VAT but 1 believe that if you had 50 economists and you had asked them about the way to implement the VAT with reference to the poor - I am thinking mainly with reference to the poor - I believe that you could come up with about 50 different methods that those 50 economists would suggest. That is the nature of economics.

We may have one economist saying no tax at all on food. We may have another economist saying tax on certain basic foods. Some may say on processed food, but the point is that regardless of what you do you are going to have some people out there who are going to say do not do it this way.

I believe Mr. Speaker, that a government can be popular if it tries to please everybody and give everybody everything they ask for. If one person says no tax on food, the Government can say okay, no tax on food. But, a government does not necessarily have to be popular. This Government has to be prudent first. I believe that in this instance what we are doing is trying to be as prudent as possible.

If I could quote from the Barbados Labour Party's manifesto of 1994. It says, Mr. Speaker.

> "We will keep pensioners' grants and allowances under review to protect their standard of living."

When we saw that VAT would have had some negative impact on these people's pensions we thought it absolutely necessary for us to do exactly what we are doing, which is, to give them an extra allowance to cushion the effect of VAT.

I know that it is good Opposition politics. They have criticised the Minister because the National Assistance Board had not met for some period. 12.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that criticism, I have no problem with it. Where I have the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the Other Side is giving the impression that nothing happened at the National Assistance Board, and I do not think that they should give people the impression that work at the National Assistance Board stopped, because that is not true, Mr. Speaker. Work at the National Assistance Board did not stop for a second. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would tell you that just a few days ago, he had his problem with a lady in his constituency. I can verify that matter was dealt with in a matter of minutes by you.

Mr. Speaker, I go a bit further to say that there was no vengeance. We were never vindictive. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central could tell you that he is still one of the organisers of the National Assistance Board dance group, the drama group, and that even maybe a couple days again, he made a request for funds to assist with that programme and he will get those funds. He is the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. It is not that nothing happened up there. Only yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George South, not on his own behalf, but on behalf of a lady who lives in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. This morning, that matter is already being handled. It would appear as though that side is getting more help from the National Assistance Board than this side. All of the criticisms that you have made at the National Assistance Board, the work has gone on.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: If you do not write on behalf of your constituents you would not get work.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in terms of housing, Sir, last year, the National Assistance Board repaired 40 private houses. This year, Mr. Speaker, up to now, they have repaired 64, and Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Three days ago they got the last allocation. They got $200,000 for the last quarter.

Mr. Speaker, last year they repaired 80 welfare houses. This year, 110 and as I say 110+ because they are now into the first stage of their allocation for the last quarter. Mr. Speaker, they resited, last year, 18 houses. This year they have resited up to now, 21.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Last year, Mr. Speaker, there were old people who got home-help. The number was 1,035 old people who got help last year. Up to now, Mr. Speaker, 1,031 have got help. There is no decrease anywhere to show that work at the National Assistance Board did not go on. The number of activity centres, Mr. Speaker, that has also increased. Even the numbers, Mr. Speaker, of the old people who went on picnics increased this year.

Aside.

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Even the numbers increased. In every single thing I can see an increase. Last year, 90 of them went, now it is 160, and they are going on picnics, going on the Harbour Master; all of these programmes which they do at the National Assistance Board still continue, Mr. Speaker, and not only that...

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I, as I say Mr. Speaker, am very heartened that the new thrust of these Estimates is in the direction of the improvement of social services and to alleviate poverty. You can rest assured Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry of Community Development, for which I have responsibility stands ready and able to carry out the policies of this Government. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Honourable Member be given another ten minutes, Sir. I beg to move that the Honourable Member be given another ten minutes so he can continue that brilliant speech.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. this afternoon.

Aside.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m.

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

The question that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have got into this debate to examine the implications of this year's Estimates on this country, Barbados. When I look at the amount of money the Government proposes to raise this year and the amount of money that Government will be spending, it is indeed important for us to examine each area of economic activity in a holistic manner. Therefore, this evening I would like to try my best to see how I could contribute to this debate and at least bring a balance to bear on what we are about to do in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that since 1994 a lot of effort has been made to return this country to normalcy. I believe that all members will agree that in the export sector more money and more goods are being exported to regional as well as extra-regional sources. It is a fact that more goods are being imported into this country today. It is a fact that the standard of living has indeed increased since 1994 and every effort has been made to make sure that this country continues on a growth pattern after years of negative growth between 1991 and 1993. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, these Estimates must be seen against the background of providing relief, not necessarily to the rich or the middle-class, but to all sectors of our economy.

I want to address some of the issues one finds in this year's Estimates. It is a fact that more money will be spent on capital works. That is important and significant if one

hopes to create employment which because the majority of employment over the last 3 or 4 years, as I said, a large section of the employment was created in construction was created in the lower aspect of the economy. That is why it is important for us to focus on what the capital works programme will do for this country.

Members spoke about poverty, about the poor in society. Now, "poor[11] may be a relative term. What is poor to one country may be rich to another. Poverty is a relative term. You have to look at it and talk about it in the context of what is happening within the economy at any given time. Therefore, as the economy of a country improves, poverty may be seen more than if the country as a whole was suffering under a recession. During recession time everybody suffers but as the country improves in its Gross Domestic Product, sometimes the gap between rich and poor becomes wider and wider. What is essential is what the country does to protect the poor, what it does to help alleviate poverty.

One member referred to an article in the Central Bank of Barbados Economic Review, written by Chandel Morley in which he made the point that it was very important to note that under structural adjustment poverty worsened because the country at the time would be looking at its Gross Domestic Product, the country would be looking at its exchange rates, there will be tightening on the monetary policies and so on. During structural adjustment these things happen. He says in his article that countries, especially Third World countries, sometimes suffer because they do not have the money and sustainability to alleviate poverty as they would want. He offers a solution. It is found in productivity when he says that the country must return to its regional areas and productive forces in order to alleviate poverty.

A country that has poverty must produce. It must get those persons who are involved in agriculture to work, those persons who are involved in construction back to work. That is what these Estimates are all about. These Estimates that we are looking at are saying that we need to put people to work, not necessarily the middle income earners, but those persons who have little or no skills. That is what the economist is saying, those persons whose main source of skills is in their human effort.

He also made the point, and I agree with it, that training is essential in order to promote and provide opportunities for persons who are not gifted with any special gifts but only their labour power. That is why -we need to address this.

I want for the next couple of minutes to address this whole issue of poverty because many politicians, many members of Parliament, many Honourable Members seem to rally and rely on the fact that people must be poor in order to gain success. Many Honourable Members, many opposition forces and people who run for office seem to rely on the fact that to keep people in abject poverty is essential. They talk about it but do nothing. Some people like to keep others down so as to ride on their backs without doing anything about it. For years, Mr. Speaker, poverty existed. Poverty is nothing new. Poverty existed and will always exist but how we deal with it in our time is essential. 2.15 p.m.

I have searched to see if there were any studies available in Barbados to sort out or to plan a structural programme, a meaningful programme of poverty alleviation. I have not found any. In fact, I understand that a study was done just after Independence in 1966 in the social sector of Barbados and we must understand that in 1994 after we reclaimed the Government that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet commissioned studies to be done on the social sector and that is important. He did not wait to see what was happening in St. Michael North West as was said earlier. We did not wait to see what was happening in that by-election. A social sector study was commissioned and two persons, two eminent and well qualified persons were selected to study the social sector of this country, to see where duplication of efforts were being made, to see how the money was being spent, to see what could be improved to help the poor man. That was the first attempt for over 20 years by any Government to study the social sector. It was the first attempt. We have Members who spoke about that. Look at some of the recommendations and look through the suburban areas and you will notice that all Barbadians are part of it and we must do our best to curb this poverty and curb the poverty that exist. It is right in our back door and we must do something to solve it.

Mr. Speaker, not only did the Government commission a two-member team to study poverty, there was also a commission done in the Ministry of Housing which I will refer to where we studied the urban and suburban areas of Barbados. A study was done just after 1994. Two studies to look at poverty and urban problems were commissioned after we returned to Government in 1994. I want to look at some of what has been revealed and what I have noticed as we move around in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that if you look at areas within urban Barbados, areas like Murphy Pasture, it is an area which floods every time there is rain. The last Government did nothing to solve this problem. People there do not have proper sewerage or toilet facilities. Nothing was done. We have also in the Nelson Street area a

number of problems that exist where people live in shambles. Nothing was done there either. I make the point that for the very first time a study was undertaken to see how we can solve this problem. If you look across the landscape of urban Barbados, we find a similar situation.

A study was done in Greater Bridgetown. Greater Bridgetown is defined as the area from Rendezvous Hill along the southern boundary to Holders Hill to the North and the A.B.C. Highway on its eastern boundary. It comprises 3 462 hectares and has a population of 103 000 which represents 40% of the island's inhabitants. This is a study that was done. The survey was conducted of a 33 600 household. The age in the houses was unknown in 7 300 or 22% of the cases, Of the 26 300 cases known, 17 500 or $^2/_3$ were more than 15 years old. I will repeat that of the 26 300 cases known, 17 500 or $^2/_3$ were more than 15 years old, suggesting a high repair component in a housing stock. Then there were 4 600 or 17% between 10 and 15 years. 4 200 or 16% were less than 10 years old. The statistics tell something that the housing stock within urban Barbados is relatively run down and need help.

It goes further, and I want to look at the household size and characteristics, which is important for Members. We talk aSout 33 600 householders. 19 000 or 58% of these 33 000 have one to three occupants. The other significant household grouping is the 4 to 6 person category with 11 900 people or 35% of the total number of household, the remaining categories point to possible overcrowding. 1 400 households in the 7 to 9 range, 600 in the 10 to 12 and 200 over 12. There are about 200 households in Barbados that have 12 persons or more living in these houses. We would not have known this if a study was not carried out. A study was carried out to determine that there are a number of homes that are over crowded, This study was done after 1994. It was commissioned by the Ministry of Housing after 1994. It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that poverty is linked to unemployment and that 3 600 or 11% are unemployed in St. Michael. 1 300 males and 2 300 females. 13 000 or 39% are retired. 90% of the household heads earn less than $30 000 annually. So that unemployment among the urban area is 11% and about 35% of people who earn less than $5 000 per annum. 16% between $5 000 and $10 000 per annum.

The point that I would want to make is that because of this study Government is now best able to set up and establish an urban commission. This urban commission was set up against the background that we have tremendous problems within the urban area. The main focus of this commission, Mr. Speaker, will be to secure land tenure. To provide opportunities for single parents, to improve infrastructure and to help upgrade the facilities within urban Barbados through the transfer of title. 2,25 p.m.

We need to understand that land in urban areas is still very exorbitant. Many landlords are asking prices of $6.00 and over per square foot despite the fact that Government has put in the infrastructure. We have to look at that and this Commission will be empowered to help provide an opportunity whereby the poor person or the underprivileged would be able to get their land at a statutory price. More will be said on this commission in the next two weeks because we are now in the formation stages but I will assure Members that a lot will be said on this and members will get an opportunity to discuss their findings within the next couple of weeks when a new Bill is brought before this House.

Members can rest assured that the Government has taken the decision to look to see where poverty exists and to see how we can alleviate it. We believe that is the best thing to do.

Now, we did not stop there, Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Housing we have sought to improve the general workers loan scheme. When we came to power, Mr. Speaker, persons earning less than $300 a week were paying loans. We have moved it from $300 to $582. We have moved loans up from $20 000 to $40 000. We have also given grants to those persons who have lost their right to purchase. Those persons who have lost their right to purchase did not obtain anything. We are giving them between $10 000 and $15 000 to help resite their homes. All these things were done to help poor people and more has to be done.

The National Housing Corporation has also earmarked a number of sites and services programmes across Barbados. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in 1995 we earmarked 181 sites, most of those were completed. We have started another 184 site lots across Barbados and we will commence, during this financial year, another 176, bringing a total at the end of this year to 1 151 lots that we have created since we came to office.

This is important. We have created a land bank to help young Barbadians and help the poor. We have also agreed, Mr. Speaker, that in almost every community, playing facilities should exist. In the area of Hill Road, Bank Hall, we have agreed, and Cabinet has agreed, to erect hard court facilities which would include volley ball, basketball and so on.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is the Hill Road in my constituency? It is Hill Road, not Hills Road.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I know you have a tremendous demand for housing. We have also agreed to erect 30 units at the Bush Hall area in St. Michael Central so work has begun.

Also in the field of sewerage, to the west of the Prisons, we have also tried to alleviate a problem that existed for years where poor people again suffered. We have tried to alleviate that. I can also tell the Member for St. Michael West Central that a lot of work has been done. More than $1.5 million was spent for renovating and clearing bush within the St. Michael area. We have painted and renovated the Farm, we have painted Fernihurst and Rosemont. A lot of work has been done in the Pine St. Michael. We have given more than 100 gallons of paint to the Honourable Member to help to alleviate poverty in his area. So action has been taken. In Eden Lodge work has been done as well so that the commission has done a lot of work and I want to say too that prior to 1992 the National Housing Corporation did not approve as many loans as they are doing now. Between 1992 and 1994 only 97 loans were approved by the National Housing Corporation, an average of less than 34 per year, whereas we have now approved 159 loans between 1994 and 1997, a three-year span, an average of about 40. We have to do better because we understand that there are a number of people who have need for loans to repair their homes and these loans are given mainly for those persons in the society who have to live in chattel homes, who want to repair their toilet facilities and so on. We have to do something about this.

If you look, Mr. Speaker, also at where the majority of fires take place. The majority of hazards take place today among the poor sector of society. In 1995, for example, there were 133 house fires, mainly among the poor sector of society. In 1996 there were 129 house fires and all these are caused mainly by householders who, not necessarily because they are careless, but because they still have kerosene oil lamps and stoves and so on. Something has to be done and that is why this Government has commissioned a study to see how best we can help those persons to pay their water bills and to pay their light bills. I fundamentally believe that Government should instal electricity in the homes of all those people.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we have to do something and I am saying the time has come for us not to play politics. One Honourable Member said in this House that homosexuality and prostitution leads to poverty. I do not necessarily agree that poor people are in prostitution. There are many poor people who are not involved or do not indulge in these things. It is a matter of the forces of demand and supply because there are some people who will demand it regardless of what station of life they are in and there are people who will supply it regardless of whether they are rich or poor so it has to do with the condition.

Another point before I sit, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make the point that we have to protect our resources and therefore a lot would be said in the next few weeks on protecting the land resource for Barbadians. 2.35 p.m.

I fundamentally believe that Barbadians should own the majority of land in Barbados. We need not sell our lands at any price and at any cost to all those who will want to buy, because we have to protect our lands in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I will come back to this topic at another time.

Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate to speak to the issue of poverty and poverty alleviation in Barbados, because, it seems to me that the general tenor of the debate, certainly on the Other Side, up to this point, has been either to suggest that:

1. Poverty is nothing new, has always been with us and does not need any specific mechanisms to address

2. Those attempts at addressing poverty within the context of these Estimates are merely an attempt at doing something that is politically expedient and to try to prepare for the next election campaign whenever that may come.

The Honourable Member for St. James North spoke very eloquently to the issue of defining poverty and the characteristics of poverty in Barbados, and I would wish, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to speak to the reality of poverty in Barbados. There is indeed, poverty in Barbados and it is incumbent on us as Parliamentary Representatives, the leaders of the people who have entrusted their futures to us to create an environment in Barbados within the general economy and within the social framework where every Barbadian lives with a degree of dignity in this country and where he or she feels that there are opportunities for them to live on par with other people within the community.

If we look at what the Government is seeking to do in these Estimates and in terms of the provisions that the Government is making for poverty alleviation, I feel that it is important, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to look at where we have come from and let us make no mistake about it. The period post-1986 and particularly post-1991 was a period in Barbados during which the numbers of the poor in Barbados were swelled to unprecedented proportions as a result of the policy initiatives of the last administration.

It is a fact that the lay-offs in the public sector created large numbers of poor people in Barbados. It is a fact that the contraction in the economy during the structural adjustment period, caused several businesses, particularly small businesses which were the entrepreneur attempts of the poor black man in Barbados to collapse. As a result the employees of those businesses were sent home.

It is a fact that the eight percent salary cut resulted in a number of people whose financial commitment did not change, having to come to grips with the reality of how to budget, and how to deal with their social problems and how to deal with the reality of their everyday existence on a salary that was significantly different from that which they would have been earning at the time that the cut would originally have been made.

It is also a fact that during that period a number of people who were previously earning and at a very .good level, either became unemployed, or as a result of the salary cut were forced to leave their houses and move back to their parent's houses with their families. In many cases, people who were home owners, especially those who were owning homes for the first time were forced to sell their houses because they were unable to meet their mortgage commitment.

During this period, people experienced rapid depletion of any savings that they would have accumulated. People, in order to show up and to maintain a reasonable standard of living, had to cash in their insurance policies.

It is also a fact that during that period, that the cushions which the Government had previously established to buffer any hardships that people may have been feeling as a result of unemployment, job lost or socio-economic stress, that all of these cushions were either removed or so changed that they did not act, as an effective cushion, to those who may have fallen on hard times.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would wish to remind the Members on the Other Side that it was during this period that severance payments were cut in a significant way from the levels they used to be. It is also during this period that unemployment benefits were significantly reduced and therefore the problem of poverty, even as it existed before became greatly exacerbated during this period. It is now incumbent on us as we move forward into a new century, as we seek to redefine our society to ensure that there are not two Barbadoses, and that we deal with the problem of poverty.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Opposition likes to speak in terms of two Barbadoses, but the reality is that it was while people whom they like to describe as poor and black, whom they like to describe as the small man, the average civil servant, the people who live in the Farm, the people who live in Haynesville, the people who live in Black Rock and the City and so on, it was during this period, post-1991 and pre-1994 that we saw, perhaps what was the greatest creation in the history of Barbados as two Barbadoses.

That was the period when BS&T grew beyond all proportions, when you can see a prime asset, a national asset, the then Heywoods Hotel being virtually given away to a large local company, not a small black company, and now for us to have to endure the shame that they will be selling it soon at a massive profit after it was just handed over to them.

We saw the Cruise Terminal again being handed over to white corporate Barbados, so that black entrepreneurs then had to turn around and ask to rent from them. We saw the development of all kinds of benefits given to white business so that Pelican, which was the hub of activity for a lot of black entrepreneurs, virtually fell asleep.

Therefore, what we now have to ensure is that the nature of development that has fostered during this period no longer promotes this concept of the two Barbadoses.

I wish to speak, Mr. Speaker, to some of the initiatives that this administration is putting in place to ensure that those losses and the suffering which characterised the 1991-1994 period particularly, no longer continue.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue of jobs. One hears constantly that the 30 000 jobs that we spoke to are not being created. 2.45 p.m.

The reality is that there is a construction boom in Barbados. Wherever you walk, you will see new buildings, new facilities, new enterprises going up and already large signs which say "Carpenters Wanted. Masons Wanted. Labourers Wanted". That speaks to a construction boom.

We are in fact on target for creating the 30 000 jobs. The evidence is that at the end of last year 19 000 people were unemployed as opposed to 30 000 people when we came to office in 1994.

If one looks at the unemployment benefit claims which are an independent indicator of the number of people who are unemployed in the community because when people are unemployed they make the claim. Once you see that there has been steady decline... If we look at the period 1992 for instance. I can go back to 1991.

In 1991, there were 18 209 unemployment benefit claims. By 1992 that number had risen to 20 396. By 1994, that figure had been brought at the end of 1994 to 11 586 and by the end of 1995 the unemployment benefit claims were at 8 830. These figures clearly suggest that larger numbers of people are working and therefore the volume of unemployment benefit claims that were being previously made during that administration are no longer being made.

Even within the context...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Not to embarrass the Honourable Member, but if 120 000 voters were dismissed in Barbados tomorrow you would get 120 00 benefit claims. If none are re-employed in 7 months time you would get no benefit claims. They would drop to zero. You would still have 120 000 unemployed. You cannot use those figures to indicate unemployment.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment benefit claims must be taken against the background of jobs created as indicated by the figures of the Labour Department which clearly show that in 1994 there were 30 000 unemployed people but now the figure^ is at 19 000. That speaks to job creation but the Opposition does not like to hear this because they do not want people to know that jobs are being created.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On another point of order. There is not a single statistic, apart from the mouthings of the Barbados Labour Party, that there were ever 30 000 people unemployed. The Minister of Finance has indicated that the figure was 25 000 and it is really not right to be quoting...

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, several jobs have been created within the Government and I will speak to just a few.

I would like to dispel the notion clearly held by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that large numbers of non-nationals have been employed on the South Coast Sewerage Project. The South Coast Sewerage Project has created some 600 jobs to date. There have been by the firm executing the project an application for 34 work permits. Of those, only 12 have been granted and those were granted by the Immigration Department in circumstances where they were satisfied that the skills that the persons wanted were not available in Barbados. We made a requirement that counterpart Barbadian staff should be brought on so that in 6 months they could be sent home and the Barbadian staff would then take over the job.

In the Government, a number of new initiatives have served to enhance job creation in the public sector. At NCC for instance, where during the structural adjustment period half of the staff was sent home and the rest was put on a 3-day week, we have moved the staff from 536 to 800.

Within the Ministry of Public Transport the Drainage Unit has been created to perform the very necessary task of making sure that the areas that were blocked in Barbados and led to problems in relation to drainage are kept free of debris and of bushy overgrowth so that we do not have further drainage problems. This unit is also charged with the responsibility of putting mechanisms in place to deal with drainage.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I can assure you, Sir, that none of that work has been done in St. Lucy and I would like to know if that mandate goes to St. Lucy also.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Nursing aides were created in relation to the establishment of the Elroy Phillips Centre. Jobs were created through the Rural Development Commission, through the Youth Service, through the new Urban Development Commission to be established. Self-employment initiatives were boosted through the extension of greater incentives and monies to the Small Business Association.

A venture capital fund was set up to help young, black entrepreneurs become more involved in business. The micro business loan through the Barbados National Bank is another initiative that the Government has put in place to ensure that those persons who would have had difficulty getting access to capital now have an opportunity to access capital and set themselves up in business.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme was established to generate a culture of self-employment and economic activity within black youth. That is important because white youth come along seeing their uncles and their families in business. Black people do not have that example to follow and therefore, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme is an

important mechanism for inspiring young people to get involved in Barbados by extending to them finance and giving them training on how to manage their businesses, because several times black businesses have collapsed, not because people did not have good creative ideas but because they did not have access to capital and they themselves were not trained in business management.

Job creation is one of the ways to alleviate poverty in Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. She is giving the impression that white people are trained in business management whereas black people are not. I would like her to correct that, Sir. 2.55 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There have been a number of initiatives that speak to the setting up of new enterprises, whether it is a crematorium, whether it is a rendering plant, whether it is business within the special development areas, whether it is the new marina project, whether it is the redevelopment of Bridgetown, or the redevelopment of Speightstown.

All of these will generate activity within the economy, will stimulate the economy, will create jobs, will provide opportunities so that people can live and work and pull themselves up out of poverty.

So that the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke in terms of the problems in relation to housing. I am hoping that several of the people within St. James South who are now working will be able to get out of some of the difficult housing conditions which exist. It is a reality and I am going to speak to that in a few minutes.

All of these initiatives which the Opposition does not want to focus on and it is significant that in the whole of the Estimates debate they have not spoken to the issue of the Estimates at all or what the Estimates are aimed to do, but are seeking to make political points about other issues, not related directly to the Estimates. I think that in itself is a confession that the Estimates are good Estimates, and will achieve the government's overall objectives.

Assistance to the social sector and social services is another important indicator of poverty alleviation in Barbados and of poverty alleviation mechanisms. There are certain services which can be delivered to the public so that poverty will not be felt at the same level. The vote for community development has been significantly increased in excess of $300,000. The vote for the Welfare Department has been increased by $2 million.

For the first time, we are having a $500,000 vote to a Disability Unit to help people with physical and mental disabilities in Barbados. The vote to the National Assistance Board is being increased. The vote to the Child Care Board is being increased. In relation to the Ministry of Education, monies allocated for training and education are also being increased.

The vote in relation to housing is being increased and it is significant because there is a very long list of people, waiting to get either houses or land to buy or rent in Barbados. It is a sad indictment on the last administration, that they could have lived within a framework where the two greatest needs were housing and jobs, and where they made no attempt to develop housing projects for lower socio-economic groups to the point where in Haynesville today, I can take you to households where there are two bedrooms where there are 20 and 25 people living.

We are coming out of the structural adjustment period. There was nobody at all in the house working and as a result people's utilities were cut off but where one can look now to see the Government trying to develop a comprehensive housing programme, particularly, for a lower socio-economic grouping. There are three housing developments at this time either started or about to start in St. James South. There are housing projects starting in St. James North. There is housing going on or about to start, I believe at the Pondside, that is being worked on. There is housing...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. There is no housing project starting or about to be started in St. James North, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It is a fact. Even though there may not be any past the judge gap, I do not know. I do not go that far. That there are jobs, there are houses and housing developments going on in several constituencies across Barbados, including my own, including that of St. James North, including St. Andrew and others about to start in the City and St. George and so on. That is very much a reality.

So that almost every component, and I want to pass on to some of the attempts being made by the Government because all over the world it is accepted that lack of access to proper sanitation, proper water and so on, that these have implications for poverty and for the health standard of the community.

In that respect, the Government has developed a national solid waste plan, the Sewerage Project is "underway, the West Coast Sewerage Project is currently

being designed, a water quality monitoring programme has been established, the Coastal Zone Management Unit is working on mapping and setting up projects for the North and North-East Coast of Barbados.

In relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the vote there for the hospital was moved from 1994 when we came to office and found it at $58,450,207. This year in the Estimates the Government has allocated some $73,562,162 for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is significant because when people talk about the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and when people talk about cuts in the budget, that comes against a background where in fact the Government has not cut the QEH vote, but has consistently since we have been in office, sought to ensure that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is adequately provided for.

The medical aid scheme, for instance, is getting this year the largest vote that it has ever gotten in the history of Barbados, $2 million. This gives several poor people who cannot get certain types of surgery that are not available here in Barbados, the opportunity to go overseas at the Government's expense and be cared for.

Mr. SPEAKER, Sir, it is significant that in 1991 when I speak in terms of the increases in the votes at the hospital, people have to understand the context in which these increases are being made. The reality is that the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital go back several years. So that in 1991-92 the hospital vote was $67,508,362, and after the St. Joseph Hospital was opened one can see that the QEH vote was systematically cut until it reached, in 1993-94, $57,819,916. In 1994-95, when we came to office it was $58 million.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The problems at the QEH cannot be resolved overnight. Every system at the hospital virtually, was allowed to go into decline, and the hospital was starved of funds during the last administration and we are now seeking, by budgetary allocations and other means, to get the hospital back up to a certain standard.

We have started a Rural Development Commission, an Urban Development Commission, each of which has an allocation of $5 million and put in $10 million for poverty alleviation. The point that I am making, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that every element which ensures that poverty is reduced to minimal proportions, whether it is help by allowing access to health care, access to water, to proper water and sanitation, whether it is by job creation, by the creation of other mechanisms for poverty alleviation and development, like the Rural Development Commission and a Poverty Alleviation Fund, and an Urban Development Commission, whether it is by mechanisms such as creating a general economic climate that all our citizens can benefit, this administration is creating the environment for national growth and development, and to ensure that poverty alleviation is dealt with in a systematic way, because poverty is a reality in Barbados that needs to be addressed and that these Estimates are addressing. 3.05 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health in the 1995/96 Estimates actually reduced the budget for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by about $4 million under the guise that there will be proper and efficient management of the resources in that institution. If you look back, you would recognise that you did just that. During the course of the fiscal year, in fact, we had a number of supplementaries coming to this House and the Upper Chamber for adjustments to the expenditure incurred for the QEH in that given year. We were told that as a matter of effective and efficient financial and fiscal management the budget could have been reduced because there was excessive wastage at the QEH in the previous years.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. In 1995/96 the budgetary allocation for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was $63 853 648. In the previous year it was $58 450 207 so I do not know where the reduction is because 63 is more than 56, so we did not reduce the vote to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member referred specifically to the allocation to the Drug Service which should have been some $21 million which was deliberately reduced by the Minister during the budget of 1995/96 and then a supplementary came which was substantially more than the $4 million that you had reduced it by. You said you would have been able to provide a better service with the reduced amount of money. At no time did the service improve. In fact, it got worse.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please!

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. Again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. In 1994/95, the allocation to the Drug Service was $16 311 315. In 1995/96 the allocation was $18 280 000, in 1996/97 it was $20 132 109 so you can see that consistently every year the vote to the Drug Service has been increased.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I have no notes but I will refer the Minister to the actual amount of money spent by the Drug Service in the year 1994/95 and you will see that the actual amount was in the vicinity of $21 million. You knew that the year before it took $21 million yet you came to Parliament and sought a reduction and said that you would produce more for it and it came down to under $17 million. I know the figures by heart.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the intervention because I am in this debate to state precisely that this debate is not only confined to numbers. In fact, to sit and listen to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West at this stage of his political life confine this debate to one of $10 million being allocated to poverty alleviation is really to deny this Chamber an opportunity to hear a substantive debate on issues surrounding poverty and how it can be alleviated. It has little to do with the mere provision of $10 million at any Ministry whether it is the Ministry of Finance, or the Ministry of Labour and Community Development.

Poverty has much more to do with organising institutions, organising communities to give more time and effort to those people who are deprived. To tell me that in today's Barbados as we look to the 21st Century that to allocate $10 million to some effort will, in fact, alleviate poverty, is to misunderstand and misrepresent the issues as they obtain in today's Barbados. It is amazing and I would have expected that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would have, in fact, debated at a much higher level in terms of what are the really serious problems relating to poverty.

Let me state clearly that poverty is not something that has resulted because of 1991/94. Poverty has not just come to Barbados as a result of any structural adjustment or stabilisation programme. Poverty is something that each Government of Barbados since 1961 has addressed in its budgetary proposals. In fact, the four main objectives of any budgetary exercise in Barbados since 1961 have been full employment which is, perhaps, the greatest effort that one can make towards the alleviation of poverty, GDP, staple balance of payments and staple domestic prices in the economy.

To make it appear as though this is something new and this is something we wish to eradicate because it has emerged as a result of the stabilisation programme of the last administration is to deny the intelligence one would expect would be commensurate with the members of this Parliament to understand that poverty has not just arrived on the shores of Barbados and has been and will continue to be regardless. It is a problem we have to resolve. Therefore, a willy-nilly effort has come as a consequence of this Government's struggling to move away from the main objective of job creation as its major objective and now at the same time that poverty alleviation is being considered to be the main plank of any strategy by this Government.

It has also conceptualised the Urban Commission which is not strange or coincidental because I am saying that when the Rural Development Commission was conceptualised, it was conceptualised with the understanding that many issues in rural Barbados had to be addressed because poverty, for a long time, has been identified more with that part of Barbados than with the urban areas.

One is safe in saying that politically more emphasis has been placed in St. Michael, and to some extent neglect of the rural areas. When the Rural Development Commission was conceptualised, it was felt this was an opportunity for Government to target the resources directly at issues within rural Barbados. Now we have two years later the Urban Development Commission being developed.

Now, it would be extremely difficult to sell the development of these two Commissions without having something that brings the two issues together, that is a nexus. I am saying that poverty alleviation in Barbados is an afterthought. It is really designed to link the establishment of the Urban and Rural Commissions together. Therefore, it makes more sense to sell these two proposals, not within the context of commissions, but within the framework of poverty alleviation. It is an afterthought because, if indeed it were...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, Sir, if the Honourable Member would give way. This idea of rural development was never an afterthought because even as far back as 1991 our party had said that we would have a rural development commission. What really transpired, Mr. Speaker - I really do not want to make a speech, I just want to steer the debate nicely - is that we were disturbed about two Barbadoses and we have seen physical development proceed apace in one part of Barbados faster than rural Barbados, hence the reason for the Rural Development Commission.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I wish the Honourable Members on that side would listen. I said that poverty alleviation is an afterthought, not the Rural Development Commission.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has only recently come into this Chamber but to

say that poverty alleviation is an afterthought is to negate everything that successive Governments have done over the past 50 years in this country.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Therefore, I am suggesting to you that if indeed you accept that it has been the objective of all administrations in Barbados, one therefore wonders why it is being given such prominence in today's Barbados. 3.15 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, I am saying to you that the answer to that has been made in here on more than one occasion. Between 1986 and 1994 poverty was exacerbated and we saw returns to 1950s level of poverty in this country in the 1990s. You know that too.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, I have been in this House since 1978 and I have never ever heard anyone in the Barbados Labour Party mention the word poor or poverty until yesterday. Never once.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I may concede that Grantley Adams spoke about poverty. What I am saying is that the Barbados Labour Party that I know inside this House has never mounted a campaign on poverty until yesterday, never once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I am not denying that poverty alleviation is a laudable objective but it is as loose as it is laudable. It is difficult to track. First of all, I am saying that any administration that has poverty alleviation at the heart of its programmes would have from the inception in 1994 constructed the basis for addressing the issue. It would have been surveyed, there would have been an attempt to identify clearly what poverty is in a defined way, there would have been an attempt to structure poverty by age and sex, by whatever, to understand the issue before one could fully address this issue. What I am saying to you on the other side is that this has come conveniently to these Chambers as a major issue and it is unfortunate that this debate has gone the line of interpreting these Estimates as some major attempt to resolve the issue of poverty in Barbados. Ten million dollars out of a budget of $1.6 billion in expenditure is now taking full centre stage in relation to these Estimates. I am saying, Sir, that given the pronouncements of the Prime Minister of Barbados and given his position as Prime Minister..,

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: One moment, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: What these Estimates reflect or do not reflect is more instructive in fact than what they do reflect. These Estimates ought to reflect the thinking of the Prime Minister of Barbados in relation to his fiscal position on the fiscal deficit. These Estimates should reflect that. The last administration under a structural adjustment programme sought to confine the fiscal deficit to 2% of G.D.P. was told by the Prime Minister that it needed elbow room to do its social engineering. What we have now is an attempt by the Prime Minister to pursue an even tighter fiscal management programme than the last administration. What we were told by the Prime Minister in here and references to bull pistles and all kinds of things is that there is need for a reduction in taxation in Barbados. We have not seen any attempt in these Estimates to reduce taxation, rather there will be an increase in taxation in Barbados as a result of the Estimates which I have before me. We have been consistently told by the Prime Minister of Barbados that he will not pursue capital works of the type of Sherbourne because that is not his style. He is more conservative, more prepared to go the current expenditure side rather than go this capital programme side. Still in these Estimates yesterday, we were told that the capital works programme...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, the Honourable Prime Minister never said that he was against capital. He said that he was against wasteful capital expenditure and that he was prepared to introduce meaningful capital projects that would be beneficial to Barbados and he was against wasteful capital projects which were funded in dubious circumstances by all types of strange methods like contingencies and such like in the Estimates.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, let me say that the capital works programme as specified in the Estimates will not be executed this year or next fiscal year either. I have said over the last two years that the capital works programme was much too ambitious and this one remains much too ambitious. I do not expect, neither do the general public expect any substantial job creation as a result of the capital works programme as outlined in the Estimates. Do not expect it to happen. I will go on to explain why. There is in fact one commitment which is being held in these Estimates. Quite early the Prime Minister said that his foreign debt strategy would be to limit his commercial borrowings on the overseas market to the extent of his foreign amortisation payments. This year in the Estimates, the foreign amortisation is $88.3 million dollars. He has decided to go for $88 million in commercial loans. That is understandable, I respect that. It therefore means that the foreign project financing requirement is really a residual because one understands that the domestic market has a certain limited capacity to provide financing for the

capital works programme in Government. If that is so, you can look at page 5 in the Estimates. I have already digested that. I do not need to look at it. The domestic financing is limited, we know that it is $129 million for the next fiscal year and therefore the other part of the foreign financing falls and that happens to be project financing. This year, as happened last year, the Government expects to get substantially more from its foreign sources than it will yield and we see that by the end of the fiscal year. Last year, ambitiously we went for $191 million or so and only got $61 million. Something like that, you can check the Estimates. Figures are not so important. The thing is the trend and the measure and the shape. I am not so interested in the actual numbers. This year we are saying that $78 million will come from the I.A.D.B. in the form of project financing. That is too ambitious. It will not be realised. The Prime Minister is on record as saying that the I.A.D.B. has for years promised and it does not deliver. Yet still the Estimates are constructed in such a way to suggest that a lot of financing will come from that source. That will not happen this year either.

Asides.

History will bear me out. Over the last two years Government identifying substantial project financing and not realising 50% of the projection. I am saying again this year that it will not be realised and therefore the capital works programme will be compromised. As a consequence, do not expect any substantial job creation in this fiscal year coming.

On this issue of job creation, though, what is absolutely amazing about it, is that the Prime Minister on no less than six occasions in 1995/96 Estimates said that he had a job strategy which identifies expanding existing business and creating new business. In fact, when we look at 1994 and beyond, we have seen only one measure of any substance to give impetus to the private sector as a means of job creation apart from the investment opportunities that would be derived in S.D.A. and some other areas of the economy. But amazingly, having given the concessions and prancing up and down Barbados suggesting that these concessions will be down to the renewal... 3.25 p.m.

Page 20 of this document, called the medium term macroeconomic strategy document which is a document of the Government in fact projects that manufacturing output in Barbados would decline in 1995 by almost 1%, would decline in 1996 by almost 1%, would decline in 1997 by 1% and there would be a renewal of growth in 1998. This is nonsense, utter rubbish.

There is no way in Barbados that the manufacturing sector can be revived in 1998. Nineteen ninety-eight is the year of reckoning for the manufacturing sector. It is the year when non-tariff barriers in the form of the surtax which was addressed this morning will be completely phased out. It is the year when the common external tariff would be reduced to 20% at the top as a form of protection.

It is because of the introduction of the value-added tax system that the manufacturing sector is under pressure as well. It is because of the existence of NAFTA which we know, and pending which, we will see the demise in the manufacturing sector. Except for those areas which can respond to the change in technology which is another issue that the Prime Minister raised years ago in debate, the Prime Minister of Barbados has suggested that the only hope for the manufacturing sector of Barbados is to adopt new technologies and that there is no other way to really address issues in the manufacturing sector so there is little hope. I am therefore saying that with the projections in this document and with the reality that the manufacturing sector of Barbados has not performed, there could not have been any job creation or significant job creation in the manufacturing sector of Barbados and there would be no significant job creation beyond this year.

In tourism we have seen decline after decline since July of 1996 in tourist arrivals. We have seen the tourism sector performing below expectations. We have seen the introduction of a value-added tax system that will not be of any benefit to the tourism sector in Barbados. In fact, contrary to what has been suggested by the Prime Minister the sector knows only too well that the $7V_2$% on hotel accommodation will constitute an increased cost and a reduction in competitiveness within the tourism sector and representation would have been and should have been made already for that sector.

I am worried that the people who run the sector do not have the level of understanding of the sector that I would wish to see and I mean that as I stand here before you. Those people who control the tourism sector in Barbados do not have the goods to carry that sector forward and you had better believe what I am telling you. I can call some names but I would not worry. It is evident in the most recent exercise at Almond Beach that something is amiss. How come it is going to take a foreign company to understand or appreciate that there may be some hope within this sector in Barbados but after the last administration, for all the right reasons, sold that enterprise to the BS&T that we have now this urgency on their part to profiteer. I am saying to you that there is more in that issue than meets the eye. First of all the mother company of the buyers is in fact seeking to diversify its investment portfolio. It is a British company which understands only "too well that the British pound is on the way down for

many reasons. Therefore this company is seeking to diversify so as to have US denominated investments.

Now, only a couple of weeks ago in this Chamber we discussed the whole question of swapping, which this private sector organisation is running away from, the pound because it is going to depreciate. Yet still we are here suggesting that we should go the route of a swap on a loan which we incurred in pounds sterling about 5 to 6 years ago knowing only too well that there would be further depreciation of the pound on which we should benefit but we are now seeking to indulge in a swap with Citibank, to whose benefit?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, may I remind you of Rule 28.4 please. Proceed with your presentation but the rule is clear reflecting on ...

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am saying to you that in the tourism sector the performance that we have seen and we would continue to see in spite of the so-called increase in tourist arrivals for January there is, an underlying weakness in the tourism sector. That sector could not have been a significant employer of people since 1994 either.

The small hotel sector is going to suffer as a consequence of the value-added tax system even more than the higher level hoteliers. I am amazed that the figures in Barbados, seeming to reflect a substantial reduction of jobs in Barbados, given the underlying performance of the economy, the growth that we have seen in 1996 is a direct consequence of the sugar industry which grew by almost 60% last year and there would not be any jobs because the restructuring is supposed to increase efficiency and in fact the whole 1991 period was about efficiency and allocation. What you are seeking to do now in this so-called poverty alleviation programme is to talk about equity and distribution, but you cannot do the two things at the same time. You cannot look at an economy that is not stable, seek to provide all forms of efficiency in the economy and still expect to pursue the route of equity and distribution. It is almost impossible to do that and I am saying to you that the growth of the administration in 1991, the Democratic Labour Party, was to pursue the line of improving efficiency across the economy so as to make the economy more competitive. We have succeeded in some measure in doing that but to throw $10 million at the poor people of Barbados and tell me that you are alleviating poverty is to deny yourself a proper understanding of the issues in this economy. It cannot happen that way and this morning we got the benefit of a proper speech from the Member for St. James North who, we in this Chamber need to give a little more opportunity to, because we have apparently to identify special people for special areas but we need to listen to others who are providing facts and who are doing the research. You have to give individuals, like the Member for St. James North a hearing because he always has something proper to say and you had better believe it.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course he is and he demonstrates it every day in these Chambers. I am saying that when you listen to him, although he ran into a little difficulty, he went on to define poverty in a way that would suggest that what is being pursued by the Government is not appropriate. 3.35 p.m.

He would have run into trouble because he extended poverty beyond just an economic man into a social man a political man and therefore the mere pursuit of $10 million to alleviate poverty, is really not the way to go. It would not succeed, you do not have the structures in place to do it, neither have you conceptualized the programmes to address this issue. It is much bigger than $10 million.

There are other areas that I will address as well. It is not just the question of money. Money will not secure you the alleviation of poverty in Barbados. It is a much bigger problem. It is having time. Time is the greatest thing that you can give to any living individual. Time, not money. Money goes. It comes and it goes. Time is invaluable. It is qualitative time that increases the power of man almost expediently. Once you give that body a degree of satisfaction, you have, in fact, provided that people immediately with improving their self-esteem, which is the greatest gift you can give anyone, not money.

That is where this administration will fall because, although I must respect the Barbados Labour Party Administration for 1996 because, even though I appreciate a slight deviation from the usual economic rhetoric of the Prime Minister, into a little deeper discussion about the social and political implications in his speech this year, he is yet to really take off this economic being. The economy is not just about numbers. It has much more to do than that and he has to rid him of being a young economist, because this is how the young economist thinks, that numbers are all. It is time to move forward and look beyond the 21st century. Do not look at the youth in terms of the - chronological thing and talk about conceptualizing and having a vision for the future and he has not yet unnerved that.

In terms of the other sectors, the Minister of International Business has failed because the underlying plank of your administration's strategy was to create ten thousand jobs in the informatic sector. It is there. It is

in the 1994 reply to the budget presented by the Leader of the Opposition. He was then Minister of Finance.

Ten thousand jobs were supposed to be created in the informatic sector. We gave an individual that responsibility and he has not yet delivered on anything. He is in fact, capable of rhetoric on computers, because it is very easy to be a computer expert, you do not need to know much about computers, once you have the jargon, you qualify. When you talk about hardware and software, you automatically assume a level of importance especially among people who have not a clue about computers. That is his role to discuss informatics.

He has not yet delivered because the Government, again, has failed in terms of being able to reduce BET rates. The Government has failed in terms of being able to reduce energy cost and you will notice that, Sir, individuals in these Chambers, will take a nod whenever I speak because it is indicative of the lack of acceptance of who is Clyde Mascoll. They do it consistently, because they feel that I should not be heard, but I have to be heard and I demand to be heard in these Chambers whenever I speak.

I am going to criticise where there is need to criticise and I am going to criticise and provide alternatives, as I did in housing. I cannot be denied of the proposal which I put forward in housing that in Strakers Tenantry, when.I went there to represent the interest of my constituents I told them not to buy any tenantry land until the Government resolves urban tenantries by establishing a fixed rate which the tenants would know, before any purchase is made and then Government itself has to subsidise residual, such that the land owner is not in any way sacrificing what he has worked so hard for.

The Government needs to provide a subsidy and that is the position and I am being told that I back raised the Government. It is because not only am I willing to criticise, I am willing to put forward an alternative position. The Government therefore, having taken on this big role of creating jobs has had to resort to swelling the ranks of the public sector. This is nominal, because I am yet to see a real job creation within the public sector.

The real job creation within the public sector should be reflected in the numbers. Whenever I hear discussion about job creation in the public sector in these Chambers, I hear about NCC. Now, NCC has created 264 jobs. We are still searching for 2 736.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: A simple mathematical deduction will say that 3 000 public sector jobs at $1 000 per month will mean $3 million per month, multiplied by 12, total $36 million per year. When you hear about public sector jobs of 3 000, it should be reflected in the Estimates. I do not see it. Where is the job creation even within the public sector?

What has happened really is that the private sector of Barbados is failing and has failed to provide the goods in relation to job creation. The Government now feels compelled to take up the slack, and as a consequence of the so-called job creation which we have had since 1994, a substantial portion of that is supposed to be in the public sector.

Yet still you do not see the real evidence of it within the numbers. I am yet to be told how it has happened and let me tell the Member for St. James South something.

The unemployment claims cannot be used to reduce employment in Barbados, or to determine unemployment in Barbados. Once unemployment is abated, unemployment claims would decline. Unfortunately, in the higher Chambers there is an individual there who seeks to represent the Government on economic matters.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member conclude please, your time has expired.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I conclude by saying that these Estimates, while there is an attempt to lodge them within the context of poverty alleviation, that $10 million in a $1.6 million budget cannot be the focus of attention. I am asking this Government to understand that the Capital Works Programme cannot be realised. I am telling them that they cannot get the project financing and I am also telling them that even in their domestic financing where there has been a shift from short-term securities to long term securities, that that would only satisfy the well-to-do because poor people cannot purchase long-term securities.

So, while you are pursuing the path of enfranchisement or equity, you have actually constructed a new domestic financing position which is only going to enhance the wealth of the commercial sector and those wealthy individuals in Barbados.

On that score, you are yet to revisit these Estimates and come up with a more creative strategy for the issues which confront today's Barbados. You have failed again, once more, in these Estimates.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City. Please, could we have some order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard the neophyte with interest. I have heard in this Chamber today that poverty alleviation is an afterthought, it is something that has now come to Barbados. I begin to wonder which Barbados the Honourable Member of St. Michael North West lives in. 3.45p.m.

Thirty-two years later I found myself as the representative for the people of the City of Bridgetown. I remember in the by-election of May 1976 that one of the major issues was urban poverty. I remember taking the then Tom Adams to see houses with dirt floors in Cats Castle in Bridgetown, to see where in the uptown area off Nelson Street people lived in barracks. A barrack is a huge building where every room represents a family. They just dragged down the last of them to build the second phase to Pondside just off Bay Street. You can pass and see them with communal washing and cooking in the yard. That is urban Bridgetown.

Bridgetown was no different from any other capitals in the world, developed or developing. I can show you now in North America, in the United Kingdom, in some of the most sophisticated developed countries of the world the most abject pockets of poverty. So it is nothing peculiar to Barbados.

To deny the struggle of over 50 years, the social revolution in this country, I really do not know where the political education of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West could have come from. Successive governments in this country, without apology, and I say this time and time again, have in the past$_x$and continue to make massive investment in the social sectors. It all went toward poverty alleviation.

It is just that in 1997, poverty alleviation, as the Honourable Member has already said, is a buzz word now coined by many of the funding institutions of the world. We are only talking about a word. I am saying that this Barbados has a great deal to be proud of in the way that it has alleviated poverty and turned poverty around over a 50-year struggle. That is a continuing struggle.

I lived through the 1970s. I lived through what is now called the "lost decade of the 1980s". I lived through the lost decade of the 1980s in this country. I lived through the first half of the 1990s when I saw a reversal of so much that our fathers and our grandfathers and grandmothers worked to achieve because of the policies of the then Democratic Labour Party Government.

I saw that in the 1990s. I never thought I would live to see in the 1990s a return to what we had graduated from in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is a fact that I am poorer in 1997 than I have ever been in my whole life. That goes for almost every Barbadian. Nobody has any money.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am on a point of order. I have never been so poor yet.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is no laughing matter. In the first half of the 1990s I lived to see in this Barbados that mothers could not afford to send their children to school, that we had gone back to a place where boy children were preferred over girl children to go to school, if only two children could afford to go to school. I lived to see a return to practices in this country that I thought we had left behind us forever in the 1950s and the 1960s. All of that is why the people of this country revolted.

The Prime Minister started this debate by making the point that wrong choices can destroy a nation just as right choices can uplift it. Do not let us butt about it. Wrong choices were made by the Democratic Labour Party Government between 1986 and 1994.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Order, please!

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been in politics, May coming will be 21 years and I have made this speech continually. I believe that as long as I am in this House I will continue to make this speech.

Over time I have seen successive governments in this country promoting the productive sectors at the expense of the social sectors. Not only Barbados, but everywhere else in the world. The recognition, the understanding at last that the social sectors are also productive sectors, I am glad that it has come full circle and that I have lived to see it happen and that I am part of it.

I repeat, the social sectors are also productive sectors. The productive sectors cannot do what you want them to do if you do not have a well educated society, if you do

not have a society that is healthy, well housed, adequately fed and so on.

All of this Sir, culminated at the Social Summit in Copenhagen a few years ago. It was there that the funding organisations of the world started to use with a certain frequency this phrase of poverty alleviation. There is nothing that the IADB or the World Bank or any other organisation can teach us about poverty alleviation.

I can remember as a little child when the first ever public bath in this country was opened at a place called Rosegate in St. John. My father, the late Frederick Miller, was the Minister of Social Services at that time. It is still there now derelict. I have lived - it came full circle - to be a Minister of a Government at a time when for the fkst time what was formally a public bath was turned to other more productive social use in the community at the bottom of the 8th Avenue in New Orleans. It was the first public bath to cease to become a public bath and is now a police post and community centre.

When he opened that public bath at Rosegate in St. John people in Barbados were shocked because in his speech he said that he hoped the day would soon come when you would not be opening any more public baths and that it would come tumbling down. That day has come.

You would understand how grieved I would be that in the early 1990s I would see in my constituency here in the City of Bridgetown people going back to that situation. They cannot knock down the bath at Waterloo Alley for that reason and that is why the second stage of the Pondside is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have gone to these U.N. and other conferences across the world and all kinds of pledges and promises have been made and funding has not followed so that developing countries like ours have to define our own priorities and work out our own salvation. That has been the history of Barbados over the past 50 years. These pockets of poverty that exist in Barbados, even though so savagely exacerbated during the 1991-93 period, we can deal with and put an end to them. It takes political will. Nobody is suggesting that $10 million is going to solve poverty in Barbados and bring it to an end. That is the interpretation that Honourable Members on the other side want to put on it. 3.55 p.m.

The fact is that Members on that side, Mr. Speaker, Sir, cannot debate the economy with the Members on this side and they are picking at all kinds of trivia. The fact that I do not count all the saucers and the cups in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are picking at that when there are mighty weighty matters of state for us to be dealing with.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because at least four persons on this side have spoken on economic and financial matters and so far only one person on that side has spoken on that particular subject.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You might not well have spoken, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I said it and I will say it again. The Members on that side cannot debate the economy with the Members on this side and all of this talk about there is consensus in here and national unity, do not be misled by it Mr. Speaker, Sir. It is only a cover for the fact that they cannot really tangle with us and debate the economy with us. Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a limited time at my disposal and there is much that I wish to say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are matters which are topical today, which touch on the Ministry of Tourism for which I have responsibility and I want to speak to these matters.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: There is nothing topical today about private beaches that has not been wilfully manufactured by people who want to distract us from the real matters which we should be dealing with. Nobody is talking about any private beaches in Barbados. They do not exist and will never exist. We have spoken on that already.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. I can take her to St. Peter and show her a private beach, if the boulders have not been moved since I last met with them.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, something has happened in Barbados which has very serious, in my judgement, very serious implications for Barbados as a country, for tourism as an industry. Now, there are very few Members in here except perhaps, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and myself who can claim to have sat... In fact, indeed the Honourable Member for Christ Church West still sits on a certain Board, several Boards in this community where we live.

I sat for several years, six years I think it was on the Board of Life of Barbados. I am now clocking up twelve and a half years as a Member of a Barbados

Cabinet. Never, never have I seen corporate manoeuvring of the kind that I am witnessing now in respect of what has happened with the Barbados Shipping and Trading over recent days. Never! It causes me great concern.

I am concerned, Sir, because I am a person who pay respect to process. I am concerned, Sir, that an item not on the agenda of a Board Meeting, not an agenda item. There is no board paper, which is going to deal with the star performer in the BS&T. We are talking about a public company. This is no little "mumma pot" family-run company.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not understand what could have been so important that the directors at the Barbados Shipping and Trading could have made the decision that they made just a few days ago. Now, the Annual Report of the Barbados Shipping and Trading, the Prospectus of Almond Beach Incorporated, have already, I think, have been made documents of this House.

Not only those two documents, by other spoken means Barbados Shipping and Trading made it perfectly clear that they have now a commitment to the tourism industry and invited Barbadians to assist them in that regard, and I am deeply, deeply concerned, Sir, and I have to be, as a Minister of Tourism that a significant policy shift so that their flagship as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy called it - I prefer to describe it as a star performer in the portfolio of the Barbados Shipping and Trading - would be virtually decidedly disposed of at a meeting where the two members of the Board who could best, or who were best placed or positioned to guide or advise the Board, the one who is the tourism expert and the one who is the real estate expert were not there. That this decision should be arrived at.

Now, Mr. Speaker, do not let us be in any doubt. Deals such as this are long in the making. They do not happen overnight. Directors of any company including the Barbados Shipping and Trading are trustees, and as trustees, they have a fiduciary duty on behalf of the shareholders and I would advise the shareholders, and I believe that all of Barbados would be behind them to get up on their hindlegs, especially those minority shareholders, to get up on their hindlegs and demand a special General Meeting and hold the feet of the directorate to the fire.

Directors have got to understand that sometimes they must learn in a board meeting they are going to say "no", and they must learn that sometimes that they must get up and say "I resign". I have never seen a manoeuvre like this. This could never happen in the Life of Barbados. If this was to happen in the Cabinet of Barbados, you would hear how wicked and how irresponsible we were.

You see, the private sector likes to hold itself up as, you know, the acme of nicety when it comes to corporate matters; but I have never seen anything like this. It is the worst. It is very poor, very poor corporate practice.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister of Finance has indicated what his concern is and has said what he has to say. As Minister of Tourism, I have certain concerns. Now, my first concern, there are several. My first concern has to do with a certain uncertainty in the tourism investment climate in this country.

Last year, Barbados found itself in a position where three of its major hotel properties Sandy Lane, Paradise, Sam Lords, were in a state of flux. Sandy Lane settled, as it always has, being in foreign hands. Sandy Lane is in the hands of a business person, not necessarily a hotelier.

Sam Lords is trying to settle again, not quite near, but it is trying to settle and that is why I am saying I have these concerns. These are major hotel properties in Barbados. Paradise is still in a state of uncertainty. Princess has just bought Royal Pavilion and Glitter Bay and no sooner bought that back on the market again. This is speculation of, I mean the most scandalous kind that we have seen, and now, on top of this comes Almond, but Almond is different. Almond is different, different because a Democratic Labour Party Government, virtually gave Almond away well below cost, to a local breed of grouping.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Well, he is going to deny the truth.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member, Sir, who I think is making an important speech and I wish that the Honourable Member would deviate from making the speech mainly for political purposes. It was a public offering. It was publicly done. It was pellucid. Almond was sold to the highest bidder according to the information. It does not make sense to be saying the Democratic Labour Party gave it away.

If the Honourable Member is saying that she would have made a better decision, say so, but do not leave the impression to the young people out there that I was involved in a Government that went and handed some people the thing. I do not think that is fair.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael West should have been the last person to get up and make that statement because the Democratic Labour Party Government did the same thing in respect of the St. Joseph Hospital, paid for it, paid for it, not selling this time, buying it, paid for it twice what it was valued at.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: The Honourable Member is now misleading the House with untruthful statements. I have in my possession a copy of a valuation of the St. Joseph Hospital which was put at three times what we paid for it. It was offered to the Barbados Labour Party for $15 million. We paid $6 million for 22 acres of a hospital that already exists. $6 million. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West was, in his private capacity, a participant in the negotiations between the Vatican and the Government of Barbados. It is improper for the Honourable Member in her capacity as a Deputy Prime Minister of this country to make that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, please, please, okay. 4.05 p.m

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I will withdraw the statement, Sir. I agree that it is improper for me to make the statement in light of the fact that there is an enquiry to get on the way into the St. Joseph Hospital. So I withdraw it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not accept that her impropriety has anything to do with any enquiry. The Honourable Member is not going to have any enquiry about anybody that collects money anywhere and therefore to say the impropriety has to do with an enquiry is rubbish. The Honourable Member knows that the Parliament was fully informed on the sale of the St. Joseph Hospital for $6 million. US$3 million.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, back to my concerns. The Government has taken certain initiatives.

In respect of the Hilton Hotel, a massive refurbishment programme will get on the way in October of this year. We are hoping to build an additional 106 rooms, also to construct at that site a ballroom and convention facility to accommodate 600 people. I have also put to them the possibility of putting condominiums and villas to the eastward side of the Hilton Hotel. A product mix will be there. The possibilities are tremendous. It is hoped that the Hilton in years to come will anchor a massive resort carrying at least 1000 rooms when you count Grand Barbados which I hope is talking to the Yacht Club and even going right into Hastings Rocks and back into the Garrison area and so forth.

The Government has also taken an initiative in respect to the GEMS project. An interesting development has occurred now in respects to the GEMS project. The GEMS project started out as a project to save rooms. Mr. Speaker, we need those rooms. We fool ourselves that we have 6000 rooms in Barbados but we do not. I can show you at least 1000 rooms that are not useable. A lot of them are on the South Coast. Do not let us fool ourselves, we count rooms but in reality the rooms are not there. I could fill every hotel room in Barbados tonight out of the United Kingdom alone if I had a certain category of rooms at my disposal. So do not let us fool ourselves about that.

What I am saying, Sir, is that the GEMS project really and truly has taken an interesting turn. It was originally designed for a number of virtually technically bankrupt small hotels on the south coast which the Government sought to rehabilitate and return to the pool of rooms. Now we find that some properties which do not fall into the category of Development Bank, bankrupt properties, are wanting in to GEMS because they understand the concept of joint promotion and advertising, they understand the concept of joint reservation systems and the need for small entities like themselves, as indeed happens in other places of die world to literally join forces in order to stay afloat. I have other concerns, Sir, I have concerns about a concentration of a majority of rooms on the West Coast of Barbados in the portfolio of one corporate grouping. I have serious concerns about that. Not that there is anything wrong with that *per se*. I have just come back from the International Travel Fair in Berlin where over a period of two days I had 18 appointments.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, Mr. Taylor and I were in Berlin together as indeed a host of other Barbadians. Now, in two days, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I saw 18 Tour Operators, Airlines officials and so on and so forth. I heard complaints of all kinds, concerns of all kinds about the St. James Beach, than I heard about any other grouping. So, that is an area of concern for me. There has been a rapid turnover at senior management level. People actually call names to me, they say the Theo Williamses, the Sue Springers, the Richie Alleynes, they have gone and the quality of service we are getting is not what it should be. Of course, I have to address the matter. It is a matter of concern to me since St. James Group Hotel owns Colony Club - 98 rooms; Tamarind Cove - 166 rooms; Coconut Creek - 53 rooms and Crystal Cove - 83 rooms. Together, these 405 rooms constitutes 6.85% of the total room stock in Barbados. Almond Beach between its two properties, the Beach Club and the Beach Village total 449 rooms or 7.6% of the total room stock. So Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the event of a merger what we are looking at here is a total room count of 854 rooms or 14.4% of the total room stock of Barbados. I have to be concerned about

that in the same way that I am concerned that so many of air lift eggs in respect of North America are in the American basket.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I would like to draw to Your Honour's attention that this House does not seem to have a quorum.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please ring the bell.

The bell was rung.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker I am also concerned in this connection because Almond is the largest indigenous old property in Barbados. The fate of it has to be the concern of us all. I am concerned about the workers in the event of a merger, if it does indeed take place. Because money now has to be raised. What is to stop them being severed or laid off or put on short time, next week, next year, whenever. Where is the care for those workers particularly who took their hard earn money and invested in Almond, and that is the concern. When the share issue was launched people were cautioned at the time to examine it carefully because it seemed to be structured more in the favour of the Directors of the BS&T and the Management than it was in respect of other shareholders, We are seeing in a short space of time that those chickens are coming home to roost. 4.15 p.m.

Who is going to speak for them? Who is their protector? What is their position? It just is not fair. Something is very wrong about this and this has been said already in here today. If this is how corporate Barbados is going to conduct itself this is not a positive message to send to Barbadians. Those who have not invested in it are thanking their lucky stars today and those who have invested are wondering and worrying what is for them in the future.

There are some who in the event of a merger and a sale are going to be very well positioned and very well off but not the majority. I have a concern, Sir, about the fate of the workers who are part of that small group of minority shareholders and whom I advise to demand a special general meeting. This cannot go by the board and unremarked. I do not know how this would be minuted. I do not know how the BS&T Board Minutes for a particular meeting would read. These are very serious matters, Sir.

If, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is saying that this negotiation was on the way even before the share offering was bruited abroad and made public this is now taking on even more ...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I would not know. It would have to be a matter for the DPP. This is a public company. These are shares being traded on the Securities Exchange of Barbados, an exchange that we want to be clean and an exchange that we can trust.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that the Right Honourable Minister of Finance will take the point that he has a certain role which he can play in this but he is not the only one with a role to play in it. There are many steps through which this process must pass and I hope that it happens. I hope that it purges Barbados of this corporate infelicity and I make no apology for describing it as such.

Mr. Speaker, it will continue for a long time to exacerbate my concerns as a Minister of Tourism that a company of the size, of the weight, in the corporate community in Barbados would have committed itself to tourism and in such a short space of time would appear to have reversed itself from it. It is a very, very serious indicator of things to come.

We are struggling in the Caribbean, Mr. Speaker, Sir. For the first time ever there is going to be a tourism investment conference in the Bahamas in April. The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Owen Arthur, has been invited to address this as indeed has Prime Minister Patterson of Jamaica and a number of people who are well placed to speak to the issues of investment. Barbados would be going to that meeting with a very dirty copy book.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Of course I will be going. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that it is coming at a time when in the Caribbean we are looking to make forward motion, to be progressive, to ask Caribbean people, particularly Caribbean people, particularly Caribbean Governments and Caribbean entrepreneurs to look at the wider Caribbean because we are talking tourism, we are talking wider than ACS, to look at this in terms of investment for the early twenty-first century and this is a very, very serious step backward. This is backwardness on the part of Barbadians. BS&T do not let us fool ourselves, they did not come from Mars, they are Barbadians and it is a reflection on all of us. Black and white directors sat on the board so do not let us fool ourselves and I am not hiding my mouth to talk about these things. I felt that Barbados had come to a level of sophistication that I could proudly go and say to people, this is what the investment climate looks like. We are putting a brochure together right now. This is what the investment climate in Barbados looks like right now in respect of tourism and invite people to consider us seriously.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, for BS&T and it is a bad thing that has happened for Barbados. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to support this Appropriation Bill for the year 1997 to 1998. When this document was produced I felt then that it was a good document and certainly when I saw the Opposition Leader coming into this House he did not have the same sprint in his heel as he usually has. Secondly when I saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central his brow was not as prominent as before and I knew then that an alternate policy would not be coming from the opposite side.

As a new member in this House I always look forward to an alternate view but on this occasion I must say that I was surprised that such a view was not forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that this year is the take off year for this administration. As you know, when we assumed office back in 1994 we had to grapple with the bad Government that existed then and certainly the Prime Minister and his Cabinet over the past two years were able to put things on stream once again and I am happy today to say that we are on the take off point.

Mr. Speaker, in this country everybody seems to be talking about the alleviation of poverty but as a person from a humble background I believe I know more about poverty than anybody else in here and it is a fact that certainly past administrations have had to grapple with this situation.

I was a bit surprised to see that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was saying, what is $10 million towards this thing. I am surprised because from the time I was born I realised those who had money seemed to survive and those who had none sank. So I am glad that the Prime Minister found it possible on this occasion to make that money available. I certainly hope that in the future he will make more than $10 million available in order to help the poor people of this country.

I was abroad over the past two weeks and something came all the way from Barbados to London and I was a little worried when I heard about it and I would like to be the peace maker on this occasion and explain to the people of this country that this administration is trying its best to help all people in this country.

Certainly, the Sports Council, where I am the Chairman over the last year our capital works programme was such that we started in the North and I know it was said that it would appear to some people that everything was happening there.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this House. The north of Barbados means St. Lucy. 4.25 p.m.

I am happy to report that in this forthcoming year we have decided to shift to another section of the country. It is important that the people of this country know because we do not want the wrong perception to be given out there.

Certainly, in St. Joseph we should construct a new pavilion, near the Grantley Adams School. We also would construct a Hard Court in St. Joseph. I would also say that in other constituencies, away from St. Peter and St. Lucy would benefit this year, I would like to say, Richfield in St. Thomas, Ellerton in St. George and lastly, this, Sports Minister, Brereton in St. Philip.

As I said, last year, we started in the far North and we are gradually working toward the South. You could imagine that in my own constituency, on this occasion, I have not really taken anything, but I like to share. I think the bible says "it is better to give than to receive". So, on this occasion, I am making sure that I am giving out.

I would like this Honourable House to know that I visited St. Lucy, the project that the people have started in St. Lucy we are looking into the matter and I sincerely hope that in the very near future, we may be able to assist in your project.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER: I am not the Minister, I am just working on hand.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, yes, I know that you are looking at me and I will let it be known.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, let us hear. Silence, Please! Please!

Mr. D. CARTER: ...now, Sir, that in our program, Hill Road, Dash Gap, St. Michael, I believe it is your constituency Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: St. Michael Central.

Mr. D. CARTER: We will construct a new hard court there, and another one in Bush Hall, St. Michael. As you can see, we have moved from the North, gradually to the Central and we came down to St. Michael. I am quite sure, that the Minister of Finance, in years to come will give us the necessary funds so that then the South would be able to have similar properties.

I have to say this in the House because, as I said, I came back here and I saw things in the paper and we do not try to give people the impression that this administration is the type of administration that would not look after every possible section of Barbados.

I am sorry on this occasion that I have not reached your constituency, I believe, and I know and I am the type of person that will make sure, and only today in this Honourable House I had to deal with a situation where the Member for St. James South was asking for certain things at the playing field in St. James, and I had to allay her fears by saying that on this occasion we were not able to give her but certainly in the very near future I would try to assist the area.

The reason why the talk came about is because in a week's time, this administration is going to name the playing field at St. James, Holder's Hill after one of our former great players, Desmond Haynes. We are using this occasion, now the Indians are coming here next week to have a big programme down there to let the world see that we like to look after our famous sons and will continue to do so.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER: On this occasion, Mr. Speaker, if I may touch slightly on a further programme in the Sports Council, I want neighbours in here to know that we, in the Sports Council will try our best, in the very near future to make sure all existing hard courts will be given light as soon as possible.

Yesterday, the Member for St. Michael South Central intimated that over the years he had to pay thousands of dollars out of his pocket to keep the playing field and the hard court and lights at Gully Hill in place.

I would like to assure you Sir, that we at the Sports Council were looking at that recently and, although I know you are a man of financial means #nd could afford to do it, I hope that in the near future we will be able to do something tangible, so that, as you said, would then transfer the money to other areas that are in need of such funds.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir, I want to make this clear. What I said is that I am prepared to give the lights, they cost about $9 000, to the Sports Council so that they would no longer become the property of the Government and, in return the Government will take over the responsibility for the monthly bills that is about $100 or a little over that. This would give me the opportunity to create another investment elsewhere in the constituency for the benefit of the people. That is what I said. I am willing to give you that in return for certain things. This, I think is a fair enough offer.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Philip North did a marvelous job this year, but obviously the Opposition still found it possible to try to attack him. Now, what pleases me today that Member was able to provide documentary evidence to show exactly what he had done for the people of Barbados. If I remember correctly, he has done twice or three times as well as the previous administrations and I think that he should be congratulated for that.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER: I would like to say one thing though Sir, that while I was away, in my constituency in St. David's, two houses were burnt flat and I would be appealing to the relevant Ministry for some help in helping those people to regain somewhere to live quickly.

I am sure that this Government is a caring Government, and it is now historic that the Barbados Labour Party looks after the ordinary people of this society. I hope, Sir, that in the near future, between the Ministry of Housing and certainly the Ministry of Community Development, I will be able to help those two families in St. David's.

But, something tickled me this evening while I was sitting here, I remember clearly the Member for St. Michael North West saying that the Government was grappling with unemployment. 4.35 p.m.

If I remember correctly, when I came to this Honourable House $2V_2$ years ago unemployment in this country was 22%. Now today, it is 14.5%. The point is this that if in $2V_2$ years this Administration was able to bring down unemployment, commonsense tells me that in the

coming years we will continue to lower unemployment in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that the Members on the other side could really be talking about unemployment. God helped the people of this country when they were so sensible enough on September 6,1994 to give the Barbados Labour Party the opportunity to govern this country.

I sincerely hope that the people realise that whenever the Barbados Labour Party is in office, in the 1976 to 1986 period and now this period, life improves tremendously.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say I hope all the Ministries in here will be able to assist Christ Church East Central certainly in roads and certainly I expect that the old people of my constituency would be well looked after. Thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would beg to move that this House be suspended until 5 o'clock.

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

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

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of Expenditure which we are debating in the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill is the first part of a budgetary process and, as such, they are a tool of social and economic engineering. The Estimates this year, perhaps more than in the recent past, exemplify the ability to which Government can put money with a view to enhancing the social sectors.

Mr. Speaker, when this Government took office in September 1994 it was against a background of at least 4 years of negative growth, all kinds of social dislocation, a crime rate that reached its height in 1992 when 13 000 crimes were recorded in this country.

I wish to say that at the end of 1996 that number had fallen to 10 000. When we took office it was against a situation of unemployment at the level of 22% and not long before that in the previous year reserves had dropped to $93 million. The task which confronted this Government was one of restoration of the productive sectors of the economy to ensure that all performed. The task which confronted us was to restore confidence in Barbados both at the level of the local population and at the level of the overseas investors.

I will confess that never in my professional or public life have I worked as hard as I have worked these last $2V_2$ years on behalf of the people of Barbados. I have no Parliamentary Secretary. I have 2 Ministries that 2 persons under a DLP Government ran and it is I alone. This whole Cabinet can say the same thing that I am saying. All of us have worked very hard. A smaller Cabinet than the DLP.

I have been in politics in Parliament 21 years now and so I suppose I understand the vagaries of the Press but I must tell you that I get very disappointed with the negativity that pervades the Press in Barbados. What are we complaining about? Why should we complain except that as Barbadians we pursue excellence vigorously and we seek to be better? Why should we complain? No longer have civil servants had their salaries cut. Rather, they have had 2 increases and a productivity bonus. Instead of the Government and the statutory boards sending home 3 000 and 4 000 workers, there has not only been job stability but there has been job creation to the point where that 22% unemployment that we found in 1994 has been officially reduced to 14.3%.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not care which figures. I am using the figures from the statistical department. All the productive sectors in this country are performing. Tourism is up by about 3.3%.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do you hear me come in here to tell lies?

Manufacturing is up. Agriculture is up. Offshore financial services are up and thriving and the Right Honourable Prime Minister when he was in Opposition made the call from that side for the then Government to ensure that all the productive sectors in this country performed. 5.10 p.m.

He was ignored or to put it another way, the present Government had no capacity to implement measures to ensure the performance of all of the productive sectors. They are now performing, Sir. We have buoyant reserves. I ask why should people complain, when for four and five years projects in this country remained half-done, remained half-done under a DLP Government. We have had to come and systematically complete Queen's College. We are going to do St. Thomas Secondary School.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You started it and left it for years five or more, languished it in the elements. You left the Venezuelan houses at Cane Gardens. Go and check out now, even the lights. Saturday before also I was there in Cane Garden when the Light and Power was putting in lights in Cane Garden because houses for people to live in have now been constructed where they were empty boxes before.

I could mention Queen's College. The new Ministry of Education building there in Constitution Road. It is only as a people, Sir, we drive ourselves hard that there can be real cause for complain, Sir.

Now, having ensured that the economy has been stabilised and is growing, it is important for the Government to transfer the reality of such growth and development in a way that the man in the street can identify with growth and development. The man in the street could not care less if you say the economy grew 4% or 3.5%. It means nothing to him unless it is going to be reflected by something in his pocket or a new road where he lives or something he can identify with. That is why I said, Sir, that the construction of the Estimates this year has been deliberately focused to transfer some of the fruits of that growth and development in a meaningful way and in an identifiable way to the man in the street. I hear all this talk about poverty alleviation, right.

Sir, every year this Government has been giving money to the social services, where the Honourable Minister of Labour and Community Services, this morning, recited the facts and the numbers to show that since he has had responsibility for the National Assistance Board the output of services has been greater each year than the previous one, including the size of the debt. Now, all that has happened this year is that in addition to giving what we always gave, Government finds itself in a position where it can do more and we are contributing additional funds for development of the social sector and relief of poverty.

It does not mean that $10 million is all that the poor people in Barbados can hope to receive. This is the first tranche, installment number one. This is one aspect of it. There is rural development, the Urban Development Programme, of which the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Transport is going to speak and at some time during this week I am sure you are going to hear about what we are going to do in terms of urban renewal, and, as I say, carry to the people in those depressed areas, which still remain, some of the benefits of the growth of the economy.

Now, it is important for us to understand that Barbados has been categorised, characterised as one of the leading developing countries in the world. Anybody external to Barbados will tell you this country has done well and is respected but yet like, everywhere else, there are pockets of poverty which remain in many constituencies. It is our challenge as, Government to identify those pockets and go in and offer relief be it in terms of repairing houses, repair of roads, provision of light, water, whatever. Relief of poverty is multifaceted. It is multifaceted, Sir. There are several things. They will vary from constituency to constituency the types of service needed to relieve the poverty which exists. I was attracted, Sir, to the argument of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who said, let me get his words

> "that he had searched the Estimates and found the numbers and apart from accounting for 264 or 246 people at NCC he could not find that the numbers in the Estimates reflected any growth in employment in the public sector."

I found the numbers. Between 1995 and the fiscal year '95-'96 and the fiscal year '96-'97 statutory personal emoluments grew by $15 million.

Aside

Hon.D. A. C. SIMMONS: So how much personal emoluments grew by? Other personal emoluments grew by 17m. This says nothing about employment in the Statutory Board, Sir. I have already explained that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South had said this morning that the emphasis on jobs has been quietly dropped and a new emphasis placed on poverty alleviation. That is not true, Sir. We tried to explain that we are pursuing many strategies at the same time. Relief of unemployment -1 do not believe that anyone can really seriously quarrel with the Government that in two and a half years it has been able to reduce unemployment from 22% to 14%. I am using the same statistics that put it at 22.

Aside

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I really cannot argue with you if you are going to tell me. The thing is to believe

you. We did not challenge them when you were Members when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was a Member of the Central Bank and their own yellow book said that unemployment was 22%, Sir. 5.25 p.m.

We did not challenge them. We did not say we could not believe them. Now the same book is going to say 14.3 per cent and we are hearing that it is a question of credibility.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You had the opportunity to do that today.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that this year we are going to get to my Head but I wish to just mention a couple of things that are reflected in Head 30. In this financial year, Sir, we will start the construction of the new Forensic Lab. One point seven million dollars have been allocated for that on page 56 and we shall start that some time in the late summer. About September we hope to start.

We are going to spend some time this year completing the planning for a number of other projects most o^which will probably start next year, a police station for Wildey and a Supreme Court Complex. We have designs. We have a model. We have identified a site for the new Supreme Court. The next step is to try and acquire the site. We have figures in this year's Estimates to enable us to plan these projects with a view to their start in the next financial year.

I also wish to say that on page 57 Members will see that we intend to implement a new penal system in this financial year. The Steering Committee on penal reform has finished part of its work. They are submitting to me a report dealing with alternative imprisonment. That report will call for the enactment of legislation to provide for non custodial punishment.

I just wish to say that as a community we have to come to accept that imprisonment must, in future, be reserved for the worst type of offence and the worst type of offender. More and more we must look towards punishing the offender in the community whether by fine, probation, suspended sentences, curfew orders, whatever.

The figures are very instructive. It costs $28 a day to keep a person at Glendairy Prison. It costs $77 a day to keep a boy in Dodds.

Asides,

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Because there are just over 30 boys and staff.

Hear this figure, Sir. To carry out probation services in Barbados it costs $2.65 a day just to look after those on probation as against $28 for a prisoner and $77 for a boy or girl at Dodds. Now, I think the figures are compelling that our emphasis must be more towards the non custodial, the probation type commendation orders that you can do. All it would mean, even if you increase, and you will have to, your staff to look after the community service orders and all those things, it is still going to work out far cheaper than imprisonment or incarceration at Dodds.

I am proud with the work of the Steering Committee and the Task Force because for the first time we are having scientific structured analyses of crime and punishment in Barbados on the basis of which we can now do proper planning and implementation of social policies.

Before I finish, Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Estimates not only to the House but to all Barbadians. This Government had asked for the opportunity to serve this country and I am proud as a member of this Cabinet with the quality of service that in $2V_2$ years we have rendered to this country. The country, and particularly the opposition elements seem to believe that all the wrongs that existed for 8 years must be righted in $2V_2$ years.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am here for 10 years.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Let me say something here. Honourable Members, I have noticed this trend.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am speaking, please. I have noticed Honourable Members having this tendency recently to speak across the Floor and interrupt Honourable Members. I am asking you all to observe the rules of this Honourable Chamber, please.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Before I finish, Sir, this morning the Honourable Member for St. Michael South tried to be contentious about a matter on which I think the country should be unanimous. It is the business of the Ship-Rider Agreement. Now, I have never spoken publicly about the Ship-Rider Agreement. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have spoken but I want to say this. I have never heard, nor would I have expected

that when an agreement is being negotiated by parties that you bring the negotiated document from time to time before it is in a state in which it could make some kind of sense.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South negotiated the agreement to set up the Caribbean Supreme Court. We came into office and I found a document that locked Barbados into the Caribbean Supreme Court. I am not quarrelling about it. We support it, but the point is he never brought it in here when it was being negotiated.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South signed that agreement in July 1994 at the Heads of Government Meeting here.

Let me make the point again, Sir, on the Ship-Rider Agreement. At the level of officials, on both sides, the U.S. side and the Government side, negotiations were taking place about the form and content of an agreement, a Ship-Rider Agreement.

The last meeting was in July 1996. Subsequent to that, the Government of Barbados and the Government of Jamaica explained in September last year that we preferred to have a comprehensive agreement which would provide not only for Ship-Rider but all the other aspects of illicit drug trafficking, thus money laundering, gun smuggling, deportees and so on. We preferred to have all those matters dealt with in one agreement, including Ship-Rider.

Two weeks ago Mr, Clerk came here and in the presence of the assembled gathering and for the Press to hear he said that the U.S. Government accepts that they will negotiate a comprehensive agreement with Barbados. 5.35 p.m.

We now have to move from the stage of Shiprider pure and simple to Shiprider plus gun running, deportees and all of that. We have to redo this thing. So there is nothing to bring to Parliament at this stage, let the negotiation process continue. I want to say this to those who talk about sovereignty. They should go back to the Vienna Convention of 1988 which is the basis for all of this negotiation about Shiprider. It is the basis. Shiprider is just the contemporary form that developed out of the Piracy Agreement, the Contraband Agreement for Rum and so on. We have come to this stage now. Article 9 said

> "in appropriate case and if not contrary to domestic law the party shall establish joint claims taking into account the need to protect the security of person and of operations to carry out the provisions of this. Officials'of any party taking part in such teams shall act as authorised by the appropriate authorities of the party in whose territory the operation is to take place. In all such cases, the parties involved shall ensure that the sovereignty of the party on whose territory the operation is to take place is fully respected".

Now the Vienna Convention itself calls for respect for national sovereignty.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is law, we have enshrined this. You know why we want a full and comprehensive agreement and not just who will hop on and off a ship because Article 10(2) says these words "The parties may undertake directly or through competent international or regional organisations to provide financial assistance to such states for the purpose of augmenting and strengthening the infrastructure needed for effective control and prevention of illicit charter."

Here is an article headed "International Cooperation and Assistance for Grant" providing that those countries that can afford should offer technical and financial assistance to those which cannot afford to help develop the infrastructure. Hence we want some help about money laundering, we want them to cooperate with them in relation to deportee, gun running and gun smuggling. I am saying that the stance that Barbados has adopted is backed and sanctioned by the Vienna Convention of 1988. I am not making any further statements on Shiprider until I finish the negotiations. I am not making any further statement, Sir.

I want people to understand that the Barbados position is taken in the context of an international convention which we had signed and nothing that we are doing on Shiprider is inconsistent with that.

I believe that I have said enough. At an appropriate time the Government will take the Opposition into its confidence on this matter and like so many other things we have been open but now is not the time to bring an agreement that is full of square brackets and dispositions, it is not in a state.

Perhaps the last thing I will say on Shiprider. I read and listened and all kinds of people talk and I wonder if they ever stop to think about the obligations, having regard to the Visiting Forces Act of Barbados - Chapter 118. Nobody has written or spoke about that. Look and see what the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act and the powers that visiting forces would have under that legislation. I am not saying any more. These are things that I will be negotiating from now on.

Sir, this Government has performed well. The Estimates reflect an economy that has performed well. I was not here yesterday, I can only deal with what I hear today. As I said before, Sir, I am proud to be associated with the kind of performance and commitment on the part of the front bench and the back bench. Thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to wind up the debate and I want to thank all Members who have spoken on it. Members of the Opposition and Members on the Government side. I want to salute the Members on the Government side for so carefully outlining the policy behind the Estimates and where necessary offering constructive criticism as to how the Government's social and economic policies can be strengthened. I believe the debate has been based on a consensus and that consensus is, Sir, that the Barbadian economy is doing reasonably well. While we may all differ as to who has to carry the responsibility for the strong performance, I believe that there is also a consensus that the country from an economic point of view should continue on the same course. During the course of this debate, Sir, I did not hear any stringent criticisms of any of the fundamental economic policies of Government. I did not hear any criticism about the deficit. There were one or two remarks about the specific aspects of Government economic policy, Sir, but there is a broad consensus that the economy is doing well and in our interest it should continue to do well and that we should all seek to continue on the same course.

I am fascinated with the predilection of the Democratic Labour Party's main spokesman on finances to keep claiming credit for the present state of the economy. Virtually three years after the D.L.P. has emitted office it is to be presumed, they say, that the performance is as a result of the pursuit of their own policies or because I refuse to change some of the fundamental policies of the D.L.P. I have, Mr. Speaker, gone on record, sometimes to the criticism of the Honourable Member for St. John as saying that there is but one Government of Barbados. In many respects, Sir, I am happy that when I was in Opposition I gave commitments in relation to my support for certain policies that have allowed me to live comfortably now that I am in Government. I remember giving a speech in the early 1990s that has become famous for remarks that I made at the end of the speech rather than for the substance of the speech where I supported things like trade liberalisation within limits. I also recall Sir, that I supported privatisation on the condition that the proceeds from the sale of Government assets be put into a special account. If the D.L.P. want to claim credit for that fund it is their business. I also urged the Government of the day that they should have retained a 'golden share[1] in every one of the Government enterprises that they were selling and that the 'golden share[1] retained by the Government of Barbados would have allowed us to prescribe the condition under which those assets after privatisation, should have been operated. If only, Mr. Speaker, if only, that advice had been followed. But that is hindsight, Sir. 5.45 p.m.

My advice to other persons who ought to be aware of where we are is to always remember that in a society such as ours that the strength and stability of this society have been based on the consistency of our commitment to a development path over a period of time, the general public's respect for and understanding of what we are seeking to achieve and our willingness, despite the occasional change of administration, to hold this country to its course. That is, in many respects the way in which we have approached the administration of this Government and if the Opposition believe that they want to share in some of the credit, Sir, then so be it.

I am proud to be in charge of an administration where an Opposition is prepared to say that the policies are their policies. That is as strong an endorsement as you could want, Sir, but I will continue, Mr. Speaker, to try to keep this country on its economic course and I have already warned the House that I am not an adamant man and if advice is rendered from this side or that side that I think is useful, Mr. Speaker, and will advance the lot of the people of Barbados, I will not stand on ceremony as regards who is the author. I will accept it and put it into effect. That is the spirit in which these Estimates have to be dealt with and I will come back to that later.

I have already commended Members on both sides but I really must say on this occasion that I thought that the speech of the Leader of the Opposition was a strong and appropriate speech. He gave credit where credit was due. He attributed to his party more credit than his party deserved but that is the lot of a Leader of the Opposition but there is one point on which he and I now are of the same mind and it is on the question of accountability.

I came to this House for my two first Budgets and I spoke to the need for those persons, not Ministers of the State, Sir, but those persons who have responsibility for managing the public accounts of Barbados, those persons who are the accounting officers in the Government, to respect the financial rules, to stop spending in advance of authority of Parliament, not to break the rules by not keeping proper records. On that occasion I was accused of being a lone ranger who had come into town to want to shoot up people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that I strongly support his attempt, if it is meant to be an attempt, at constructive engagement to keep the

entire Government on its toes by making sure that there is accountability in public financing. If it is intended to be constructive engagement because there is nothing better for all of us than to be in a position to be able to say that the taxpayers funds have been spent in accordance with the dictates of this Parliament, because Parliament is supreme, and that it has been spent in such a way that the taxpayers are getting value for their money. If that is the intention, Mr. Speaker, although I doubt sometimes that it is, to be focused on accountability by the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks then I strongly support it because it is also a practice that I insist on from public officers.

My Ministers could tell this House that there are instances in which I refuse to agree that not even a penny could be approved for specific heads until I was satisfied that the questions raised in this year's Auditor General's Report were answered by the Departments concerned.

The Member for St. John raised the question of a Head in the Ministry of Health which had been already referenced by the Member for St. George South that there were certain departments in the Ministry of Health where people were drawing money without being on payroll and without having contracts. It appeared in the Auditor General's Report and I told the Ministry of Health when it came to Estimates Committee, go back clean up that before you come to the Ministry of Finance and ask for even a penny. The same thing pertained in relation to certain Heads that were cited unfavourably by the Auditor General. The point I am coming to is simply this that this Government is not going to condone financial infelicities by persons who are at the level of financial officers in the public service of Barbados.

Ministers of Government do not keep vote books. Ministers of Government are not responsible for the spending of money. Very often, Sir, the actual act of expenditure goes on without Ministers being aware of what is happening but at the end of the day we are made to appear as if there are political infelicities arising from the things that happened, when inventories are not being properly kept and so on. If there is a mood in this House that these things must stop, Sir, I am glad because I want, I have already sent the message that I want the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs to start surcharging public officers who are in breach of the rules. It is not politicians who do it, Sir, it is the public officers. I want to say, Sir, that I want to thank my Cabinet because we had a very serious situation and I am not going into detail, Sir, where it was almost impossible to complete the preparation of the Estimates because of the deficiencies in the financial management of one Ministry which I will not name.

The Constitution of this country requires that these Estimates must be laid and they cannot be laid if a Ministry is left out so if one Ministry's finance officers say they are not going to be part of the process then they could frustrate a whole financial process and I would really like the Constitutional Commission to review the manner in which public officers should be disciplined. It is harder to enforce discipline on public officers than it is to deal with persons who commit crime and are answerable to the courts of this country. These things have to be said, Sir, and I am not going to let my Cabinet colleagues be labelled with the strictures that should properly fall where they should fall.

There are some things in the Auditor General's Report that we have told him that we do not agree with. For example, Mr. Speaker, on page 4 of the Report he speaks of breaches of statutory requirements. The Constitution says, for example, that the Minister of Finance should lay the Estimates and he should show sums required to meet statutory expenditures and the expenditures required arising from laws separately.

In the past, Mr. Speaker, statutory personal emoluments were shown in a vertical column but a few years ago the format of the Estimates were revised and statutory expenditures are now shown horizontally. And apart from statutory expenditures there are only two other sets of expenditures that arise as a result of law, one is debt, the debt is shown separate from all other accounts so it complies with the Constitution and sometimes there is travel which is built into law, for example travel associated with the office of the Governor General. The Ministry of Finance has, if you go to the Governor General's Head, shown that of $30 000 for travel it has a note saying that this item includes provision for statutory travel expenses of the Governor-General.

This Parliament has already agreed that the notes to the Estimates are an integral part of the Estimates so that if you have to change the note to be able to buy a kettle rather than buy a teapot you have to come back to the House to change that. 5.55 p.m.

The Notes are fundamentally part of the Estimates so that if you show statutory expenditures in the note, it is the view of the Ministry of Finance that they have been shown separately, so that they have a separate column showing "statutory travel" as distinct from "other travel" is a joke. What that issue is about, the Ministry of Finance feels that it has complied with the constitutional responsibility by showing it by a note that it is in the integral part of the Estimates, but the Auditor General does not agree.

We feel that it is tidier to deal with it this way rather than have a large number of columns which would make

the document three times larger than it is, merely to show "statutory expenditures" in a vertical, rather than a horizontal fashion.

Now, Sir, there are some other things that occurred in the Auditor General's reports that reflect poorly on some of us that are not worthwhile. Let me say Sir, that this notion of queries being raised without the House being told of what were the responses to the queries is something that should be corrected. Very often, Sir, the queries are raised, the response may come after the report is finished, or the response may not be in keeping with what he wants.

I would use my own case as a case in point. I travelled once on behalf of the Government of Barbados, stayed in a private apartment, and I repaid what was given to me to pay hotels. I am given as well an amount for entertainment. When I go abroad to represent Barbados as a head of a delegation I meet people for breakfast, 1 meet people for lunch and I meet people for dinner. I am given an amount to cover meals. I am also given an amount to cover entertainment. I am required to take my hotel bills when I come back to disaggregate that portion of my expenditure that is in the nature of meals as distinct from what I spent to have a person meet with me over lunch.

Now, Sir, I have told the Auditor General that I would rather pay back the money, rather than come back to Barbados and have to sit down and piece out every expense that was part of my meal allowance. Those are the nature of the queries that are sent in here.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, when it was raised as a query my response simply was, "I am prepared to pay back the full amount rather than to sit down and have to take out how much I spent on my own meals as distinct from how much I spent on entertaining people, on behalf of the Government of Barbados." I do not feel that I have the time to do it. Let me pay back the whole thing.

You will hear Sir, "queries were raised*' and there is a whole political hullabaloo about it.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is my project, Sir. Those are the queries that are raised. All of us in this House, Sir, who go abroad have the same allowances that existed in the mid 1980s. Ministers travelling abroad, Sir, if they carry any group to lunch, eventually have to end up subsidising at least $60 a day for meals. So anytime you carry a delegation to lunch, Sir, all is lost. Then you have to come back and say "part of that $60 was yours and how much you spent on meeting people to do government business for Barbados." It does not matter. I will pay it.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am saying, Sir, that there has to be a sense of proportion with how people use the Auditor General's report to reflect to the behaviour of politicians, because these things have to do less with political infelicities, Sir, and more with the breakdown of the functioning of the financial system.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I said that I really thought that the Member of St. John gave a strong aggressive speech. He did what is expected of the Leader of the Opposition. He criticised where he thought criticism was necessary. He tried to keep the Government on its toes Sir, and I commend him for that. I would urge my Ministers, Sir, to take note of what he said in relation to their Ministries and put it in a perspective where his advice is rendered gratuitously and is used as a benefit to advancement of the Government.

Sir, I regret that I cannot speak in a similar vein about the Member for St. Michael South. One day Sir, I hope to.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Maybe sooner than that, as a former Prime Minister of Barbados. I believe that having sat in this office that a certain dignity should attend you wherever you go. Cameron Tudor made the point that whenever he was abroad, Sir, he was always an ambassador for Barbados.

For a former Prime Minister to come to this Parliament today to suggest that a Government in the course of developing an agreement with a foreign Government or with anybody else, should have the agreement brought to the Parliament for the Parliament to hassle over square brackets and so on. It is a...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He said that Branford. It is a fundamental piece of mischief.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, and to bring that to this House, Sir, in the context of a situation where mischief in now appearing on American television to seek to discredit the position of the Government of

Barbados in this matter, Sir, is not, I believe, Sir, the kind of thing that we should expect from a former Prime Minister of this country. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are many things that he is doing that we should not expect of a former Prime Minister of Barbados.

Last week I had to bring to the House, Sir, without any public fanfare and I brought to him because he is week by week, month by month publishing something called "The Constituent." Month by month I am bringing to him quietly, copies of the records for him to see how wrong he is. He is driven by a motive of vindication. He wants to secure a place in the Democratic Labour Party for the future, but there should be a certain decorum that should be attached to how he conducts himself.

I brought him, Sir, and gave him things that would cause him to understand that what he printed in the last "Constituent" about his leaving behind some fund arising from the money that he borrowed from Barclays, was incorrect. That decision was taken on the 5th of September, the day before the general election, to completely move the money out of the Fund and put it elsewhere, so that we came to office finding ourselves in a position that one day the whole fund would have, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to be redeemed. Now, he knows these things and knows when they were happening, Sir. He knew them when they were happening.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are other things he said on platform that he misrepresented what I said on the floor of this Parliament. I called him and spoke to him about it and asked him "why are you doing this?" Sir, it was used in the Central Bank and then it was replenished and then it was evaporated on the 5th of September and he knows. But he would put in the "Constituent" that he left a fund when he did not leave a fund.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I stress this point because the Member for St. Michael South spoke in this debate about how we should be concerned with wealth creation and not with distribution. I remember, Sir, that he had published, in one of the copies of the "Constituent" an account of what a period in this document called "the Development Report for 1995 and 1996", and those reports said that Barbados has slipped from being the number one developing country to being the number three developing country, and that is a fact.

What he did not say was that the 1996 report was based on 1993 data and the 1995 report was based on 1992 data and that the period when this country slipped from being the number one developing country to being the number three developing country was in the period when his Structural Development Programme was in place. That is the point. 6.05p.m.

Mr. Speaker, that is why Barbados needs a poverty alleviation programme because it has been slipping. It is not a question that a former Prime Minister takes up this Human Development Report. It is not whether the data is right or wrong. He puts it out to his constituents as a former Prime Minister that the U.N. Human Development Report of 1995 is showing that Barbados has now fallen from No. 1 to No. 3 in the developing world. He did not go the next step to say that the information is information based on 1993 and 1992. The public is left to believe according to what he said and he said, "What has this new Administration done to Barbados to cause us to fall to that position?"

Sir, I set it in this context because we need to address the problem of poverty, because there is intense poverty in certain parts of Barbados despite our general development and there has been a recent element of poverty suffered by certain sectors of Barbadian society arising from structural policies of the past DLP which the general society believes that once the Government finds itself with the wherewithal to provide some relief that such relief should be rendered.

Yet the- burden of his representation to the House today is that we should not be concerned with problems of redistribution but let us continue to deal only with the problems of wealth creation. I find his behaviour in this debate totally reprehensible because he knows what he did to Barbados and why he did it. He knows what is left to us, who have inherited the legacy, to do.

The notion that we can separate wealth creation from redistribution is something that one associates with backward anachronistic minds of certain neo-fascist economists and people who believe in the trickle down period - that let them accumulate wealth and then let the wealth trickle down. It has no place in this society at this time or any time.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed by the nonsense that could issue from a man of that standing, that let us continue wholly to be concerned with how much wealth we create but let us not be concerned with the fact that there are places in Barbados where poverty and squalor exist, that we have a responsibility to deal with people's needs.

I want to enlarge on the point. I have just recently been honoured by CARICOM as the Prime Minister who

is now to be the Chairman of the CARICOM Committee of the Caribbean Group of Cooperations in Economic Development. The Caribbean Group of Cooperations in Economic Development is a policy forum that is made up of coordinators, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and Caribbean countries.

They have produced a series of reports that are intended to be acted upon. Their latest report is Poverty Reduction and Human Resource Development in the Caribbean which I would like all Members of the House to be able to read because it assesses the problem of poverty in the region and how we should respond.

It is an excellent report, Sir, and I give the House the commitment that as Chairman for the entire Caribbean in this Caribbean Group of Cooperations in Economic Development that the findings of this report about poverty in Barbados and the Caribbean will not gather dust but that it will be attracting my every effort to make sure that the international donor community and the international financial community put their money where their mouths are.

I have already met with the officials of the UNDP to get their involvement in our poverty alleviation programme and the reason why it is in the Ministry of Economic Affairs is for the same reason why a Mr. Bill Richards under a previous BLP Administration was in charge of a basic needs project in the Ministry of Economic Affairs that we can mobilise international and regional support for poverty in the Bajan project.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not a fad. I really would like to reach the stage when I, as a Member of Parliament and my contribution to the development of this country, is not measured by how many street lights I can walk about Barbados and say I know the number of and how many little pieces of road that I can say that I have brought to my constituency but that when my contribution in this Parliament...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: We have left ourselves to be judged only by reference to how many street lights we know. We have to put ourselves to be judged in terms of our holistic concept as to how Barbados must go forward. What we need is a system to ensure all Barbadians that there is a process by which the small things can be done and that there is some recourse when they have basic needs that must be met. We have lacked that before and we must have it now. We must have it now because we can afford it, Sir.

I am not apologising to anybody for putting this...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I want the Honourable Member for St. John to bring forward some projects for small people in St. John. Under the Special Development Areas legislation to do for St. John what I have just done for Speightstown because the first parish to benefit in Barbados from the special development zone legislation was a small black man - Elmer's supermarket was owned by white people and has converted into a service centre in Speightstown.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke in this debate and I notice that the spokesman for the DLP on financial matters did not trespass on the grounds that he thought that he should trespass on, in view that they put abroad that we are raking in some additional $100 million from the VAT.

Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of Expenditure show, and I want to be very clear, that last year, the year ending March 31st, revenue is estimated to be $1 299 million and for the next year, beginning March 1, 1997 is to yield $1 297 000. For the next financial year we expect that revenue will increase by only $68 million from all sources.

Sir, within that $68 million we expect that revenue from taxes and income and profit will grow by $25 million. We expect that revenue from non-taxed revenue will grow by $11 million and that revenue from international trade will grow by $2 million. 6.15 p.m.

So of the $68 million increase, over $30 million will be subscribed to, by taxes other than taxes on goods and services and other taxes. So that among the class of those other taxes within which the VAT is included, and which will contribute $30 million, Sir, some taxes will also contribute to the increased revenue. I made the point, Sir, in my second reading speech that the element taxes that the VAT is going to replace would have contributed almost $480 million to the Treasury in the course of this financial year.

To determine how much they would have generated in the next financial year, Sir, we added an element of growth, and it is obvious, Sir that eleven taxes together would have contributed an additional $30 million to the Treasury in the context of a situation where the economy is growing about 3% and total revenue is growing about

So that the additional revenue, Sir, what we have cited for the VAT and the Excise is equivalent to the revenue that would have been yielded by the eleven taxes in the year 1997-98 in the context of an economy growing at between 3 and $3V_2$%. That is the point. Let the word go forward from this Chamber that the Government is not expecting to take in total $100,000,000 in taxes from all sources, that we are expecting, Sir to get no more than $33 million in additional taxes from those things that have now replaced the 11 taxes, and that is due to growth. I stress the point, Sir, because there is a campaign abroad to suggest that the Government is in a position to support zero-rated food. That is why, Sir, I really have to take strong issue with the DLP on this matter, Sir. The Value Added Tax provided the Democratic Labour Party to show some sense of leadership. Its introduction has converted the DLP into a mob.

On the one hand, the Government is being advised by the Member for St. Michael North West that we should have a 10% VAT on food. That is his position, stated clearly. In the Constituent of January of 1997, and this speaks on the behalf of the St. Michael South constituency, it boasts that by the time, and I am speaking from memory, obviously, Sir. I recall that he said that by the time the office of the Sandiford administration terminated the following components of the proposed system had been agreed upon by Cabinet. All goods and services should be taxed at a single standard rate of 15% except those exempt or zero-rated and then I recall, Sir, I recall that the Constituent went on to cite those goods that should not have been taxed, exempt or zero-rated and they did not include food.

But then, Sir, I also recall, I also recall, Sir, that document concluded by saying that...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I want to get my memory as fresh as possible. I recall that it went on to say that the Constituent is not arguing for food to be exempted or zero-rated. We are demanding that the Government should immediately draw up a basket of basic food items and charge those items, not the standard 15% but at 5%. So we have the Member for St. Michael North West saying 10. We have the Member, Sir, for St. Michael South saying 5 on a basket you know, Sir. We have some people telling us deal with unprocessed food, some with basic food, and Sir, I want to tell the Member for St. John that the embarrassment of bringing a resolution to this Parliament, whereas the Member for St. Michael South could not agree to it, because he has gone on record as saying no zero-rating on any foods at all, 10% on all foods, and the Member, Sir, for St. Michael South is saying 5% on a basket, but the leader is coming to this Parliament, Sir, the leader is saying zero on the basket. Who is speaking on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party? Has it now become a mob? Has it now, Sir, become a mob?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am making the point to say that the introduction of the Value-Added Tax has provided an opportunity for those practitioners of political opportunism to tap into what they believe is a rich vein of public controversy. In their heart, Sir, they believe what they said when they went to Cabinet. Sir, I would like to attack the extent of opportunism. I have to refer again to the Constituent of January 1997. The Constituent on that occasion, Sir, that the Sandiford administration agreed that there should be no refunds on consumption taxes on stocks upon the introduction of the VAT. Then he says because of these things that the Minister of Finance, David Thompson could announce that a VAT would have been introduced in Barbados in April 1995, because they had settled it in their minds. They said that a Mr. David Thompson could have introduced a VAT in Barbados had he been given the chance with these features in 1995.

Then Sir, the same Constituent who said that the DLP under Erskine Sandiford agreed that there should be no refund on taxes on stock went on to say that in 1997 goods in stock at the time of transaction should only carry the VAT and that businesses should have been allowed to reclaim a refund on relevant taxes previously paid on those goods.

So, Sir, in the same document published in January 1997, they say that his policy was not giving refunds but because there is controversy in the society they say that we should give refunds and that is all that this debate is about. It is called "harperisation," Sir, "harperisation."

Do not seek to engage the Government in constructive engagement but serve his head and try to put the Government in a condition where it has to be reactive to the issues of the day; and that is all, Mr. Speaker, Sir that this is about, that this "tooing and froing" in the Constitution, Sir.

Sir, I have spent some time on the Member for St. Michael South because I thought that, generally speaking, in this debate, there was an attempt at constructive engagement on both sides, Sir, except Sir, for the Member for St. Michael North West who has staked his political career on the presumption that the Barbados manufacturing sector must vanish and decline. His argument was that a higher level of taxes on imports will force the sector to become more efficient by having to seek export markets rather than sell on the domestic market.

Now, Sir, the Central Bank of Barbados has put out preliminary estimates on the performance of the manufacturing sector in Barbados in 1996. The Central Bank is not responsible by law. I have said that before for making statements about the GDP. That responsibility is vested in the Department of Statistics. The public has to understand that very often the Central Bank is speaking in a preliminary way. We saw in 1995, Sir, I remember a debate in here, Sir, when the Central Bank changed its forecast of the GDP for 1995 on the eve of the budget. 6.25 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. The Prime Minister is misleading the House. He knows only too well that the Statistical Department produces the nominal GDP of Barbados and that the Central Bank of Barbados produces the real GDP data. The Central Bank of Barbados therefore has every right to speak on real GDP. You know that only too well, Mr. Prime Minister, so how could you accuse the Central Bank of Barbados about misleading. You know that. It is shameful that you should say it to accuse the Central Bank of Barbados of not being in its rightful place to speak on real GDP.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, that is exactly the point. The point is, and that is what this is about, that the Central Bank goes ahead and produces estimates of real GDP before the Department of Statistics produces theirs, based upon the collection of actual data.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Before the Department of Statistics goes ahead and produces the actual expenditure on GDP, and very often the Central Bank has to make corrections to its preliminary statements in light of what the Statistical Department has said are the facts, because the laws of Barbados vest in the Department of Statistics the responsibility to collect and publish information on production in this country.

The point I am making is, Sir, that when the Central Bank speaks, therefore, it is referring to its own preliminary estimates of what is likely to be the output of the country pending receipt from the Department of Statistics of the nominal figures.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not being unfair.

Now, Sir, this issue has concerned the Government, The Barbados Investment and Development Corporation has prepared a paper that I have to cite because I intend to refer to it. This paper says in its footnote: "This paper is prepared in response to the Central Bank's indication of a 1.7 per cent decline in the manufacturing sector in ...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I will have to. It was intended, Sir, for restricted circulation but I feel that Members of this Parliament should be within that category of people whose eyes are not defiled by seeing information like this.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am going to refer to it, Sir.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, let us understand that the Central Bank has put out a preliminary estimate but it now falls to people to go out and find out what actually happened by way of surveys, getting actual reports from companies and the like. These are the facts, Sir.

This is a report prepared, not by the Government, not by me, but by the IDC in response to the Central Bank's estimates. The index that leads to this 1.7 per cent growth is suggesting that the 1.7 per cent growth is the cause of a 42.3 per cent decline in the garment sector, a 5.6 per cent decline in electronics. Beverages and tobacco fell by 1.3 per cent and wooden furniture fell by 4.2 per cent.

Sir, the IDC did a survey of the garment industry that was supposed to have fallen by 42.3 per cent according to the Central Bank indices. The BIDC information indicates that while three garment companies closed during the year, seven new companies started operation and that there was a net increase in employment in the garment industry by 80 net new jobs in 1996.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Prime Minister is again misleading the House. He cannot be permitted to do this in this Chamber. The IDC has no legitimacy at all in producing statistics for Barbados, none whatsoever. He knows that and he comes and gives figures produced by the BIDC which does not have a statistical department or which does not do authentic figures. He is in no position to quote even from the BIDC. It is a poor reflection on the Prime Minister of Barbados. It is pathetic.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I will not allow the Member for St. Michael North West to take advantage of the lack of acquaintance of Members of this House with how this country's GDP is prepared. The Central Bank puts out a preliminary estimate. Then the Department of Statistics collects the information from the departments that would be responsible sectorally...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Department of Statistics must get information on industrial production from the BIDC.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. A survey is conducted by the Statistical Department which has been for years underestimating because the response rate has fallen from over 50 per cent in 1980 to 29 per cent. That source is the only authentic source for measuring the output in the manufacturing sector.

I am saying to you, Mr. Prime Minister, that you cannot use the BIDCs numbers in assessing the manufacturing sector's performance in Barbados. You cannot.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER; Please, please! Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is in the uncomfortable position of stating that if you cut taxes on the inputs of a sector it will cause it to collapse. If we were to follow his prescription the solution to Barbados' employment problem was to keep increasing taxes on the inputs of sectors because he said that if you cut taxes the sector would collapse so if you want to expand them, increase the taxes on inputs.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just one minute, please. Order, please.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL. Mr. Maxwell Stamp did a study and you need to listen carefully. He did a study which suggested that...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! The Honourable Member, please. Your point of order, of course, must relate to what was just said.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course, it relates, Sir. It relates because he is suggesting that I am saying that to impose a tax on the local manufacturers would make them less competitive in the domestic market in which case they would prefer to export because it would make them more competitive. I am saying that anti-export bias as identified by the Maxwell Stamp Study in the 1980s was misplaced.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. You have made your point of order already.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I have not yet made my point, Sir.

The Prime Minister has accused me...

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this all part of your misleading point?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Yes. The Prime Minister has accused me of suggesting that it makes sense to impose a tax on local manufacturing because they would then have to look to exports to earn their keep. I am saying, Sir, that is pathetic in its logic. I am suggesting to the Prime Minister that the local manufacturing sector, regardless of what he does now, will have to undergo severe transformation to hold its head above water in the 1998 period and beyond. You are pathetic.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I just want to state the facts as reported by the BIDC for the benefit of Members of the House. 6.35 p.m.

In 1996 seven new garment industries opened up, three were closed, 80 net new jobs were created in the garment sector and that the BIDC has put the advent very clearly that in circumstances where you have more new companies being created than being closed that it is inconsistent with a 42% increase in garment decline. In relation, Mr. Speaker to electronics, we did a survey of the Electronic Industry, BIDC indicated that companies in the sector did not experience decline in 1996 in fact most achieved increases. That is consistent, Mr. Speaker, with the Government having to earmark a whole area in the Harbour Industrial Park as a Centre for the Information Processing Industry and the Electronic Industry. In the electronic sector some 58 net new jobs were created.

Sir, I want to come to the conclusion and I want to repeat very carefully that the overwhelming characteristic of the manufacturing sector in 1996 was strong export performance. I.D.C rose from $194.6 million in 1995 to $263.1 million in 1996, an increase of 35%. I want to repeat that the certified exports of the sector rose from $194.6 million in 1995 to $263.1 million in 1996, a 35% increase in exports and the issue that must surely antagonise the Members for St. Michael North West is how can a sector that is generating net new jobs, expanding exports by 35% be shown to be a sector that is in decline?

Mr. Speaker, I am telling the House, Sir, that last year we reached a situation in Barbados, I am not talking about estimates and forecast, where the I.D.C. has run out of space to meet existing requirements for manufacturing capacity. We have reached a situation in Barbados, where the I.D.C. in order to meet requests for additional space has gone to the market and raised a $12 million bond to expand factory capacity in this country, and how can anybody come to this Parliament and tell this House that in circumstances where we have run out of space to accommodate existing demand, have to put in an $18 million programme year in factory space, that there has been a collapse in manufacturing in Barbados. It is not borne out, Sir, by the requirement of new space in the sector, it is not borne out by the growth in export in the sector, it is not borne out by the net new jobs being created in manufacturing, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, you would not want to refer to the Honourable Member as a...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter were ordered expunged from the records.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I leave the House, Sir, with these statistics. In 1995,1 came to this House with my first budget in circumstances where the Central Bank had started with an estimate of 2.5% growth in economy for the year that it revised on the eve of the Estimate to 0.5%. The Central Bank is now saying that the economy grew by 2.9% in 1995. I remembered having been pilloried in this House because of the way in which preliminary estimates are treated. I want to say, Sir, that there is...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: At the time that the original estimate was made for G.D.P. in 1995, there is no way that the Central Bank technicians could have predicted the strong hurricane season which we had in 1995 which drastically affected the out-turn in tourism and consequently affected overall performance in the economy,, It is unfair again, to be casting the Central Bank of Barbados in such light. It is unbelievable.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I can forgive the Member for St. John but any economist who would rise to say that the hurricane in Antigua can account for a difference in 2.5% change in the G.D.P. of a $3.6 billion economy, has to be mad, he has to be a joker, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member your last statement, you are not referring to any Honourable Member in here.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading the House because he is an economist and in 1995 he said that the growth in 1994 was as a result of cricket and the SIDS conference and I cannot imagine that in an economy of that size that two events like that could contribute so substantially to a growth of 4%. Any economist who said that about 1994 would have to be mad.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just let me say to the Honourable Members we are proceeding following the rules. The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Member for St. John might not be an economist but he might be other things.

My statement was that we would find it difficult to reproduce the 4% growth that was realised in 1994 because they were upon one shot activity. He has mislead the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, let us hear.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Again the Prime Minister of Barbados surprises and then again I am supposed to be a retarded son.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that what is your point of order, Sir? 6.45 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Please! Please!

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: In his own document, the growth in the economy in 1995 was a direct consequence of 8.1% growth in tourism output which was a consequence of the performance of the tourism sector during the summer season of 1995 so therefore to even suggest, Sir, that the Central Bank could have made this kind of prediction for the summer season is really amazing on the part of the Prime Minister.

In 1995, output in the tourism sector carried the economy and it grew by 8.1% whereas the economy grew by 2.9%. The tourism sector is the most critical sector of the Barbados economy and it is a direct consequence of the performance of the tourism in the summer following on the very difficult hurricane season which we had during the summer which affected all the other destinations. Therefore I am saying to you that the Central Bank could not have predicted that at the beginning of the year. It is amazing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point. Order, order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the tourism industry was set to...

Mr. SPEAKER: Could the Honourable Member wind up please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am going to wind up. Sir, I am delighted that the Member has raised the point. The tourism industry contributes about 12% of the GDP. It was set to grow by 6% and it grew by an additional 2. An additional 2% growth in a sector that contributes only 10% of the economy cannot cause the economy to just grow by 2%.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, again the Prime Minister is misleading the House. Whereas tourism constitutes 12 % of GDP, tourism in terms of relative importance is far more important than that to the GDP. It is called a weighting system. All I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that tourism although it is 12% of GDP as a whole, in terms of its importance in relation to the GDP it is much higher than that.

Sir, let me just explain. I need to make the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Please! Is your explanation part of your point of order?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course it is. In order to bring apples and oranges together, Sir...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, for the benefit of the Chamber, in order to bring tourism, manufacturing, retail distribution and all these sectors together they need to be given a weight, that is their relative importance within the GDP. That weight in the system is determined by a survey. Tourism is far more important to the Barbados economy than 12%. When you put the competent figures together, using the weighting system, you get a total. What the Prime Minister is now saying is that tourism as a percentage of that total constitutes 12%. That is true but tourism in terms of its relative importance to GDP is way in excess of 12%. It is amazing that the Prime Minister of Barbados ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Honourable Prime Minister your time has expired. Could you wind up in your last sentence, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Yes. I have thoroughly enjoyed this debate and I genuinely thank Members for their contribution and I thank the Member for St. John in particular for the strength of his contribution. I genuinely do, Sir.

I also want to thank him for his wisdom because on the last occasion he had a man at number 3 for the Opposition and his performance was so disastrous but he has had to relegate him to the level of a tail-ender, Sir, because what has been characterised in this debate, Sir, is that the spokesman of Finance and Economic Affairs, on behalf of the DLP, has rather than speaking first after the spokesman for finance, has been relegated to the tail-end where he belongs. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

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 when we begin to call Heads.

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

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

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

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

COMMITTEE

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

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL - $1 089 766

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in rising to move that Head 10 stand part, I would just like to make a few comments in the light of what might appear to be a very substantial increase in the provision under this Head. It is the intention of Government to provide a Clerk to the Privy Council. Hitherto the Privy Council which deals with matters pertaining to the exercise of mercy but also deals with matters pertaining to the discipline of public officers, has had itself put in the unfortunate position of not having a secretariat and the Deputy Cabinet Secretary has functioned effectively as the Clerk to the Privy Council That arrangement has served to hamstring the functioning of Cabinet Office itself and has served to undermine the work of the Privy Council and as a result there has been a substantial backlog of matters that ought properly to be dealt with in the most efficacious manner.

I have approved the post of Clerk to the Privy Council but the approval was made too late for it to be effective fully in the other personal emoluments and therefore in the course the debate I would want to move in an amount under this Head. I think the House will agree, Sir, that all matters pertaining to the exercise of mercy and matters pertaining to the discipline and to the functioning of civil service ought to be swiftly and effectively dealt with and there is a real need for this post and I will therefore move in the amount.

The opportunity is also being taken to provide some support for capital activities at Government House. Those of us who have to attend ceremonies at Government House for official reasons know how sweltering it can be and it is proposed that there be some changes to main assembly room but I must, on this occasion, Sir, point to a grave deficiency of certain government departments.

For 2 successive years we have tried to get moneys spent on improving the electricals at Government House which are in a shocking state. When Dame Nita was Governor-General this was the one project that she asked for. Funds were provided, and consistently lapsed due to the dilatory nature of some government departments which have the responsibility of dealing with electricals and other things, Sir. I do not like to use the Floor of Parliament to be too condemnatory of public servants but it is a shocking thing that funds have consistently been voted to carry out a simple exercise that falls within the province of the jurisdiction of some government departments and we have consistently been voting funds for these same things. With those remarks, Sir, I beg to move that Head 10 stand part.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that Head 10 do now stand part...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if I could take that vote again. I propose, because the temporary post has been created, to move in an amount under other personal emoluments to cover the salary of a Clerk to the Privy Council and I therefore ask that further consideration of this Head be postponed, Sir.

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

The question that consideration of Head 10 be deferred was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 11 - JUDICIARY - $122 735

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 11 stand part with the statement that the increase projected in these Estimates are to give effect to our decision to improve the terms and conditions of employment of members of the Judiciary. I have already given the House the details. I beg to move that Head 11 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT - $4 005 757

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in speaking to Head 12 - Parliament, I just want to say that the completion of the West Wing of Parliament is an issue that is engaging the attention of Government. This year we have provided funds for the Ministry of Public Works to complete the roof and the Government is shortly to consider a proposal as a project from the Management Commission of Parliament to complete the rest of the activity, treating it as an activity falling under the governance of the Management Commission of Parliament and as a stand alone project rather than a project to be carried out by the Ministry of Public Works.

The activity on the West Wing of Parliament, Sir, has been a sad episode in public sector management. It has just simply taken too long. It has been done using the wrong method. It has been treated as an overtime exercise for the Ministry of Public Works and that is totally unsatisfactory. The West Wing of Parliament is a valuable piece of pur heritage and it has to be appropriately developed and it has also to be put to the best possible use. There might be some division of opinion as to its use for the future as compared with the intended use when the project was first conceived but I thought I would want to bring Members up-to-date on that.

I want to say, Sir, that they are not here reflected in the Estimates because I feel that this would require consensus between the political parties, but the time has come when we must provide funding to assist political institutions in this country that have proper standing and are represented in this Parliament, provide subventions to enable them to carry out their business.

Throughout these Estimates there are subventions for all kinds of institutions in Barbados and across the world and I believe if we were to pull out all of the subventions we give, Sir, from BAMP, Small Business Associations and all the international institutions, they run into millions of dollars. But for some reason there seems not to be an understanding and appreciation for the need for us to secure the stability of the society by making sure that our political institutions have the kind of subventions that would allow them to operate in a manner that other institutions are.

Our political institutions have contributed to the generation of the wealth of this country, Sir, and a lot of hard work has been put in by serious people within those institutions. But it is a fact that all of the political institutions of Barbados lurch from financial crisis to financial crisis. The meeting of the payroll every week is a crisis. We have people who work for our institutions and work for 40 years and they cannot afford to go home because the parties cannot afford any pension arrangements. It is as if when you come to work for a political institution you become a pariah. That has to stop.

I am not going to be proposing a lot of money but I feel that we should provide an amount that allows the institutions to pay their staff in the same way as we provide funding for all kinds of institutions that contribute because the stability of this country requires the functioning of well organised political organisations. There is, out there in the public, a mood that too much is done for politicians but *I* think that we have, without being extravagant, to grasp this nettle and I feel that it is only proper that an appropriate amount should be provided.

The issue will obviously arise as to what should be the level and how it should be apportioned, if it should be on a basis of equality for all parties or on a proportionate basis. I am, Mr. Chairman, prepared to start that discussion but it is something I want to do this financial year and I know that all the parties struggle.

The other aspect of it, Sir, is that the financing of the institutions has to be carried on the shoulders of Members of Parliament or a few benefactors. 10.10 a.m.

Every Member of my Party makes a contribution every month to the running of the parliamentary party. They make this contribution out of their salary to the running of the Barbados Labour Party. It is the biggest source of revenue for the Barbados Labour Party, and it is what carries the Barbados Labour Party, Sir.

I suspect that a similar situation pertains in the Democratic Labour Party. It is a burden because parliamentary salaries are not large but even before you get your net income, Sir, a substantial amount goes off to the Party. When the parliamentary group is very small, as we have known it in the past, the strain on a few is extraordinary.

We have a situation in this country, Sir, and it has to be said, that in order for the political institutions to continue, a few people have to put up collateral to support loans that the parties might have raised from time to time to secure their political survival.

I also am of the view, Sir, that we must not put the political system in Barbados in a condition where it becomes so dependent upon donations from private groups that the political process becomes tainted by the excessive dependence on such donations. This is a matter, Sir, that I feel must be dealt with and I would like to hear the views of the House on it. Mr. Chairman, it has to be dealt with and I am not thinking in terms of a large amount but it has to be something that we treat as a priority.

I have also received representation from the Management Commission of Parliament in relation to the regrading of the Constituency Assistants who are at an impossibly low level in relation to the functions that they exercise, and on other representations affecting legislators. I would like it to come to us as one full package so that this matter can be dealt with within a sensible and structured context.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to speak on this particular matter. I was quite

peeved a couple of weeks ago and I tend myself not to respond to the bark of frustrated men and women who sit on their arm chairs at home looking upon politicians, when they know where their true ambition lay and could not, by any means, affordable or not, get them elected to this Chamber.

A well-known historian, if I described him as white I would be untruthful in his ethnic origin, sitting in an arm chair in Haggatt Hall wrote one of the most disparaging articles that I have ever read about politicians in Barbados, He was moved to say that "a lot of these young giddy headed," he just fell short of calling us idiots, "rushing into the House of Assembly at age 20 this and 20 that drawing salaries which they do not deserve and raiding the public's treasury." He went on to say, some very disparaging things which, in the context of what the Honourable Member for St. Peter has said today, I am glad to hear that what he wrote was not consistent with the views of the Barbados Labour Party.

People have choices. There are some people who make the decision to go into politics at age 40 or 50 after they have had a successful professional career, which is perhaps the easiest way to do it. There are other people who take the most creative years of their lives and essentially commit them to the service of Barbados and those years could be spent, if they are professionals, amassing fortunes or working on their own personal interest.

Therefore, I resented it very much, but not because of me, because, firstly, I genuinely think that most of the persons who have been elected to this Chamber have by and large, either been caught up in a vortex, once they clearly expressed an interest to being involved. A vortex of events propels them into the positions in which they find themselves. One cannot plan those things as carefully as that gentleman would imagine. Secondly, I think that by and large all of them have had some connection either with community work or service in political parties which the public obviously feels suits them for public office.

I am glad to see that others did not latch on to that misguided notion as I said from somebody who clearly was frustrated from his true ambitions in life and therefore resents the fact that others who are clearly more electable than he ever was or will be, had the honour of serving Barbadians. So, in that context the resentment does not bother me. I wish it was not there, but it does not bother me. There is important work being carried out by Parliamentarians in this country and in our second reading speeches, I believe every Member pointed to it.

As long as you have in Barbados a scenario in which those departments and entities which are to deliver social services to people are essentially desks bound, they do not work on weekends, they are not available after hours to deliver those services, then it means that the role of parliamentarians is clearly going to be critical.

As we expand the services whether it is expansion of the MAB services, expansion of what the Welfare Department offers, expansion of what the Ministry of Education offers, etc. and feel that they need the intervention of a Member of Parliament to secure some kind of benefit from these agencies, then it is going to mean that the quality of staff which Members of Parliament need to assist them in their task, is going to have to improve. Therefore it means that you are going to have to improve the salary levels which are attributable.

The point being that it would have taken my own constituency assistant at least five to six years to become accustomed to the routine of dealing with what she is doing, before she had received her level of confidence. For new Members of Parliament they have to go through the whole process of taking on somebody who is paid at the level of a maid in the Public Service and requiring them....

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well that is it. I do not know what the last salary cheque for my constituency assistant was, but it is at the level, I think, of a maid. I believe, that by comparison the people who work as the Messenger/Cleaner in the Opposition's Office probably receives a comparable salary to a person who is a constituency assistant. Now the constituency assistant is not a maid. It is true that they may carry out some messengerial duty, but they often have to relate to people in the absence of the Member of Parliament. Therefore, they have to develop people skills. They also have to know how to schedule activities for the Member of Parliament and to stand in. They have to take a lot of abuse and criticism, because, as I say, they stand between members of the public and the Member of Parliament and therefore, clearly that position needs to be upgraded significantly in my view.

We are not delivering anything to ourselves and people have to stop with this motion. The service is being delivered to the public. It is not a service to me that my constituency assistant provides, because if she answers the telephone for me and assists somebody in solving a problem when I cannot answer the telephone, if I were not to have a constituency assistant, the matter would not be dealt with at all. People, in my view have to have a more farsighted approach and sincere approach to the need for these kinds of facilities. 10.20 a.m.

A constituency office in Barbados gets assistance of $500 a month. So in my particular case I get the $500 and when I pay the rent I have to plug the telephone into the owner's extension on a Saturday morning so that I can receive telephone calls. It would be impossible to rent a property like that as well as have a telephone, a filing cabinet, a desk, chairs and other facilities which are necessary.

It is a very costly exercise and we are providing comfort to constituents. They cannot stand up in the hot sun outside waiting to see their parliamentary representative. They have a right to be able to have a seat and see the parliamentary representative with an element of confidentiality and have their business treated with seriousness at the constituency level which is the only way that one is going to get an improvement in the quality of representation which parliamentarians offer.

We support in that regard any efforts which are made by the Government to improve the standing of the constituency aides and, in addition to that, to provide further assistance to parliamentarians to carry out their work in the constituency.

I believe that the Management Commission also has reasonable consensus on the West Wing project. I know the Honourable Member for the City was very critical of the Democratic Labour Party. She accused us of reducing the West Wing to a MCW depot but at least it was serving a purpose then. Right now it is a ghost town and it is serving no useful purpose whatsoever.

I only say that to say that I believe her criticism over time has been tempered by the need to find consensus and the Management Commission has reached consensus on the purposes for which that building should be used. I hope very sincerely that the Government will not make the error in doing the work on the West Wing that has been made in some parts of this building.

The office of the Leader of the Opposition is a health hazard for anybody who suffers with sinus or respiratory illness. The walls peel as soon as they finish painting them and the hooks for paintings ride out of the walls because you are using soft stone. It is also in my view a fire hazard because all of the sockets ride out of the wall in the rainy season..,

Aside.

•Mr, D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not intend to be there long but my successor. I am doing all of this for the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter or his successor.

I believe that we should not make the errors in the West Wing that may have been made over years in this Chamber. We have to find some way of ensuring that the work which is done there does not create the same kind of problem.

Every year the painters have to come and paint the offices down here because of the problems with moisture and I do not know how one would get around that problem but at the upper levels I do not see the same kind of scenario. I believe it is because the walls are stripped and I hope that the Honourable Member for the City who had a hand in this project when the Democratic Labour Party was in office and carried out these very far-reaching renovations will also bear in mind in doing the work on the West Wing the problems that have occurred here.

I believe also, and I have made representation to the relevant authorities, and I have no apology in saying so, that the Opposition as a group needs to have at its disposal a research officer, because of the volume of information which is being made available from a variety of sources, as well as the variety of issues which now come before Parliament for consideration. Together with the work of Committees in Parliament, that cannot be handled by the personal staff which is provided for one functionary.

There needs to be somebody who is able to provide ongoing assistance to the parliamentary group of the Opposition and to provide information which again enhances the quality of the contributions of Members of this Chamber and would provide in my view an additional avenue for Members to improve their skills particularly when they first come into the Chamber.

There are other aspects of reform which have been raised by the Honourable Member for St. Peter in his contribution on Parliament. On the issue of funding to assist political parties my view is that you first have to have a sensible recognition by the Constitution that political parties exist. I hope that will be one of the recommendations which the Constitutional Review Commission will consider and which will become relevant in their deliberations.

Once you have that recognition that political parties exist formally, because under our system they do not exist formally, once you have that recognition, then there are consequential scenarios which can follow including giving the kind of support to the work of political parties formerly acknowledged to exist under the Constitution which the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter has recommended.

Political parties do a lot of work. We have political parties which have educational arms like the Democratic Labour Party, the Academy of Politics. Members of political parties are themselves usually a collection of the most active people in the communities in which they

live. So you are not dealing with people in political parties who are only there for the purpose of dividing the *Nation* or for the purpose of putting forward counter points of view to Government. They also play a very key role in the development of the country and I believe that that formal recognition is needed, together, as I said, with other consequential elements like financing.

What you have to be careful about in providing financing for political parties is the avoidance of a proliferation of political parties. Wherever the State has provided assistance in other countries it has sometimes given rise to a proliferation. Therefore we have to find a formula which does not militate against the formation of new political parties where they are genuinely needed, and also give recognition to political parties which are truly established and which are truly making a contribution.

You do not want a situation in which funding is seen as an opportunity for fringe elements to form political organisations simply to fleece the Treasury. If not, we will be playing into the hands of that frustrated element out there and thankfully there are only a few of them, who would wish to heap odium on our heads for even discussing this particular point in the course of the Estimates.

I am anxious to see the West Wing project completed. I am concerned about the delays, generally, in translating the work of the Management Commission of Parliament into action and there are a number of things in the course of the year that the Management Commission had decided which need to be given urgent attention.

It does not fall at the feet exclusively of Government. I think that we need to have a sense of urgency about making Parliament relevant and I agree with that aspect as well as all other aspects, and, in particular, with that aspect of the speech of the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South who focussed on the fact that Parliament and parliamentarians have been over time losing their significance and their relevance. 10.30 a.m.

Sir, unless we do this, we are going to be viewed by Barbadians, not as people changing anything for their benefit but as people who can always tell them why things cannot be changed.

This is part of the problem that we face in Barbados, that we spend a lot of time in this Chamber telling people why things cannot be changed rather than genuinely moving swiftly to make those changes, and not only make this institution relevant but make other aspects of Government's operation relevant to their lives and to their daily existence.

I do not think that there are any controversial issues here, but as I say, I would like to see urgency attached to this question of the reforms which the Management Commission has recommended and it will receive the support of the Opposition as long as the Government is not playing politics and as long as I do not pick up the *Advocate* newspaper one morning to see matters which I have not even raised myself, being attributed to me giving the impression that I am trying to seek benefits for the Opposition which no other Opposition seeks or which are merely an attempt to accumulate benefits to the office holder; and that has been part of my experience. But the guided mind of that newspaper has a criminal element to it and therefore I am not surprised at anything that I read in it relevant to the Democratic Labour Party even when we are functioning altruistically and in the interest of the people of Barbados.

As I say, those elements are sometimes preyed and aided by the Government to seek to create divisions and to separate us from each other on issues on which there can be some common interest and on issues in which the interest of the people of Barbados can become paramount. So I will wait to hear what the responses are to* those aspects of the presentation to determine if I have to add anything.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I have spoken on this Head a number of times in my 21 years in here, and I wish to say that I have never been ambivalent about the role of politicians in Barbados and how they should be treated. I think that one has to speak sincerely on this matter, and not from a position of partisan politics. The truth is, Sir, that the vast majority of Barbadians have absolute contempt for politicians. We have absolutely no esteem among the general population, Sir, and the sooner many of us understand that, the better.

I hear some of my colleagues complaining about how they are treated in their departments. That is part for the course. I do not worry too much about it. I know how to deal with it. Somebody once said in here that we are regarded as lower than pond waters. It was not pathetic. It was truthful. Nobody gives you credit. Nobody is thankful that 28 of us make sacrifices, only to try to move our country on, only to try to provide a better life for all of the people resident in Barbados. We are always accused of having an ulterior motive. Nobody would think that 28 people would wish, for altruistic purposes, to assist in the flowering of democracy. You can do what you like. You can say what you like. I have been in this thing long enough to know how they and others think about us. That is why I say you have to speak sincerely.

In 1938 this country was in the grips of oppression by an oligarchic plantocracy. A few patriotic Barbadians banded together under the Progressive League to try

and improve conditions in Barbados for all Barbadians. Out of that came the Workers' Union. The conditions of Barbados changed drastically between 1938 and today, Sir. We did not have to fight and kill people apart from the riots in 1937 to get the right to vote in 1951. That basic democratic right was won for Barbadians by a political process, by a political party.

Mr. Barrow came along in 1961 and he and his party won for us independence, and ever since then the two major political parties in this country have broadened the base of ownership, have allowed the democratic process to flow, have created wealth in this country, have expanded the middle class. In earlier days there were two distinct classes, the rich and the rest and for all of that, nobody stops for a minute to say but wait, wait a minute. What are we doing? Aren't we trying to destroy what we have built up that has enabled us to reach the level of being one of the top three developing countries in the world? I am not talking about criticism. When you are in politics, you have to expect criticism. You must get criticism. You are in public life and your back has to be broad enough to take it. I am not talking about criticism, I am talking about attitudes. It is more than criticism. It is attitudes and perceptions of people in Barbados.

The two biggest companies in Barbados are the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party, not commercial companies, the two biggest groupings. When we talk of the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party we are not talking about us, we are talking about all those little people out there that go and cast their votes, that come to the meetings, come to the conferences.

Those people that come to the conferences of both parties have helped to develop policies for the benefit of all Barbadians which we then have to come and espouse on their behalf and explain and expound and yet, yet, that the country will be prepared to see the basic headquarters, the operations, functioning and management of those parties flounder, something is wrong with our thinking.

I agree with the Prime Minister. We have to be carefiil. You know what the reality is? The public does not know, they must know. When an election is declared all kinds of people run and give money to both, all three. Now we got three, to the three parties. After the election, that is the end of that. Members on both sides have to run to the bank to sign guarantees for loans that they had to borrow to run the parties and pay election debts. 10.40 a.m.

I am not even talking about the personal constituency. I am not talking about the politicians I am talking about the parties, the reality of being a political party in Barbados in 1997. After the election you have debts and you have to clear the debts and you are liable to the banks that you borrowed from to write you and threaten to call in the guarantees which some of us have given on behalf of the parties, on behalf of the people of Barbados. Now, that is why it can lead to very subtle corruption of parties if they have to rely upon handouts and contributions from people who give in the expectation that they will get. That is reality. I think there is an opportunity in the Prime Minister's proposal for us to change that.

I am not anticipating the debate, Mr. Chairman, but look at the Notes opposite page 55. In my Ministry $44 855 is given for subscriptions to all kinds of groups. We are taking the taxpayers money and subscribing to all kinds of groups, Society for the Reform of Criminal Law in Canada, Caribbean Association of Law Librarians and I have not mentioned the secretariat. That is not in this. It is separate, the Disciplinary Committee of the Bar.

The Attorneys-at-Law have a Disciplinary Committee and we have as a country to give money to them to help them run themselves properly in a disciplined way. There is also the Journalists' Association.

Turn to page 76, Sir, and you will see some more. The BWU Labour College, the Extra-Mural Department. The Barbados Astronomical Society, the Girls Industrial Union, the National Union of Public Workers, BIMAP, Barbados Employers Confederation and other similar institutions.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not attacking anybody. I am saying that we give money from the public purse to other kinds of groups and associations in Barbados. I am not attacking anybody. I am giving the facts. There are here in the Schedule to the Bill. If the facts are unpalatable, I apologise for that. Then the Red Cross Society, the Cancer Society, the St. John's Council, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, the Barbados Registered Nurses Association, the Barbados Road Safety Association and the Barbados Family Planning.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Prime Minister has told me he has about 13. These are overseas things now - Latin America, SELA, SCR, UNIDO, CARDA, CFTC, LAEO, INTAR, CCC, ILPES, CEIS, CECLEX - $613 150, all of these organisations.

I cannot find in principle anything wrong with the State recognising the existence of political parties in here, and I would limit it to parties represented in the House of Assembly. That is the way you control the mushrooming

of parties just to draw on the public purse. You must have representation in here. If you are here, you should be entitled to a subvention. I have no quarrel therefore in principle with the Prime Minister's proposition that those organisations which have contributed to the growth and expansion of the democratic process in Barbados should be entitled to some assistance to help them in managing their businesses.

Dr. Duncan at the University, I seem to recall, has written about how the political parties ought to be organised and managed. He has called for a professionalisation of political parties in Barbados. You cannot professionalise it out of the contributions that we make, let us say, to the Labour Party when the months come. They take $450 out of my salary before I see it to help run the Labour Party.

We cannot employ proper staff, provide proper terms and conditions for them if we are dependent upon running a little poor-raky organisation out of our contributions. We are either serious about what we want to do for the upliftment of Barbados - we could do a lot more if both parties were in a position to fund a number of the programmes they want to do for the education of Barbadians. We cannot on the limited finances we have. As I say, after elections, the donors that were knocking you down before elections, you cannot find them.

I do not believe, Sir, that it is in the best interest of the country as a whole for us to continue to try to operate the political parties on a shoe string budget. I remember when I was in Opposition between 1986 and 1991, there were three of us. Salaries used to get docked. You did not get very much in Opposition but out of that we still had to pay, I think $500 or $600 officially, and yet the three of us in here you believe we could keep the Labour Party going?

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West he, even more than I, used to have to pull his own pocket, thousands of dollars a year to keep the Labour Party going when there were just three of us.

I know the days, and I will put his name in the record because he was a long serving stalwart of the Labour Party, Mr. Ishmael. He used to walk from 111 Roebuck Street to my Chambers in town to say we need to pay the late Nadine, the maid. I had to write a cheque for $300, $400. You all understand that? That is how political parties in Barbados are functioning? It is no different with the Democratic Labour Party. I well know the time when Light & Power cut off the light at the Democratic Labour Party. The Telephone Company cut off the phone, after all that these parties have contributed to Barbados, treated like dirt, like dogs. I am not asking for anything for the politicians. I am saying that the institutions which have developed the political process should be recognised.

We are written about from outside as this great exemplar of democracy, the second oldest Parliament in the Commonwealth. We had 350 years. We had a whole set of people come down here. You could carry them to show them your Labour Party Headquarters or DLP headquarters? No, dilapidated. Other countries do it. Some countries assist even with the financing of election campaigns. I am not promoting that at this stage. That is a matter for the Constitutional Review Commission to discuss, not among themselves, but with the public. 10.50 a.m.

Service in Parliament for many of us, particularly at the ministerial level, for those of us who have been in the profession is a kind of national service which we do gladly at great, great cost. I am talking about the personal havoc, how your family is virtually destroyed. I will cry if I start to talk about that, about what has happened to my family and my relationship, with my children, how politics have destroyed them. I have not had time to be around them, to sit down with them and help them do homework. Politicians do not have that time. It has taken a great toll on my life. It could be so much richer were I not rendering national service. Therefore I am giving this proposal the strongest possible commendation that I own. I am not saying anymore because I will get emotional.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on this matter as well. I would hope that in 1997 it would be a matter that all parties would feel that they can address without hypocrisy. I would like to pick up on a point made by the Attorney General. We are very proud everywhere in the world that this little developing country of 166 square miles with 262 000 people is still one of the most densely populated countries in the world. It is the No. 1 developing country of the world and it has a democracy that is envied, not only by other developing countries, Mr. Chairman, Sir, but by developed countries as well.

When I speak, both at home and abroad about this matter on good governance, the respect that we have for human rights in this little Barbados and about our stable democracy, I often speak of it in terms of this hemisphere in which we are. I do not hide my mouth to compare the democracies of the Caribbean with the democracies of Latin America and of North America as well. There are certain institutions which underpin a democracy. A democracy is not something that you hold up and carry to the store. It is an intangible. There are certain features which are the hallmark of a stable democracy.

There are many institutions which underpin a democracy. A free judiciary, such as the one that we have; a free trade union movement, such as the oie that we have and many others beside. Even the institution of the church and religion is part of the stabilising influence in a

strong democracy. Political parties in a multi-party democracy such as the one that we have are part of that underpinning as well. Governments which change themselves, to the amazement of so many, in these dying years of the 20th century, without a shot being fired.

Look at what happened in 1994 in Barbados. I am just saying this as a matter of broad fact, the Government changed hands. I do not think anybody even got a cuff in that campaign. I do not think that one libel action came out of the September 1994 campaign. That speaks only to the maturity of the parliamentary process and the electoral process and the political party process in this country. That was a campaign in September of 1994, Mr. Chairman, when the Government was not at the constitutional end of its tenure. This was a truncated tenure which was triggered by a resolution brought in this Chamber which caused a Government to fall and where people from one side voted on the other side. These things do not happen in democracies across the world, particularly in developing countries and it speaks a great deal, Sir, for the high esteem in which Barbados is held. We deserve this reputation.

When I go particularly to North America and other parts of the Commonwealth, particularly now, in my new capacity, chairing the executive committee, I delight in making the point all the time because I like to see the shock registered on people's faces, particularly in North America. I said up to last week and I have to say it now that we have in this country, an institution of parliament - it was not always as democratic as it is now - a parliamentary institution unbroken for 358 years. That does not happen by chance. It is only a few years ago that the Americans celebrated 200 years. The New Zealanders and the Australians, they cannot begin to catch up to us. We have to understand, particularly now as we are moving towards a new century and a new millennium, Sir, that they are basis to our democracy and that we must help to preserve and to enhance the work that parliamentary parties do.

I have no hesitation at all, Sir, in supporting the recommendation for political parties in Barbados because I grew up in a multi-party democracy. It grieved me deeply as a student in London at the time of the talks on independence, that the then Government sought to cast our Constitution in the narrow terms - as the Constitution Review Commission must now be looking at it - of a two-party democracy but that was not the truth about Barbados, Before 1966 we had a multi-party democracy in this country and since 1966 we have had a multi-party democracy in this country. No two major parties, but multi-party. I hope that we are taking the distinction between the two. We may laugh, as we do from time to time but I make the point all the time that we live in a Barbados where you have parties without leaders; leaders without parties - we have one in here, Sir - but that is all part of the freedoms of which we are so jealous.

The Honourable Attorney General pointed out the really quite unacceptable conditions under which all political parties labour in this country. Only a few weeks ago the story broke in North America about certain contributions which were made to the last Presidential campaign in that country, United States of America, from whence they came and the American people have had their say on how suitable or otherwise that sort of thing is. We have to face the fact that that is part of modern politics.

Political parties are run even on a more slender budget and sometimes on no budget at all. This Parliament is not much better, I will speak about that too, but political parties have to be run. In a modern party, you have to have modern technology. You have to have access to research capability. Any modern political party worth its salt in Barbados today should have access to the Internet. 11.00 a.m.

There is work that the party does on the ground in the constituencies that has to be supported. I have seen in this Parliament, gradually an appreciation of these things coming to the general understanding of Barbadians. An earlier administration in Barbados established the post of the Parliamentary Assistant. This is a great help to parliamentarians. It allows us to do our work as parliamentarians far more efficiently and far more effectively than when we had to do it all ourselves. The parliamentary assistant is expected to be a maid, a messenger, a cleaner, a receptionist, a research officer, a public health inspector and a whole host of other things. Then I saw gradually another administration added to that some payment towards rental of suitable constituency offices where Members of Parliament could see their constituents. That needs upgrading now because it does not include the cost of utilities.

Members of Parliament have to travel. Barbados is a small place but Members of Parliament and not only those in the rural constituencies, but those even in the urban constituencies, have to move around their constituencies on the business of constituents. All of these things need now to be examined.

We heard reference just now to how much money we spend on international organisations. The Honourable Prime Minister said that in his Ministries alone there are 13. Now there are a number of international organisations, Sir, and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we have been asking all ministries to review the subscriptions that they are making to international organisations because many bring no benefit to us and we continue to pay the subscriptions simply because we have been paying them in the past.

We have been paying them for 20 years and have nothing to show for them.

I would suggest to the Right Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that he would cut off, terminate, some of those useless subscriptions and put that money, do not take any money from any of the projects that we are dealing with in other aspects of the Government's programme, but take that money...

What I am saying is, we are paying money now to a number of international organisations which bring absolutely no benefit to Barbados and we go on doing it every year. We bring no critical analysis to this. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs last year I asked for this to be addressed. I invited every Ministry, every department of Government, even the statutory corporations to look at these subscriptions and these various memberships. Look at them hard and critically, and let us review them with a view to either terminating those which are no longer useful and perhaps looking to subscribe to some which could be, in the future, more useful to us because with the new technology there are a number of things we want to hook into.

I am suggesting, because I am sure that the Ministry of Finance has no wish in this connection to be taking from any of the Government's other projects and programmes but I am suggesting that the savings which are monumental and which can be made from that exercise be given over to support for the political parties. Why would we take money over the last 30 years of Independence and put it in organisations outside of Barbados, which bring no benefit to Barbados, when the political parties which are part of the foundation of our stable democracy are with a begging bowl.

I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, soon after September, 1994, the First Annual Conference of the Democratic Labour Party, set up the public begging bowl. I heard him say how there was no money left, just like I heard the Barbados Labour Party after 1986 make it clear, there was no money in the kitty. We have spent it all in the campaign. But parties have to run. Secretaries have to be paid. Messengers have to be paid and it is not fair to them.

I can remember as a child, a long time ago, but in the early days of the Barbados Labour Party, a messenger coming to my father, we have to pay staff today, and he goes into his pocket. The Beacon has to go out today and he goes into his pocket. As a child I saw that with these two eyes. I was saying to the Prime Minister that Rachael Manley's book "Drumblare" is such an emotional experience for me to read because it brings back so much of my own childhood.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very seriously wanting to recommend to the Minister of Finance that this is a way that he can go. It is time now for political parties to be formally registered. It is time for contributions to political parties again be looked at. I believe the Constitution Review Commission, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I hope, is examining this. It is the way of modern politics and the more and more we push these things under ground, the more what is happening in other countries, which we say we do not want to happen in our country, that corporations and organisations feel that they can buy a political party and consequently a trap into which, as a government, we would not be likely to fall.

I have in my hand, Mr. Chairman, Sir, courtesy of the Clerk of our Parliament to whom I am grateful, I am reading from the "Parliamentarian" of January 1997.1 am not talking about 1996 or 1995 or 1967. This year, in the "Parliamentarian" which is the journal of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to which we belong an interesting article called "Services for Members Canadian M.Ps and the Resources for Representation" making the same point - research resources and I quote from it, Sir, and will make it a document of the House. I wish that Honourable Members, when they get their "Parliamentarian" will read these things. "Research resources were minimal in the Canadian Parliament. Travel budgets were restricted while opportunities to learn more were limited. But it is far different now in the Canadian Parliament where they are providing adequate resources and services for Members of Parliament whether they are supporters of the Government or members of the Opposition, there is a belief that better informed parliamentarians have the potential to be more knowledgeable and effective Members of Parliament."

That has to be more than a belief it would have to be a fact. Members of Canada's Parliament today are provided with good budgets for research purposes. Four times a year, Sir, Members of the House of Commons in Canada are authorised to send publicly funded mailings to their constituents. I would love to be able to do that. I see the Honourable Member for St. Lucy saying he would support it. I would even ask twice a year to begin. I would like with free franking to be able to send a letter out to all of my constituents.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is saying, whenever. Members would have their various points of view. Members of Parliament in Canada, Sir, are given adequate travel budgets, resources to visit all the regions of Canada. Well that does not apply here in Barbados. The House of Commons provides each member with a furnished office in the precincts of Parliament, listen to this Mr. Chairman, Sir, which is equipped with a personal computer, a laser printer, typewriter, television

set a,id TV converter, photo-copier, telephone, stationery, office supplies and other equipment as needed.

Now, I am glad that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about the West Wing of Parliament because he is correct about the urgency. 11.10a.m.

We need to have it done because part of the proposals to be used over there is to provide offices. I am not saying that every single Member of Parliament is going to have an office, but some office facility which will allow Members to have this kind of amenity at their disposal.

We are doing the Estimates in here this week. These are the Estimates for expenditure for every penny that is going to be spent in the Government of Barbados for the coming financial year which starts on April 1. This is the highest Committee in the land.

There is a room which is put at my disposal, right opposite the Prime Minister's room here, as Leader of the House. I have set up a camp in there. Mr. Chairman, Sir, one could barely walk on the ground in there with documents, lap top computers and so on and so forth, so that the work of the Ministries, for which I have responsibility can continue, even while I am sitting down in here doing bills of the House.

I have told my Personal Assistant that she must make available anything that I set up in there for other Personal Assistants as well.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Leader of the Opposition has copious offices downstairs. I agree that there are not well appointed, but you have downstairs even more than we have upstairs. The Government still has to run.

Aside,

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: There is a committee room. Yesterday, when I opened the door and looked around it, the Minister of Health was in there having an important meeting. I was looking to sit down to do some work and went into the Senate Chambers and saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael South in there in the President's office, and so on. I tried to get into the bathroom yesterday and could not get into it for the crush.

It took me 20 years to get a Ladies Room established on this floor. It has to serve all the lady Reporters, all the lady Members of Parliament and all the ladies who are here, either as personal assistants or as civil servants attending the Estimates process.

This is a Parliament which is meeting virtually once a week and will soon have to be meeting twice a week because the legislative agenda is so heavy, and because this is a Parliament not only dealing with legislature, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a Government that is reading White Papers, which has a lot of election committee work in the pipeline to come down.

By the year 2000 I expect this would be virtually a full-time job. I have not even reached the remuneration of Parliamentarians. The Leader of the Opposition will remember when he moved from the back bench to the front bench as a Minister, the small difference in the salary.

On this front bench we are not paid as Members of Parliament, we are only paid as Ministers. We have constituencies to service just like every other Member of Parliament. When I say that abroad, people are shocked.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We are dealing with the substance here, Mr. Chairman, not the shop. We are dealing with substance. Backbenchers, and the Leader of the Opposition have access to private practice of all kinds. We have a Cabinet in Barbados which has forbidden private practice.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying that all of this is part and parcel and I am concerned though, that proper facilities have to be provided for Members. This Parliament, and I am tired saying it in this Chamber, has been operating for at least the last 15 years without a library. Can anybody believe that?

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Without a library. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Sir, using the new technology, the Internet and other aspects of the new technology is very soon now going to be putting at the disposal of all Parliament, a welter of information. For example, the Standing Orders of all the Parliaments and the Laws of all the Parliaments.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I know some are there already. This is one of the platform pledges that I made at my election last year. This information is soon going to become available in the Parliaments, but, it can only be available to this Parliament if we have the relevant technology to give us access to it. We need it. We

cannot do comparative analysis unless we have this basic information. We cannot know what the direction is...

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, yes. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will return to this because it is a subject about which I feel very strongly in the way that it affects the quality of democracy which we have in this country and the quality of representation which, as Parliamentarians, we have to offer our constituents.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we heard a lot of talk this morning about the way in which Parliament is being short-changed and there seems to be a general agreement on both sides that something must be done about it.

I just get the feeling, Sir, that we are quarrelling with ourselves. We are the ones who make the decisions.

I have in the Estimates before me a vote for Parliament of last year, in the Approved Estimates of $3 549 731. This was the money that was voted for the Management Commission of Parliament.

This year, in the Estimates there is a figure of $3 555 757. This tells me that there is an increase this year over last year of $6 026. They are making a lot of noise. All we have to do is to cut this debate short, ask the Minister of Finance to move into these Estimates a proper sum of money, let us vote on it and move onto the next Head.

We are going to get in here, Mr. Chairman, and shout across to each other, all saying the same thing, agreeing that Parliament is short-changed and we are going to sit down at the end of it and vote for $6 000 more than last year.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I want to make two other points very quickly, Sir. If you go in the Central Bank Building and you look across at Parliament, you will see that half of this roof is uncovered. There is a big pool or cavern in the top of this building. This has been so for a long time. It seems ludicrous that we could be making these kinds of comments and cannot even get around to preventing this Parliament from being caught under a deluge of water one of these days.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: .....because there is no room in half of this structure that we are now sitting in.

I want to make one other point, Sir, because I do not want to drag this thing on. This relates to the facilities. I heard the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and great affiliates mentioning all of the short comings.

I was trying yesterday, Sir, to watch the end of the test match between India and the West Indies and there is a television set in the lobby for Parliamentarians. A Gold Star cheap $500 T.V. as the only T.V. made available in Parliament. In the room you cannot see the television...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: A 15-inch television and you have to get binoculars if you want to watch television in there.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Now, I would like to make an appeal only for a television set. The others can make appeals for the big things. The Prime Minister says that he would answer the first part of my submission, but certainly, we have to stop talking about these things. I am not dealing with any salaries, Sir. I really frankly do not care too much what they pay me.

I do, however, have to say that since others may feel less inclined to say it than I would, I was around here since 1971 Sir, and I feel that I can say anything...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Ministers of Government are grossly underpaid.
11.20a.m.

It is scandalous the amount of money I hear some of my friends on the Front Bench tell me that they take home and they have as their take-home pay. I understand some get less than that.

I also believe Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Backbenchers, those who do not hold ministerial positions, are badly underpaid. Those who are afraid to say these things because they feel it may offend the voters in their constituencies I am saying it for them. The public must be told very clearly what are the emoluments of parliamentarians. I do not think that they understand what they are being paid.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Members of Parliament perform a very important role in this country and whether they are considered as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the learned Attorney General, is saying, as lower than pond water, that is not the point.

The point is how important is the role they carry out for the good governance and integrity of our system in this country. It is a very important role.

Although I am not making an argument and I do not want anybody to believe that the argument I am making is that you must be paid a lot of money just because you are a politician. I am making the argument about the kind of pay that should be given to people who carry out this important function and particularly the Ministers. The Backbenchers as I said already are essentially part-timers who have other vocations and avocations. But I make the case also for them because they have other responsibilities.

I told the Parliament only last week or the week before that I have an office in Bridgetown and persons from all across Barbados see my office which is for my profession as an office in Bridgetown for the Government. Persons from all across Barbados come to my office on a daily basis from every constituency in this island to raise with me their concerns about matters relating to them and the Government.

You deal with them. You cannot say that this is a law office and it has nothing to do with any problems beyond the Judge Gap in St. Lucy. You cannot tell them that.

You cannot say this is a law office where I earn my living as a professional and you cannot talk to me about problems you are having with the national insurance and funeral benefits just because you come from Marchfield in St. Philip. You are always on duty, not only for your own constituents but for all the people of Barbados.

It is for that reason, Mr. Chairman, that I believe that no right thinking person - there is a lot of jealousy abroad. There are a lot of people who have jealousy about what other people get and measure themselves in terms of others - but there can be no gainsa>mg that all right-thinking people in Barbados who see what the emoluments of Members of Parliament are and study them closely in relation to the duties that they have to carry out, their role in society and indeed their expenditures in relation to constituents can quarrel with the fact that the pay of parliamentarians is grossly inadequate.

I am going to wind up the same way I started. There is no point for us to spend another 2 or 3 hours in here with everybody getting up and saying the same thing. I will ask again that the Minister of Finance move in to these Estimates an appropriately large sum of money that will meet the complaints and the requirements, the needs and shortcomings or whatever that have so far been identified.

Grateful to you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I believe by virtue of the fact of my having been in here a long time I, too, can speak in this debate with a certain amount of dispassion. I do not wish to go over ground that has been covered over and over again but I wish to deal with 2 issues, one of which was raised by the Leader of the House and the other one by the Honourable Member who just sat down.

I have said almost from the day I returned from the United States and started participating in the Parliament in the Other Place, that the major shortcoming of our parliamentary system and being elected to Parliament is that being called to function in a parliamentary position the means of communication with the constituents was not sufficiently facilitated. I have felt that from the day I went into a Ministry in 1971. There is something which I believe politicians do not do especially during the season when we have to fight for a seat and it is understandable but that something is that we do not take the time to explain to the people, some of the things that we talk about.

We talk about franking privileges. I remember very well the first time I raised that among my senior colleagues at the time, when I said that franking privileges ought to be automatic. It seemed as though you were recommending castor oil every morning. Yet when you examine it, what are we talking about? Why do we not remove the language? Do not call them franking privileges because it seems as though you are giving something to somebody. What in fact you are doing is what you should be doing.

I think that it is inherently wrong that a parliamentarian does not communicate in writing with his or her constituents at least once a month. I believe that whenever they want to if they wish to write and say Happy Birthday, if they wish to write and say I killed two dogs yesterday or conversely I went to four funerals this month, if they want to say I went to church or explain why they did not go to church, they should be able to write to their constituents and tell them how they are being represented.

You cannot write to your constituents and put stamps on as often as you would like on the basis of the "salary" which you get. You simply cannot do it. I send out every year, since 1974, in excess of 1 000 Christmas cards per year. On a good year, I send out 2 300. I do not have a problem with that. It is a cost which I meet.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is true but it guarantees you get enough votes out of that card. Yes, it is a form of keeping in touch but, in many constituencies, the letter or card from the parliamentarian for many people is the only piece of correspondence they get.

When you write a letter to somebody who cannot come to a branch meeting but they still get a letter from you sometimes it is the only piece of correspondence that they get for the month. It makes a tremendous difference, when somebody dies, and you cannot go to the funeral. I believe that the poorer the person is, and I am going to one this evening, you have to go to the funeral. Not because you are visible. You have to go because if you really care about those people that is the time when they wish somebody will come and say something to them. 11.30a.m.

You only realise how important that is when it happens to you. The people who lose somebody close to them are better able to understand the need to be there to give somebody moral support because anyone, the Honourable Members over there, most certainly my contemporaries over there, are in a position to say "I have experienced this." When somebody close to you goes and you look up and you see the amount of support you have, it is the most comforting thing that can happen to you. When people that you never really expected to pay attention to you turn up and come and give you a word of comfort, you remember that long after you have forgotten a number of other important things in your life. So it is important that you go but in the event that you cannot go, it is crucial that you communicate with the person.

I cannot teach old dogs new tricks but any Member of Parliament or potential member of Parliament who does not pay attention to the direct communication between him or her and the constituents to the point where they know them because we have a small enough constituency that you have to know a substantial part of them, that person will not last long because there is a difference between being in Parliament, being in the House, and giving representation. I am satisfied that you cannot give good representation if you do not communicate with people in writing.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central on more than one occasion has been in the same church yard or cemetery yard as myself and we have exchanged words about this.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He? He is learning to cry? No, he cries naturally, I think. Your friend is saying that you are a hypocrite, that you do not cry properly. We make fun about it but it is crucial. I am saying therefore that there are no franking privileges. It is giving to the people what they have a right to expect. In fact, one of the criteria which should be used to find out if a person is doing his job as a representative is how many letters they have sent.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you would know as a practitioner of the art of public relations. I have seen you, Sir, doing a whistle stop-tour in the midst of your second year,

Aside,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am being prompted to say that you have a rent-a-crowd for your whistle stop tours but I am not going to say that, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to allow anybody to make me say that about you, but you are aware how important it is to communicate with people.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South, his constituency actually, his constituency council puts out a thing called "The Constituent." It is now getting judicial notice. Well, at least it is getting parliamentary notice. He sees to it that it gets parliamentary notice. It is a good publication. His is one of many which are springing up. It is a new style, but it costs money to produce and you cannot tell your constituents that they have to pay 25 cents or 35 cents or $1.00 to receive information from you about what you have been doing, but there is no reason why each parliamentarian should not be sending out a quarterly newsletter. I certainly would like to send out a monthly one. I would love to be able to send minutes of our monthly meeting to all the constituents because I say some important things to the people who come; important from my point of view and I think important from theirs.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member wishes to endorse the concept of the branch meeting, but the branch meeting is really the nuts and bolts of our representation. I have never understood and this year I do not understand and remember, I am not criticising because this was happening, as I said, from the time I came here. We have not done it, you have not done it, who knows? Maybe this year the Prime Minister might move in that since the Honourable Member calls for it. He might include franking privileges. But this is done in almost every Parliament everywhere in the world, that when a parliamentarian is sending out an official letter, about official business, he or she can send it without having to pay postage.

You know what is very funny? I should not say this, but I have to say it to make the point. I once received a letter from an organisation in Barbados and it had "On Service" on the outside and there was a signature on the outside and when I opened it, it was a solicitation. Sir, I am not ashamed to tell you, my language was not the kind of language that my mother would have approved. My mother would not have approved of what I said when I opened that piece of correspondence. I said "Now here am I. I have just celebrated 25 years in Parliament and if I want to send out anything at all that has "On Service"

on it and a stamp I would have to carry it down to the Leader of the Opposition's Office and he has already made it clear that the Opposition Office is not for that, so I had to get my constituency secretary to put on a 35 cents stamp." Now somebody like Oliver Jackman will write next week and say that the parliamentarians get in here and beg for something for themselves. Oliver Jackman would probably put some blows in me.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. Gladstone Holder would not write that because he knows that I would reply. Oliver Jackman is the pristine representation of all that is pure and holy in administrative activity. So, he is the one I would expect would have the courage to tackle me or any other parliamentarian for having got in here and looking for something for themselves. I do not wish anything for me. I wish something for my constituents and I wish them to be able to rind out what I am doing and I wish to be able to find out what the young parliamentarians are doing.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has just come in here. And the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West should not have 25 years from now to be complaining about the same things that the Honourable Member for St. George South and I are complaining about. That is rubbish. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is practising the same kinds of things. He is spending some money sending out some things,

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I know, I pay attention to what is happening in St. Michael. He would support us on this. He knows what it means. My friend from St Lucy, it is true that he does not feel it. He might not feel it quite the same way as other persons, but he has the same problem trying to get communication about what we are doing. That is a democratic right of the constituents to find out what we are doing. That is part of our accountability. That is nothing for us. I am dealing with correspondence that is going to constituents. If I wish to write a love letter to the Member for St. James South, it should not be on a franking privilege. It should be in my own hand in a proper envelope and properly stamped. In fact, Sir,...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Puddin[1] and Souse will have it that we started a love affair across the Floor of the House and the next thing you know the Member for the City and you would fall out, so be careful.

Anyhow, Sir, the other thing I want,to speak about, in this session, is the price we pay to our constituency secretaries, the constituency assistants. Now I have raised this in the Management Commission. I want the Leader of the House to hear this in particular. I have raised this in the Management Commission. The constituency secretary, the constituency assistant, as I understand it, and as I use mine, is second only to the representative in a constituency in terms of knowing what is going on, keeping informed, looking after the constituents, ensuring that something happens that should happen, keeping abreast of all the information, and I do not think that it is right that they should be paid at the level of a maid. I do not think that is right. When you examine a maid in the public service, my constituency secretary gets paid less than a maid. Now, somebody will say why does she not become a maid? She does not become a maid because she does not wish to be a maid. She is the one who is invariably helping you to find work for people, out of a sense of loyalty, out a sense of commitment, not only commitment to the parliamentary representative but commitment to the constituency. Because after a while, and I believe that I have the most senior one of anybody else because ever since the thing started, mine has been with me, except for a few months and the other Members who have been around for a long time will have people who have been around a long time as well; and they got a big raise recently and they got something that is below the level of a maid.

Now, I think the maids are properly paid. I do not think that any maid is overpaid. I have to be very careful with what I say in this House. It gets reported sometimes a little cockeyed so I am not now saying that maids are overpaid. I am not now saying that there is anything wrong with what the maids are getting. What I am saying, is that my constituency secretary and the constituency secretary of everybody else in here is underpaid and I think it is wrong. 11.40 a.m.

While I am at that, I have, according to what my colleagues say, the best research facilities of any Member of Parliament. That is what my colleagues say. I have put that together myself over time because that is something that I like. It seems to me that a good parliamentary representative should have a research assistant.

It seems to me, Mr. Prime Minister, that any good parliamentary representative should have as a matter of course a research assistant. It seems to me that you cannot do proper representation in this day and age without proper research. If you are in Government, you can get the Permanent Secretary to get things looked at. I have no quarrel with that.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is a technical difficulty. Sometimes you have to do it yourself. The point is, right now my constituency secretary works part-time as

research assistant because I call her up and say: "Look in so and so and go through the parliamentary document and find for me such and such."

Now, I need a research assistant. If I could afford to pay one I would hire one, apart from increasing the employment in my constituency. But I need to have a research assistant but I cannot afford to pay for it. I cannot even put them on my legal staff because I have no legal staff so when all is said and done, I have been fighting off the last 20-something years not on full cylinders. That is because the facilities which we have do not allow for me to function on full cylinders.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would not go so far as to say that they are medieval but they are a little anti-diluvial.

I believe, Sir, I have made the two points I wanted to make. I therefore am not going to get involved in a discussion.

The Honourable Member for the City put a case so that again we do not have a big confusion on the call-in programmes. I support the Honourable Member's case. I support the case that is being put. Nobody can lock me up for saying what I am supposed to say in here because that is why I am in here. My constituents understand now after all this time that I share the meat with them in every respect possible so I do not spend a lot of time making statements for purposes of publicity. When I make a statement in Parliament, I believe it is a representation of the synthesis which exists in the neighbourhoods which I represent.

There are some people who do not always understand that when one speaks as a Parliamentarian that one has a duty most times, not every time, to represent what appears to be the consensus in one's constituency or at least a synthesis of the majority opinion in your constituency. Now, there are times when you have an opinion that is different from theirs. I know there are three or four issues on which my opinion differs substantially from the majority of my constituency but they know that because I tell them. I have not made it public for the rest of Barbados yet but there are some things they know about me because I tell them and I intend to continue telling them for the next two years. For as long as I remain healthy, I am going to remain a Member of Parliament for that constituency as long as they vote for me.

I would like, as I come to the second half of my representation life and as we go towards the millennium, to have slightly better facilities. Mr. Chairman, I have better modern-day equipment, that is, computer, printer and that sort of thing at home than I have in my office, or indeed, that we have at the party's office. But that is only an accident. I happened to be in the frame where I could do that over time. But that should be automatic equipment in every constituency office. There should be no constituency office without a computer. No Parliamentarian should have to buy a computer to function in his office.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I made the point that I bought one, but I am saying somebody else would come along and say, "Who do they think they are." Well, I think we are representatives of the people of Barbados. I believe we epitomise the best. We are the best of what the people in Barbados wish to have here. Therefore what somebody thinks about me personally is immaterial. What they think of us collectively might be immaterial as well but, certainly, what they think of us as representatives cannot be immaterial because that has to do with why we are here.

The sole reason, if one had to give a single reason for this conglomeration of 28 persons in here is to represent the people of Barbados and you cannot represent the people of Barbados if you do not have proper tools. If you do not have proper tools, you are denying the people of Barbados the right to the best representation.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We should be the best we can be. That is my point, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I have listened to some of the speeches made this morning, as I was a little bit late in getting here. I have no difficulty in supporting the idea of the funding of political parties or the funding of elections, or looking at the type of support staff that should be provided for Members of Parliament -1 say Parliament because I mean not only the House of Assembly but of the Senate - to undertake their public duties.

If we are to maintain civil governance and multi-party democracy, which is a very vital part of the basic freedoms of our citizens, then we must ensure that the institutions delivering these services function properly. Unfortunately for us in Barbados, however, the political parties themselves have caused in the public's mind a perception that Members of Parliament should not have minimum services if they are to undertake their task. They have also caused the public to believe that Members of Parliament make a fortune out of being Parliamentarians and we have also caused the public to believe that Members of Parliament happen to be employment exchanges, among other things.

Now, Sir, I can understand the historical reason why Barbadians have come to look at Parliamentarians as people who should give their services totally free. When the plantocracy was in power, and the oligarchy, they normally gave their services free but any proper analysis of the history of Barbados would show that all of the contracts which were awarded were given back in such a way that there was adequate financing for the annual elections of the plantocrats and the oligarchies who ran Barbados for a long time. Whether the contract was providing food for an almshouse or elsewhere, they had the wherewithal through those sources in order to maintain a political stranglehold on Barbados. 11.50a.m.

Therefore when the revolution started in the 1930s by the Barbados Progressive League and the Congress Party you had a group of men and women who came into politics without the same financial resources. The attack which was made on those men like Grantiey Adams, Edwy Talma and a host of them was that they were coming into politics to make money.

Unfortunately, the bi-partisan political system which we have in our country, leads political parties to take up that because it is an emotive issue with an electorate. I am not yet satisfied that we have got over in our country the politics of envy because the politics of envy is a very, very heavy force operating on how the public see politicians themselves. Today we have heard a bi-partisan issue on these issues. It is significant that the third representative party is not here because, unless he has changed his tune, it is usually the position that you will find one at least of the political parties believing that there are some votes to be had from these matters and attacking themselves on these issues.

In my twenty something years I am happy to see that we are making some progress in recognising that you cannot deliver proper services unless you have the wherewithal to do so and that we are not all gaining the same salary whether we are professionals in private practice or businessmen. Therefore there is a disparity sometimes in the nature of the representation.

It is a very expensive process to run a constituency office. The constituents themselves believe that every Member of Parliament everyday has a pocket full of money and everyday somebody is coming to you for $20 to finance something. You just go down the steps of Parliament and there are people out there who are going to rush to you and on the basis that if you do not give them they will tell you "don't mind Forde" we can go to somebody else. We have to get that out of the public's mind as well. They must understand that we are in here to give service and that we make some sacrifice but at the same time if the public wish proper Government, some of the legitimate charges must become a public charge.

We have made a tentative start during the 26 years I have been in here with first providing the Leader of the Opposition with an Assistant. In my days as Leader of the Opposition, it was an office that made it embarrassing at times to even meet an Ambassador in those circumstances. We have graduated from that and we now have a bit more commodious office which the present Leader of the Opposition occupies. The Leader of the Opposition has a staff of three, a maid, an Executive Assistant and a Secretary. There are not extremely well paid people. It is impossible to get proper research done in order to perform your role as Leader of the Opposition, unless you are going to pull your own pocket. I found that out as Leader of the Opposition.

There was a lot of pressure to become a full-time Leader of the Opposition where you do no outside work at all and have no other profession but nobody in those days ever asked whether or not the Leader of the Opposition was being properly paid.

Our Parliament has not yet matured to that level that the public is prepared to recognise that if they wish people to give up their business full time and service the country full time then those people must be reasonably paid and I am using the word reasonably. We are not asking for the salaries of bank manager, assistant bank manager, chief executives of even medium-sized companies in Barbados. We are not even asking for the salaries of Chefs or the salary that is made by insurance salesmen.

Barbadians believe that they are paying expensively for the type of Government that manages a billion dollar economy and manages it well. From time to time we make mistakes, but we manage it as well as BS&T and better than BS&T manages BS&T, as well as the Advocate Company Limited and the Nation Corporation are managed and I believe we produce more profit for the people of Barbados than they produce for their shareholders.

I am citing these examples because it is about time that one has to be blunt about these things in this country and yet the politician is so maligned by his own political opponents sometimes and then by the Press and by these mighty writers who have never had the guts and the confidence to come down and spend their time canvassing and going into poor people's homes and genuinely helping them or going and taking sick children to the hospital. None of them have had that sort of time. They all will attack the politician and at the end of the day they undermine the political system.

I am satisfied that part of the cynicism that has come to political life has come because the politicians and

the lawyers are about the two most pilloried people in this country and yet the people who pillory us have not got the guts nor courage to come out and do the job that must be done. You have to tell them that. They have not got the guts to know that their telephones are going to ring at 3 o'clock in the morning and they could be holding their wife in any position and they have got to let her go and get out there. They have not got the guts to understand and recognise that when a fire takes place and there is real tragedy that the first person they call is a politician and if you do not go, you are in trouble.

I missed a couple of funerals recently in my constituency, and I remember one of my strong supporters stop speaking to me because I was not at the funeral. That does not happen often with me. I was doing public duty elsewhere but the expectation of the public is that the politician should be all things to all people at all times including the sacrifice which we are prepared to make by leaving our families at times in order to fulfill public duties. I do not know where they expect the money to come from.

Now, Sir, that is a very dangerous position for any country that wants to avoid corruption in its public life. Political parties must now be seen as any business is seen; as a business organisation. Political parties in Barbados are weak. I am satisfied from all that I have known of my own party and for all that I have got to know about the D.L.P. and the N.D.P. that as soon as they are out of office they are financially, absolutely exposed for the simple reason, and nobody writes this in the Press, that each one of us has to find the money in order to run the party. I will say that between 65% to 75% of all of the money running a political party comes out of the pockets of the M.P. and the parliamentarians. 12.00 noon

Now, when we were reduced to 3 in this House it was very difficult to keep another political party alive but it was necessary for democracy and we had to make the sacrifice because we did not want to be in the pockets of the Big Six or anybody else. People do not understand that. When an election comes the businessmen line up all around and they give some to you, they give some to me and they give some to the other one. But they want pay back day. I am against that in this system and I have said that one must find a way in Barbados where elections are paid for by the public on a proper system of certification so that we are not dipping our hands in their pockets for private purposes in order to stop special interest from having such a domineering role in the political system.

That is my view and it is a view that research throughout the best democracies support. The trouble is that there are a lot of people who write from their self-righteous position who do not do the research.

Now I have the good fortune and the honour to be serving on a thing called the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and we are doing a study of the functioning of political parties and their financing which has been made available to strengthen democracy in countries such as ours and elsewhere.

We are also doing a study of the code of ethics which should bind and guide the political parties in their relationship with one another. That does not prevent us from taking stances that are different on policies and what not. But how is any Honourable Member, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to come in here and speak about the implications of NAFTA for the future of the economy of Barbados in the Caribbean unless he is going to research that subject and has the possibility of doing so? How is any person going to be able to come in here and consider adequately the intent of the American Government in taking over the leadership of these countries as much as it could as though we are some little rubber stamps from them through a Ship Rider Agreement unless we can study other treaties, see what is our vital interest and how we can defend our vital interest whilst carrying on proper relations with United States? When we have to deal with idiots such as Mr. Cronkite, McLaughlin who can use the whole of the NBC to attack politicians in Barbados, a country that knows more about democracy than the United States and that had democracy longer than the United States, but they can use the power of their television and their money in order to malign the political system of Barbados.

Mark you, in the American Civil War we helped them. As a matter of fact Barbados, although we had slavery then, Barbados was at the time telling the United States we are not going to let Britain dominate anybody - the Navigation laws as you very well know. So we have a tradition and we have pride. They talk about pride. We have pride but our country must understand and our people must understand that they must pay in order to see that the parliamentarians are people who can stand up for them, whether they stand up in their Parliament, they stand up in the United Nations or elsewhere in defence of democracy.

I stated quite early, since October last year, when they were celebrating my twenty-fifth year, I stated quite early that we could not possibly sign the Ship Rider's Agreement in the terms in which it was. Now I had done the research, Sir. I have had to research many treaties with United States of America, treaties with the Philippines, base agreements elsewhere and, Sir, I want to say that people must understand that my speciality was International Law which I did many years ago. Sitting in this Chamber is a civil servant who did tremendous work on the United States Lease Bases Agreements, an agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt that bound the colonial territories, The United States has a record of not paying, They

went through here from the nineteen fifties and sixties without paying us a cent for their vehicles driving on our roads. I reckoned that they owed us over US$50 million for vehicle taxes and other taxes that should have been paid at the time. When I tried to re-negotiate the lease agreements the United States would not pay us a cent instead they found a division between Antigua & Barbuda and ourselves and eventually gave us $1.3 million for all of those years.

You have got to understand these big countries and when it comes to national interest we need people to stand together and we need to inform our Members of Parliament so that our Members of Parliament in turn can brief our public so that the public in turn can properly understand the issues and do not believe that an invitation up to the United States Ambassador's House is the end all and be all of public life. I do not worry to go but there are some of them who believe so. It is not that we have any hatred towards the United States. As a matter of fact they are close allies. We have fought with them on the battle field, we have argued with them elsewhere but when they take steps to undermine the banana industry of the Eastern Caribbean, when they take steps such as they are doing now, to undermine the tourist industry by decertifying your airports.

Aside,

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Not our airport, Jamaica by giving a Class 2. When they take those sorts of steps we then have to be properly informed in this House to be able to sit down and argue with them and that calls for research and assistance. We may have to hire consultants, Sir.

The Opposition has to be briefed properly by the Government. We must exchange information on these matters. The press has to be briefed because very often the Press is not doing any research either. Some of them get such scandalous salaries in the Press that they work for, that they are not able to do any research and that is part of the problem that we have in this country. So they will write any first thing. But these are matters that go to the fundamental way in which we are governed and I hope we will get beyond the stage that the Member of Parliament is seen as though he is there only to milk the public purse whereas in truth and in fact many of us are giving service at great sacrifice to our families and we have chosen to do it. So we are not complaining but all we need ask is that the public recognise this.

If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and myself, he has been in here for over 20 years and in the Senate also, I for 26. Every month we contribute faithfully to the pension that they are going to give us. I sh6uld not contribute because I cannot get a higher pension other than a pension based on the salary I drew in 1981. We do not get a pension at the moment. That is a fact. My pension is based on my 1981 salary the last year as a Minister, that is, when I get a pension which may not be for a while if the people of Christ Church West manage to dominate the position. Sir, I am serious about this because when you look at it most of the Prime Ministers of Barbados, in fact the Premiers and Prime Ministers of Barbados have not died rich people. 12.10 p.m.

There are many Members of Parliament in recent times, both from the Democratic Labour Party, the Barbados Labour Party and the Congress Party, whom some of us have had to pull our pockets to keep in their old age and to bury.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is the position. They were not people who were spending money recklessly about the place. So this idea about politicians which you hear for example, on the call-in programmes, gets me furious, because they do not ask any politician to come and talk. Their talk is that politicians go in there and lace their pockets at the expense of the public! It is always that sort of wild, useless talk that, in my view in the event of a final analysis will undermine the democratic system of Government which we need to have. I believe in political parties holding office and losing office. I strongly believe in that because it keeps democracy functioning.

That is why I had a slogan, Sir, which my Party will always tell you when I was leading the Party. I always said when you are in Government, prepare for being in Opposition. When you are in Opposition, prepare for being in Government.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The political parties must understand that there are some areas where we must exchange information, not in ways against the public but in the interest of maintaining a proper parliamentary multi-party democratic system.

Barbados has been fortunate. Corruption is not in this country at the level of corruption in some of the Caribbean nations or the corruption in the United States of America. We have been lucky in that way, Sir. We have managed to maintain a standard...

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

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: ...that I think the country can be reasonably satisfied. It is not perfect. I really must appeal for some understanding about the need to

strengthen the political parties and a need to ensure that they have the tools with which to undertake their work. One last sentence, if you would permit me. The political parties, themselves, will have to convince their members that the members have a duty to contribute. There are obviously pensioners and others who do not have the resources, but too many people free ride in a political party.

They are the quickest people, when the party wins office who are annoying the Ministers or the MPs they want jobs. If you do not give them jobs or you cannot find jobs for them, they believe that you are the worst thing up. That is not right. I believe in what the late Errol Barrow said. "If you join to a club you must be able to pay your dues and if you cannot pay your dues, do not join it." He said it in relation to the World Bank when the United States offered to pay the Barbados dues to the World Bank. Had he taken the very proper view that represented the feeling of the Barbadian that we do not want your money for that purpose, because I would not have joined the club unless the Barbados Treasury could afford it.

I say to people in political parties, they too must strengthen their Party, whether you are an N, D or B in your Party, you must contribute faithfully. You must give freely of your time as well and you must expect to give service if you really believe in strengthening democracy and a proper system of civil Government in Barbados.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have consulted with the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party and the Leader of the National Democratic Party and indicated that I would have wanted this matter debated on the Floor of Parliament and that we should have addressed it by a move in, if there was a consensus, but there is no consensus or a formula to some of these things. But, I still feel that we should have a move in keeping with the strong recommendation from the Member for St. George South.

The ihatter of the subvention for the political parties and for the constituency offices, Sir, is urgent. I propose to have a move in of $400 000 to cover that. The other issues should be dealt with as a package.

I have also started discussions with the head of the staff on this and all other matters because I do not want it to be said that we are doing things with politicians outside the context of the discussion that is going on for other civil servants. I brought this to your attention and the other matters will be dealt with, Sir, by the time of the mid-term review when we look at the Government's expenditure.

More precisely, Sir, in the context of the position of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, she said that we intended to finance this House out of the savings that are to be realised from Barbados stopping its subscriptions to institutions from which we are not deriving a benefit. This can be done at no additional cost to the taxpayers, by our diverting funds from useless expenditure to institutions internationally from which we are deriving no benefits and helping to build democracy in Barbados and that is the way in which this will be addressed.

By the middle of the year we would have identified all the institutions that we will stop subscribing to. In my own Ministry it has been said, Sir, we subscribe to 13 institutions at a cost of $613 000 a year. It goes across every Ministry, Sir. This is not to be a burden on the taxpayers. It is to be financed by way of savings and I am sure that after we have gone through all of the institutions we will come up with more than half a million dollars in savings which will allow this to be done in an expeditious manner.

I will urge, Sir, that the Management Commission meet as urgently as possible to discuss the formula for the provision of the subvention to the political parties and to agree on the amount by which the support for constituency offices should be set.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I need to use this opportunity to address a broader point. The broader point is that the biggest discrimination faced by Barbadian politicians is discrimination in the work place.

There is a perception, Mr. Chairman, that once you go into Opposition, that there are certain places that you cannot work. If you work at those places, it would upset the Government.

I want to say on behalf of this administration, Sir, that we are setting no constraints on any private sector institution in regard to its employment practices where those practices involve the employment of Members of Parliament. There are some institutions in this society that have to change anachronistic employment practices and I speak particularly in relation to the University of the West Indies.

The Government has made recommendations which I want the University to take seriously, Sir. It is nonsense that if a member of the University runs for office and loses his seat can be re-employed at the University, while if he runs and wins a seat, he loses his job.

It is nonsense, Sir, that a Member of the Senate as a Member of Parliament can be employed full time at the University, but a Member of the House of Assembly cannot be employed full time. That is nonsense, Sir.

It is also nonsense, Sir, as has happened in my case, and in other people's cases that you can only be appointed as a part-time lecturer but as a part-time lecturer you are responsible for all the lectures of the course. You are responsible for setting the examination, you are responsible for marking the scripts, you are responsible for doing the tutorials and doing everything that a lecturer has to do, but you only draw the salary of a part-time lecturer. That is nonsense.

The point is, Sir, that there seems to be a fear that people are contaminated by association with a politician that, if you put a politician in the University you will politicise the process. That is the fallacy. If you are going to contaminate a person by full time relationship with them, you are equally going to contaminate them by a part-time relationship with them.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: To begin with $400,000 and then deal with the rest at mid-term, but it would come from savings and from stopping giving money to these institutions abroad that do not benefit Barbados, so that we are not burdening the taxpayers.

I want to stress the point that there has to be an enlightened approach in this country.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There has to be in this small society, an enlightened approach to the employment of people who come into public life, and who do not have independent careers to go back to, for example, careers at the Bar or careers as physicians. The private sector as well has to stop feeling a sense of intimidation involving people of great experience and expertise who are politicians taking part in their business. 12.20 p.m.

Across the rest of the world people in politics who are not members of Cabinet function largely by having positions in the private sector, but that tradition has not yet evolved in this country and I really want to use this opportunity with no special pleading whatsoever to say that this discrimination against politicians in the labour force is wrong.

I am talking about people who do not have independent careers. It will drive good people from participating in the political process and in addition to what we are doing by way of improvement through the Treasury I trust that the message will go forth from these Chambers that the time has come for a new and more enlightened approach to be brought to bear by all concerned on how we treat the people who exercise public policy in the country.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER 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 1.30 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. 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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 12 stand part as amended.

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

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

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - $34 324 123

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, last week I gave the pledge that ample time would be allowed during the course of this Estimates debate for the House to consider the function of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and broadcasting policy in general. The calling of this Head provides the opportunity for that full, thorough and ample debate to be seized.

Before I allow other Members to speak, and I hope the debate is deep and full, I would just like to draw attention to the salient aspects of expenditure contemplated under this Head. The House will recognise that there is a certain stringent economy being exercised in most of the subprograms under Head 13.

Under the Prime Minister's Official Residence there is nothing new being contemplated. The vote for the Barbados Defence Force is being increased by only $40 000. We are however doubling the vote for the Barbados Cadet Corps because we would like to see the cadet corps generalised throughout the schools in Barbados. The vote to the Government Information Service is in fact reduced and this is because last year the Government Information Service carried out substantial repairs to its structures and the amount voted last year does not have to be voted this year.

The amount as well for the Data Processing Department is also being reduced and again that is because last year provision was made for the data processing unit to establish a computer laboratory to serve as the place where the training for public servants in computer technology and information technology should be located. We do not have to replicate that vote this year and that explains the basis for the decline.

The one major area, Mr. Chairman, of expansion is under General Administration and Coordination. The Government of Barbados has, as part of the first financial protocol of the Lom6 4 Convention, agreed to a proposed programme whereby a quality Cariforum Information Network should be established. A Cariforum is the combination of the countries of CARICOM together with Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

We have agreed that a quality Cariforum information network should be established by the expansion and the modification of the existing facilities and the services available to and currently being supplied by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and CANA.

The implementation of this programme will involve and result in the establishment of a coordinating centre for a regional operation and activities. This regional information network centre will be located in one building and will result in the provision of common administrative services and the joint delivery of programmes.

It is intended that the present plant of the CBU and CANA will be relocated at the centre leading to the lowering of operating costs and improved efficiency on behalf of the CANA and CBU.

It is intended to be a 2-year project that will be financed substantially under the First Financial Protocol of the Lom6 4 Convention as part of the regional indicative programme and that the coordinating centre would be established in Barbados. The Government of Barbados will be responsible for the location of the site of the building and the budget of the project indicates that the contribution by the Government will be approximately one and a quarter million dollars for the building and $200,000 for conversion if conversion is required. The entire project is intended to cost about $11.6 million. 1.35 p.m.

An area has been identified located to the south of the Caribbean Development Bank and to the east of the Defence Force for this new centre to house the CBU and the CANA to be located as part of this new regional network, Sir, and it is anticipated that the Government Information Service and any other public broadcasting unit as determined by the government would have some share in these facilities. Now, Sir, I have gone to the extent of spelling out this project because the major item of increase under the Prime Minister's Head is a provision of $1.24 million for structures and that provision, Sir, is intended to be the amount that will be spent this year for the planning and construction of this facility. I would want to draw the Members of the House's attention to a few aspects of some programmes falling under the Prime Minister's Office.

If Members read the notes carefully, they will observe that under "Operating Expenses in the Ministry of Finance," that a new project has been started ... the Prime Minister's Office, Sir. A new project has been started called "Barbados 2000 or Project 2000."

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member for St. Michael South Central wants me to revert to Head 12 but I have moved in $40,000, the formula for the allocation was said under Head 12. He was not here. It is to cover subventions to parties to work together for the upgrading of constituency offices but the formula is to be dealt with through the Management Commission of Parliament. I want to bring this to the attention of the House that there was a unit in the Ministry in the Prime Minister's Office that was planning independence celebrations. We have broadened the scope of the function of the office to start giving thought to the kinds of celebrations that we would like to have to usher in the new millennium.

It is not too soon for us to start giving thought to this, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I know there is one project in particular that I would like to see carried out. I believe that we should take the country into the new millennium as a very clean and beautiful country, and that a project of that kind has the scope to involve communities, to involve organisations, to involve the citizens, properly developed; and I am not talking about something like a crash programme but properly developed. It can be an expression of how Barbados feels about itself as we go into, not just a new century, but a new millennium.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are a number of entities in the offshore business which want to have a relationship with Barbados, not just as a location for companies, but they want to have a relationship to Barbados that is deep and many want to sponsor green projects that would see the significant beautification of major landmarks in Barbados. One landmark, for example, is the old esplanade that lends itself to transformation. That general beautification, properly done, is part and parcel of the thinking for Project 2000, but there will be other ideas. I believe that it will be appropriate as well for a sub-committee of this Parliament to be convened at some appropriate time to give appropriate consideration to the kind of ways in which you might want to salute our going into a new millennium, but the point I am making in this debate is that we have formally now established a small unit in the Prime Minister's Office to start doing the basic planning for the celebrations that we will observe to take the country into the new millennium.

I would like to see it nationally in scope, Sir, totally non-partisan, and that we could come up with ideas befitting the significance of the occasion that we intended it to celebrate.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Head also makes provision for the financing of activities pertaining to CARICOM affairs. The Prime Minister of Barbados has responsibilities to the region as the lead Prime Minister with responsibility for the single market and the single economy, and for that reason a very small unit has been established in the Prime Minister's office to enable us to...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Some of the other personal emoluments are replacing it. I have upgraded that post of CARICOM Affairs Officer. I really think I have an obligation to the House since it is being funded here to let the House know where we are with the discharge of that responsibility. As I said, there is a small unit established in the Prime Minister's Office that deals day-to-day with it but there is an intraministerial committee that serves as a co-ordinating committee on CARICOM.

As regards the single market, Mr. Chairman, the House will be aware that there was a special consultation in Barbados last July in which we have decided to give new focus to the work on the single market. The single market is, as the House knows, is intended to create the conditions under which by the year 1999 now, the Caribbean economy functions to all intents and purposes as one economy.

Hitherto, the emphasis has been on the dismantling of trade barriers or the election of common external protectionist policy; and we have recognised that we have gone as far as we can go with the purely trade based approach to the development of the single market and a single economy. As a result, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the special consultation recommended that for the future, the emphasis should be taken off just state aspects of integration and be focused more on programmes and policies to fuse the Caribbean economies to allow for the conversions of economic policies and to allow for in particular, the development of the Caribbean capital markets as the basis upon which the evolution of CARICOM enterprises or competitive scale can emerge.

This has occasioned fundamental changes in the organs of CARICOM and it is to be reported, Mr. Chairman, that the treaty of CARICOM has been amended by the introduction of a protocol that has now amended voting rights, but has now established new mechanisms, new councils, for the first time to drive the process of integration. So that while in the past, for example, the Ministers of Trade have been at the centre of the integration process, for the future there is now a council of Ministers of Finance and Planning, because we want to start the process of integration by the pursuit of more common macroeconomic policies dealing with money market issues, fiscal issues, conversions of fiscal and monetary policies, the division of capital markets and the like. There is a more proactive role for Ministers of Finance in the process in the future.

The biggest change that is proposed, Mr. Chairman, and that is being worked on now is to give the single market, the single economy a legal construction that it has not had hitherto. Before the measures of the single market and the single economy had been stated in accords that countries could either observe or not observe, and amendments to the CARICOM treaty have been made by way of the introduction of protocols. An intergovernmental task force has been established to begin work on the introduction of a new protocol to deal with new areas of integration namely, rights of establishment, the provision of common services and the movement of capital. 1.45 p.m.

The intergovernmental task force dealing with those subjects met recently in Antigua. We are hoping to bring the work of that Task Force to a stage where we could be in a position at the next Heads of Government meeting in Jamaica to, for the first time, integrate the mechanisms for a single market and the single economy into the treaty of CARICOM itself and also to make provision through that new protocol for a common position for the region on matters pertaining to the movement of capital, the rights of establishing enterprises and the rights and movement of services.

We are really not going to get anywhere with the development of a regional economy unless there are

rules governing rights of establishment, the movement of services and the movement of capital. I believe, Sir, the work of that intergovernmental group is important both in relation to the subjects that it is dealing with but especially...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I make the point that the first thing we did however was we changed the Treaty by changing the rules because the problem with CARICOM to date is that the pace has always been set by that of its slowest member. We have now changed the voting powers and so on such that majority decisions can now obtain in CARICOM.

I am stressing the point, Sir, that it is the intention therefore to carry forward the CARICOM integration process by agreeing to a number of protocols that would have legal effect in new areas such as capital movements, the rights of establishment and the movement of services. There will be one as well on industrial policy, but one in particular, Sir, and this is going to be very crucial. There will be a new protocol as well on the protection of disadvantaged sectors, industries and regions.

It is very crucial that we have a common position on this because in order for CARICOM to relate, for example, to the free trade area of the Americas, we need ourselves to be aware in CARICOM of those sectors we would not expose to the full brunt of reciprocal trade arrangements. That new work, Mr. Chairman, to develop protocols in those areas, will exercise the attention of inter-governmental task forces.

We also want to bring the Attorneys General of the region into the process at a sufficiently early date so that by the year 1999 the mechanism for having a single market and a single economy in the region could be realized.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the House wants to talk today particularly about CBC broadcasting, intercom policy and the like. I am not going, in my introductory remarks, to say a lot but just to say we are dealing here with an area that has been growing in complexity because of the drastic and dramatic change in technology.

When we came to office, one of our concerns was to set a framework in place that could govern the grant of new television licenses but we have now found that the issue is far more complex than that. The advent of direct television, for example, has made the whole concept of broadcasting and television broadcasting virtually obsolete. It has opened up an area of grave uncertainty for the application of public policy because we have regulations governing telecommunications and we have regulations governing broadcasting but Direct TV falls neither in one camp or the other. Many countries have been grappling with the very difficult task of how to put in place a system not only for dealing with licences but to deal with the cultural penetration and the other issues that arise from the march of information technology.

The need for intercom policy does not only deal with the issue of the criteria to be taken into account in deciding who should get licences, television and radio but how do we deal in terms of the exercise of public policy, with the management of one of the most dynamic sectors in the civil society and a sector where technology is changing so rapidly that the mechanisms for regulation will have to depart very substantially from the past.

In relation to CBC itself, Sir, the Government is still committed to the notion that mixed ownership eventually has to be the lot of the station and that we have to put the Corporation in a state that it could attract ownership by private groups in the country including many of the institutions that hold the savings of small people.

CBC is on course to becoming commercially viable and the recent guarantee of a loan by this House to its new venture is intended to facilitate that. I am aware that there are concerns on all sides, not only on the Opposition benches but on my side, on the manner in which CBC has been functioning and appears to want to function. I made it clear when I assumed office that I would like to see a sense of balance at the CBC.

I am not in support of a situation where a Corporation, because it is Government owned, believes that it has to be dominated only by Government representation but members on my side sometimes feel very hard done by the imbalance at CBC that appears to be anti-Government. I suppose that Members on the Other Side feel sometimes very hard done by the imbalance at CBC that seems to be pro-Government.

I recall, for example, the day when the Value Added Tax was introduced that CBC carried a political statement but it was not a statement by a political commentator because that person did not have any known expertise as an economist nor as an accountant in these matters. It was not a comment from the Government side nor was it from the Opposition.

I have to congratulate CBC, Sir, for its brazenness and its nerve to believe that in a matter as sensitive and as delicate as the introduction of the Value Added Tax that it was finding neutral ground in having the views of the NDP and the NDP alone represented. I am not even sure if it was the NDP, Sir, because it might have been a faction of the NDP. I do not know if the person was speaking on behalf of the NDP, but we have been having this in Barbados.

People speak in terms of Government manipulation and you wonder where was the Government manipulation in a situation like that. The reality is that television is the most powerful medium...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: As Minister of Finance you once called CBC and stopped it from doing something. He intervened in the news. When the Honourable Member fof St. Michael South Central was the Minister of Finance, I remember CBC was carrying a statement on the Opposition and he intervened in the news and spoke.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I want to make it absolutely clear that I have never ever on any occasion called CBC on any matter whether in Government or in Opposition to stop it from carrying anything whatsoever, never once.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I did not say he stopped it. I said he intervened immediately and had his views represented on the spot. 1.55 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I have repeatedly in this Honourable House made the point that anytime a Prime Minister makes a statement that a responsible organisation like CBC should provide three, five or even one minute, whatever is available for Members of the Opposition to take advantage of, so that they can be some kind of balance. I have made that point in here for years and years. Certainly, I am not a CBC interferer nor do I interfere with the media. I never get involved with the media. You have the wrong man, not me.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is going to be a lot of sanctimony expressed in this debate, Sir, but politicians are concerned with their public image. Most politicians try to maintain a relationship with all sections of the media.

Sir, the notion of politicians not having an interest in what happens at these corporations and institutions is nonsense. All I insist upon, Sir, is that there should be a sense of balance. I have had from my side the strictest criticism expressed about our side's perception of the balance of CBC. I have no doubt that I am going to hear from the Other Side about their perception of the imbalance and I look forward to the debate. I am speaking tongue in cheek, Sir, but it would have to be a wonderful day for democracy where you have a complete and radical overturn of the indirect tax system of this country and nobody from the Ministry of Finance or the Opposition is invited to speak on CBC the night but Mr. Comissiong was the only person who expressed the position and lambasted the Government. That Sir, speaks volumes.

I just want to say, Sir, that the operation of CBC is going to be a subject of public concern and controversy and the management is trying its best to bring a commercial ethos to the organisation to allow us to put it in a condition to allow people to subscribe to the shares of the corporation in due course.

We have had a first draft of the Infocom Policy submitted to Cabinet that not only deals with the criteria that is taken into account in deciding on the issue of licences to television and radio stations but deals with the greater and more fundamental issues arising from the development of information technology in the communications field, the scope of public policy and the mechanism that we can exercise in order to make sure that public policy is effective in this area.

As I close my introductory remarks, Sir, I just want to say that Barbados must not try to operate as if we can hold back the march of technology in the field of communications technology but that we must join it. It is perhaps necessary that CBC, the National Cultural Foundation, the local producers of cultural materials and others look to putting in place a development company to develop sufficient material on Barbados[1] culture, its business opportunities and its way of life in an effort to put Barbados up on satellite and sell Barbados as effectively as other countries who are seeking to sell themselves through the new Direct TV and other mechanisms. There will be people who will want to hold back the march. Some people will be afraid of it and in my view we must not be lax in this area and believe that we can halt this march while being sensitive to the new forms of cultural penetration and protective of any adverse effect it can have on the society.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to a robust and wide ranging debate on this particular Head and I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of issues which the Minister has raised in this matter in respect to CBC but before we get there I want to solicit from the Minister some information first of all on the fees and other expenses of the Commission of Social Justice. I believe that if the Honourable Member for St. Peter wishes to supplement the pensions of former public officers, priests and others or wishes to pay call-in programme moderators out of the public purse, or carry out other kinds of financial engineering, then the public deserves to know this.

Despite the sanctimonious attitude that some of those Members of the Commission adopt in their public profile, we cannot as taxpayers find out from them, nor have

we been able to find out from the Minister what it is that these Social Justice Commissioners are earning, what it is that they do, to whom they are accountable, what it is they have been suggesting, why they are being paid out of public funds and whether what they are performing should not be performed on the basis of their commitment to the country rather than on the basis of forming part of a provision of $488 000. I really wish to know what is the relevance of the Social Justice Commission. If it is only to advise the Prime Minister, I still believe that when we set up Commissions such as these which are being paid out of taxpayers money that ultimately the Minister himself should report to the people on the kind of advice, if any, or the kind of activities, if any, that this Commission has been undertaking.

I can see no relevance whatsoever to the existence of the Commission other than as I said supplementing people's pensions or providing them with a pot barrel approach to writing hegiographies and other contributions to the newspapers, either in defence of the *status quo* which has been so wonderful to them, rather than really looking at the issues of the good society. I would recommend people like the Honourable Member for St. George South who would do it out of commitment to start to bring the doctrines of his mentor.

Asides.

-Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You cannot be drawing money and holding positions when you are making decisions and not be accountable to the people of Barbados.

The Minister ultimately responsible for Information policy is not a Member of this Chamber and therefore we cannot pillory him for the fact that two and a half years after the Government has been elected to office the so-called White Paper on Information Policy or whatsoever it was, has not seen the light of day and all of the White Papers which have been under his hand have been gathering dust since they were issued. 2.05 p.m.

The one on public sector reform, nobody even talks about it now. The one in relation to information policy, there is nobody in Barbados who believes that the Government Information Policy has any credibility. Even the persons whom we once thought had the most favoured status in relation to that have had to deal with the Government very severely in relation to the issue of television licences and radio licences and other matters of that sort so there is complete disarray.

There is no consensus and the object of Government, I would think in a matter such as this is to build that level of consensus and I am glad that the Prime Minister applied a muzzle to his Minister of State about 2 years ago to stop him from shooting off his mouth in relation to Government policy in relation to radio and television licensing because he knows as well as I that the Government has no policy. So it was no point shooting off your mouth giving the impression that you had come to office with a task other than to reward the journalists and others who had assisted you in that process. That was the extent of the Government Information policy and it carried that part out very well. Having done that we have nothing to go on and in the midst of all that there are a lot of bits and pieces of a broken jigsaw puzzle which it is difficult to put together with any form of sanity or consistency and that is a major concern that we have.

I digressed a bit about the Commission on Social Justice. I want to hear a bit about the role of the CARICOM Ambassador. I wish I could have asked the Honourable Member for the City but I know she is no wiser than I am. Unlike me she does not wish to be informed about his role. But I want to hear something about the role of the CARICOM Ambassador.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, there is a special envoy or whatever he is called. What are his specific responsibilities and what he will be undertaking...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. It is customary when an Ambassador has been appointed or a Special Envoy that the Foreign Minister has gotten into the habit of coming down with information and his curriculum vitae etc. I have no evidence. I cannot recall the Foreign Minister ever having done that. I do not think we have any CARICOM Ambassador. Is this a secret weapon of the Government? I must have been absent.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I think the subject matter was so limited that there was not much to say and therefore it is quite correct that there may have been a statement but most of us would have missed it and I am certain the Honourable Prime Minister would have wished to deliver it in as short a sentence as he could lest at his right side he may be hauled into his seat quickly for extending himself.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think that we do need to consider how we are going to celebrate the turn of the millennium. There are many countries who are doing it and we do not object to Government. I think the environment is something that needs some attention.

It is only this week as I was driving from home on mornings, there have been a lot of bush fires in St. Philip, and if you drive in St. Philip now you would realise, and I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and I would agree on this, but I decided to say it before he

says it, that as a result of the bush fires, when that grass top is removed all of those open tracks of land in St. Philip are full of bottles, bags of garbage and other waste material.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, not St. Philip, people passing through St. Philip to go to Bushy Park on weekends, to go to other sites and there are people in St. Philip who do it too. Many of those areas throughout Barbados are an eyesore particularly at this time of year. It is at that level and I also think that one needs to pay attention and devote resources if you are going to do it through this or elsewhere, to that important matter. It is very, very important.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well we have no problem with that and any effort which you wish us to make in that regard we will make.

I think that it is about time that we had a full scale debate on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. On previous occasions debate has been limited to a question as to what should be the appropriate subvention, whether CBC is in fact making money or not making money. A lot of it, for the time I have been in this Chamber, has been sterile debate in which we have not achieved much because there is nobody who can doubt, least of all any Minister of the Information or Minister of Finance, that as long as CBC is to carry out its mandate under the legislation that it is going to require from time to time injections by way of subvention or otherwise from the Government and that is going to be necessary.

What I think is of concern is that the Government needs to make a determination on where it is going to locate CBC because I could not work out how it could be that in the absence of a published plan in relation to television in Barbados, for example, that you could have the introduction of direct TV at the same time as CBC is expanding to go into multi-choice television together with requiring a major guarantee from the Government of Barbados which we all know at the end of the day the Government is going to have to pay off. Against this background many of the experts tell us, as they did when we introduced STV, that the technology which is being used is not necessarily the most appropriate technology and there will be debate about that kind of thing but the question is, should the taxpayers eventually be burdened with the responsibility of putting in place an operation which the private sector, or perhaps even a joint venture with Government in which a substantial portioij of that risk is assumed by the private sector, is not involved, and that concerns me.

I think what you may have done, you may have cut off your nose and in essence done spite to your face as a result of the way in which this particular matter was done. That perhaps is one of the concerns that we would have articulated had we had time to debate CBC when the matter came up before the House.

I also think and I have felt very strongly about it, having sat on the Board of CBC, having worked in its television/radio department, worked in the TV licensing section as a school boy and have great familiarity about the institution that it needs a very radical overhaul and therefore I would be disappointed that the Minister has essentially made it clear that the more things change the worse they get. I interpret his statement about what CBC expects, to be an indication that the more things change the worse they get.

All of us in Barbados have to be concerned. There is a very strong commitment to having a local television and radio broadcasting station but more importantly television because we need to reflect the images of our people and our culture. That is very important. It is going to come under increasing competition from other areas and therefore Government has to make a determination about what is realistic and what is feasible in that particular context. 2.15 p.m.

It has to make a decision also about the structure of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. I say to the Minister responsible for Information that he could solve all of the problems of the public perception of the CBC tomorrow, he opened up the Board Room of CBC to persons other than appointees of the Minister.

Even before privatising it, I believe that the workers should have a representative on the Board, not the Workers Union, the workers. I also believe that the public, and I do not know what mechanism you would use to select those persons, should have independent and impartial members on that Board, so that a lot of the foolishness that goes on in these statutory corporations, even with a well-intentioned Board would come to an end.

The Democratic Labour Party's position was that CBC should be privatised, starting with partial privatisation. I read the comments of the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office relative to CBC and he obviously does not understand what he is talking about. It is pointless making a political point unless you really understand it.

The whole process of bringing in consultants to CBC was to get its privatisation ready, but the Minister, if he would try to understand the facts of the situation, would understand that there is no statutory corporation in Barbados or no statutory corporation that I know of in this country that wants to be privatised. Therefore, the

process of getting it ready for privatisation is not going to meet with the active assistance of the persons who are presently involved at the staff level, Board level or otherwise of that Corporation. If you want to privatise a statutory corporation then it means you have to make that decision and you have to bring people from outside to put the mechanism in place which will make privatisation a reality.

That is essentially what the previous Government was undertaking. It would have taken a very long time, recognising the fact that the only people, who initially probably would make an investment in that corporation would be the people who are inextricably bound up in its future, meaning the workers of the Corporation. The initial decision was made to privatise it with a percentage of the shares to be made essentially available to the workers. If you are on that course, we give you support on that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON:That is the point. So that the idea that we wanted to privatise it without getting it in that condition is nonsense and that is what the Minister of State said in another place and it was patent nonsense.

We brought in consultants from outside to get the corporation privatisation ready and that process was brought to a halt, I believe, until such time as the Government announced that it was ready to proceed with the privatisation of it again. We believe that it should be privatised because I believe it would raise the levels of professionalism in the Corporation. It would open the doors and give a breath of fresh air, particularly, against the allegations which the Honourable Minister has made about partisanship and that kind of thing, in relation to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter has expressed his commitment to fair and balanced news reporting, but it is not going to happen like that as long you have the Ministers calling in the newsroom and directing which Deputy General Manager should sit in the newsroom and vet news before it goes out. Even at the last by-election exercise, somebody went through the roof of the corporation simply because the former Speaker of the House, Mr. Lawson Weekes was featuring in one of the television broadcasts.

We have a litany, that is why I do not have to speak on the CBC because the information is documented in relation to that, down to the fact that a directive has been issued that the Democratic Labour Party's public meetings should not be covered on the television news. This is the kind of thing that is going on at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. I am glad the Honourable Member for St. Peter said he is not committed to that kind of thing. He needs to call to account those people who have been rampaging through the newsroom of CBC bringing their lack of professionalism from other media houses...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. There have not been any instructions for the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and no directives were given for the non-coverage of any public meeting. In fact if there is anything, the Democratic Labour Party has enjoyed wonderfully good coverage on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

As Minister, I have issued no such directive. I can say that categorically, Sir. There is no such directive that carries my signature as Minister. I have not issued that in words to anybody. I really have to ask the Members if they can produce that evidence, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am in the mood to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Peter. There is a substantive Minister and an insubstantial Minister. It seems as though the insubstantial one has more influence on the policies of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation than the substantive one. So, I do not attribute to the Honourable Member for St. Peter's feats to which he neither is responsible nor can take responsibility.

I have never called in any newsroom asking for anything. I have called in mainly, whenever I have, to produce a news story. I believe the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party need to adopt stances which reflect how democracy works. When I find a media house taking a direct policy against this Party, then this Party has to use whatever means at its disposal to ensure that we do not finance the operations of entities which take positions against us. The person who believes in our philosophy do not use their resources to ensure that a balanced view point is not made out.

If we find that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation adopts that stance, then we will have to look for other unorthodox means as we have been using, and will continue to use, to changing to the Attorney General to get information out to the people of Barbados using whatever means is at our disposal. We will continue to use unorthodox means. We are not worried and we do not want any media house to believe that you had allegations in 1994 that the Democratic Labour Party Ministers were on television every night and despite that, we lost the election.

The Barbados Labour Party was using the unorthodox means, some of what we have learnt so very well from Members on that side to get their information and

their view points across to the people of Barbados. I suppose that is why the missive from Mr. Nigel Harper caused them such discomfort. Obviously, it must have been written with an eye to what the Barbados Labour Party has done in the period after the Honourable Member for St. Peter became the Leader of that Party, not by him, again by the insubstantial elements in the institution.

The point I want to make is that we are not going to walk around with empty protest about the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. We will document the information and when it is available, we will use the facilities that they have available to us. If it is not, we will use other facilities which are available to us to get our view points across to the public of Barbados.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I want to take this opportunity to deal with one or two issues other than the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

In this House over the years a lot of debate has taken place on the role of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and the functioning of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. We have buried an awful lot of money behind the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. 2.25 p.m.

About 3 weeks ago, I came reluctantly to the conclusion, after listening to the frustrations of a lot of young, bright people with creative skills who are now functioning in the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation that the only future for that organisation is for it to die a natural death and for a new institution to emerge which is responsive to the clear needs of Barbados to provide entertainment and to provide education which would include balanced opportunities for all political groups in Barbados. They could divorce from the political process.

When an institution has gone through the chronic experiences of CBC it is virtually impossible to rescue it because of the history of relationships, the multiplicity of problems, the amount of bad blood that is associated with the institution. I am quite sure that in the year 2050 a debate will be taking place in here in a similar vein about CBC and there will be no significant change. That is exactly what is going to happen unless it is buried and replaced by a new institution that is responsive to specific goals in a democratic society.

It is also clear to me that CBC is going to become increasingly irrelevant as new technology in communications overtakes Barbados. In my view, we have to try to establish that niche in relation to public expenditure where CBC can continue to make a contribution in the areas of cultural development, in areas of education and also in relation to the development of the political consciousness of Barbadians. My views on these matters are pretty simple, pretty straightforward, and I have no doubt about that.

Now, we, the NDP, have been largely excluded from participation in the political process that takes place at CBC. Mr. Chairman, I am not complaining. Far from complaining, I am expressing gratitude for small mercies extended over the years in that from time to time, some kind person may call or give us the opportunity to appear on CBC and put forward our views.

I really feel a lot of it stems from the political directorate of the day whether they have the confidence to recognise that it enhances them. It enhances a government when it creates opportunities for criticism, especially on TV.

TV is an extremely cruel media and the more some people are exposed, the more damage they do to themselves. I am not speaking about any particular person. What I am saying is that a government should have nothing to fear about TV. I would sincerely hope... Sir, the Honourable Member is trying to trivialise important concepts that I am trying to bring to this House to try to lift the Government towards a different approach to the whole question of the use of CBC.

For example, I would think that if the Prime Minister is making a statement on CBC whether it is half an hour or an hour - he would be very foolish to make one for more than 45 minutes anyhow. After 45 minutes on TV nobody listens to you anyhow. I see all these long statements on TV and I know perfectly well that in half an hour one can do a lot more damage than 3 or 4 hours.

You should make provision for brief responses by the other political parties. I do not want more than 3 minutes. 1 can respond to anything you say in 3 minutes because I know that I can get my point across, the main 2 or 3 points which the people will remember. Then the people of Barbados will get a balanced view of everything that takes place in the country politically.

There is no point trying to hog television because in the long run it damages - make no mistake about it - a government when they overuse television to the exclusion of other political parties in the country. It is wrong to do and it take a big mind and it takes somebody who understands the art of communication to understand clearly that what I am suggesting today is in the interest of the Government and in the interest of democracy and in the interest of all Barbadians.

Sir, there are other areas, apart from CBC coming under the Prime Minister's Office, that I want to make 1 or 2 comments on. That is the area of Defence and

Security. I wish to make it absolutely clear, and I think this is the appropriate time, that the National Democratic Party would at all times give its support to the Prime Minister of this country and the Government of Barbados if they take the strongest position against relinquishing any aspect of this country's sovereignty to any other government on this globe, especially when that area of sovereignty involves the security of this country.

I believe that all Barbadians, particularly those born free and who did not have the kind of colonial experience some of us would have had, those born free after independence, would clearly understand that the time has come when Barbadians who are committed to the development of this country should take the strongest stand against all efforts, even blackmail efforts, being attempted at the moment by trying to damage the image of this country overseas in relation to various matters. Let me make it quite clear where we stand as a nation.

That stance must be to defend the sovereignty and the integrity of this nation and the integrity of the Government at all times. 2.35 p.m.

There are some things, that we must rise above at all times whether it be the abuse of public assets, to be followed by a ridiculous statement in a newspaper today that this is being done to provide foreign exchange for the Central Bank as though they are now the Minister of Finance or Governor of the Central Bank and this kind of nonsense.

I am talking about a statement from BS&T, talking about it is good to sell Heywoods because they give foreign exchange to the Central Bank, the most ridiculous statement. As far as I know the Minister of Finance did not ask anybody to sell anything for any foreign exchange. As far as I know, all of us in this country, except under dire circumstances would repudiate any policy, of assets for foreign exchange, of one-time disposal of assets. That, in my view, is a kind of conduct that undermines the sovereignty of this country by people who have no commitment and have never had any commitment to the sovereignty of this nation; and we have to be very careful that they do not run down and bleed the tourism industry in the same way as they run down and bled the sugar industry in this country, milking everything from it and putting nothing back in it, and then the taxpayers of this country having to take over an industry and spend over $300 million to replenish what had been taken out of it over the years. I say nothing more about that particular matter.

On this issue with the United States of America, I think it is important for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to clearly understand what is going on in the United States of America. What is being mounted now is a campaign to blackmail the Government of Barbados to agree to a shiprider's agreement which is not in the interest of the sovereignty of this country, and it was my belief from the very beginning that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs should have told them up front that Barbados does not negotiate any aspect of its sovereignty with anybody as a clear statement. They should be told that this democracy is older, more secure and more substantial than anything, than anything that exists in the United States, that this country is more stable socially, than anything that exists in the United States. They should also be told that the demand for illicit drugs in this country is substantially lower than in the United States of America. They should be told that the people in America spend more money in California alone on drugs between seven and nine o'clock a morning than the total national product of Barbados. They should be told that the demand for drugs in Barbados is so low that it cannot contribute in any way to any growth in the drug trade on a national basis, it does not make any sense. They should be told that if the demand for drugs was controlled in the United States, then the Caribbean countries will have far less of a problem with drugs. They should be told to deal with their problems rather than to come and undermine the sovereignty of the countries in the Caribbean, but I think it is important for us all to understand this, that the stand of this nation would be taken as a symbol, would be symbolic as far as certain elements in the United States are concerned and, if they perceive that any small country in this western hemisphere can take a stand in its own interest which is contrary to their policies of the moment, policies that might shift overnight, then they see us in a wider context, the wider context of undermining their assumed hegemony over the western hemisphere, so they see it in a smaller context, and in a wider context, and Barbados has an opportunity now and I believe that all Barbadians would support the government of Barbados to make it clear to the United States of America, friendship - yes, but not at the expense of the sovereignty of Barbados.

If you wish to withdraw certification then withdraw it. We will fight and paddle our own canoe elsewhere in the world. This is nothing short of blackmail and I think it is something that the Government must resist because it impinges fundamentally on the security of our country.

It worried me very much, Sir, when I heard that statement coming out of the United States of America and it made me begin to think whether we should not be looking for more rapid diversification of our trade, and I am serious about this, for us to make more substantial progress for the diversification of our tourism effort to ensure that countries which share the same kind of commitment that we have, to the independence of small countries, and who would not seek to undermine us, not seek to blackmail us, not seek to withdraw certification,

so that we cannot have loans from international institutions, would be the main people once again who would be participating in the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, there are many, many domestic issues raised by these Estimates today but I consider this matter to be of the utmost importance but before I sit down I want to refer briefly to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and I believe that the time has come when free political advertising time should be made available to all the political parties in this country on television. They have to make money and if it has to be paid for from the public purse, so be it because it is money transferring from one government, from one pocket to another pocket, in the first instance but I think it is very important from what I see going on in Barbados at the moment, that the Government makes sure that it retreats from any dependency on the private sector of this country to provide sustained development in Barbados.

There are a few, one or two people out there in the private sector who are committed to that, but the overwhelming majority are not so committed, and we also have to take sequential steps in Barbados to isolate the political process of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, listen to me carefully, we have to take sequential steps in Barbados within the context of our budget to isolate the political process of Barbados from the influence of elements in the private sector. Now, Mr. Chairman, that can only be done if the people of Barbados clearly understand that the only real seat of power in this country that they control is this Parliament. The only real seat of power that they control is this Parliament and this is the only body that stands between them and most ruthless exploitation in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I have a lot more to say. I will return. There are a lot of other issues I have to deal with under this particular Head unless, of course, Members want to move on.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that we want to move on from here yet. We have to spend some time so that the people of Barbados can understand where we stand on matters that are of fundamental importance to them.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is one of the fundamental issues of this country. I believe the whole question of broadcasting, the whole question of the availability of public broadcasting ...Mr. Chairman, Sir, I $m saying that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is one of the most important issues in this country. 2.45 p.m.

There are many people who seek to trivialise the question of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, but if we are going to be talking about national sovereignty, national unity, and national development, I make bold to say that we cannot have those three things unless we have an instrument of public information that is essentially owned by the people of Barbados.

I do not believe, and recently had an example of private sector activity which confirmed me in my fundamental belief that the only people who are interested in the people of Barbados *per se* are the salt of the earth people who you can find around any corner in Barbados and whom we represent in here. It is therefore necessary that we have an instrument.

You will recall, Mr. Chairman, from your wide experience whenever there is a coup in a country that among the first things those who are perpetrating the coup will seek to control is public information because they understand that what is said to the citizen and how it is said is important.

Now, I am unlike a lot of other people. I do not have any problems whatsoever with Government on behalf of the people having responsibility for a radio station. I have no problem with that, or with a television station.

The British Broadcasting Corporation and everybody in Barbados, the private sector, the middle sector, the public sector, everybody will tell you that the BBC is a desirable thing and nobody, especially the ones who are educated in this country, wish to recognise that the British Government has used the BBC as an instrument of foreign policy from day one. The BBC is a charter from the Queen, from the sovereign and recently, in 1991, the Queen renewed the charter of the BBC. The BBC has a methodology which I believe when the CBC was created it was intended we would seek to duplicate.

Mr. Chairman, we have not been successful in that for a number of reasons in that we live in a very small society. People are influenced very quickly by views and as a result there is strong competition about views being expressed for and on behalf of Government as opposed to other views, no matter who the Government is. Whatever difficulties we have had should not blind us to the fundamental necessity for us to be able to compete with the rest.

One of the errors we have made and to a large extent that error was made on my side because we had the CBC from its inception and, perhaps, for longer than the others. The error we made was falling prey to the concept of a bottom line profit which must always occur and allowing ourselves not to have the competitive edge that ought to have been given long ago. I am speaking retrospectively.

I do not wish anybody to get up and say that I admit to error because if you cannot admit to error you are dead.

Mr. Chairman, we should have allowed competition much earlier than we did, both in radio and television because we would not have had some of the slot which has crept into the operations of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation as a result of not having the competition. Having competition does not mean that you have to take the birthright of the people and hand it to a few other people on a platter. I will never agree or be party to anything which gives up the right of the people to own at least part of the means of communicating with the rest of the people.

It does not mean that I am totally and completely against privatisation. That is why when we in the Democratic Labour Party talked about privatisation of CBC we talked about privatising 20 per cent of the ownership. As far as I am concerned, that is a detail. I am saying that on behalf of the people it is the responsibility of the Government, whomever the Government may be, to have control of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. That is my position.

I do not get involved with these esoteric discussions which people have in the newspaper about how you must not let the private sector get a chance. Let the private sector get a chance to own CBC and all the others and you will soon see that they will own us as well. They will own in here. You know, Mr. Chairman, it is too late for anybody to own me now but the young politicians who are coming need to have the same chance which we had to say "No" from time to time. I think CBC gives that opportunity that we can have argument and we should have argument on how it is to be managed.

Back to the British Broadcasting Corporation. I think one of the things which we should do is the same thing that happened with the BBC where the governors are appointed for a five-year period. I think we should examine that. Instead of appointing people in the way we do now, just as we appoint others to statutory boards, when you are appointed to the BBC the sovereign gives what, in essence, is a governorship. They are recommended by the Minister. This other rubbish you have that you can get some commission, always somebody wants to get something to come in-between the people and the decision.

The only instrument that can carry out the work of the people are Ministers. I believe that Ministers must have executive responsibility in the public sector and if Ministers are not good enough to appoint they should be dismissed, either by the people or by the Government of the day, but this business of having some set of citizens that are holier than thou who are able to make appointments to something that Ministers cannot make appoint to, because Ministers are incapable of coming to that conclusion, is a form of rubbish which I will never subscribe to because Ministers get their position from the people and the only sovereignty in any society must come from the people. No collective group or clique that cannot be prepared to face the rigours of being selected by the people ought to have executive power in any country. Let them go and fight for it in the trenches like everybody else.

That notwithstanding, I believe we should examine the methodology we use for the appointment of the governors or the members of the Board of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. Having appointed them they should be vested with the authority to say what they feel like to those who have appointed them, just like the judges after they are appointed are free to look upon those who appointed them with contempt if they wish because the broadcasting capacity is as important as the dispensing of justice, in my judgement. 2.55 p.m.

If the judges have authority to ignore the politicians after they have been appointed, which is lost by many of the people who comment on who should appoint judges, many of the people who comment on who should appoint judges seem to think that after a judge is appointed, the politicians still have some type of access to the appointee, which is not valid criticism but that is another matter.

I believe that it would serve some useful purpose if the people who are appointed as Governors or Members of the Board of CBC could be invested with immunity, as individuals, from further direction once they have been appointed.

Mr. Chairman let me tell you that what I am saying is consistent with the view I took when I was Minister responsible for CBC I appointed a Board and I have argued that it was the best Board that CBC ever had.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have argued that, I am not saying that I am right but I have argued that.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Name one person, the Member for St. John was a member of the Board, he was young and fresh in those days, the Chairman was Professor Walrond, the deputy was Bert Thompson.

Anyway, Sir, we are not discussing the political framework of the Board but I retained one of the chief canvassers for St. Michael West Central in the Barbados Labour Party because he had the capability and the

interest in the development of the station, I retained him. I also knew of his integrity. Quite frankly, there has to be somebody who is a B.L.P. person that has integrity and therefore I do not have any problem. Sorry, I phrased that badly, I am saying that it cannot be that because a person is a B.L.P. supporter that he or she does not have integrity. That would be ridiculous.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that once these people have been appointed and they are left free of further direction except on the question of policy which the Minister should be responsible for giving them, then perhaps they can feel sufficiently vigorous as to prosecute a policy that will pay more attention to the needs of the country than they would to the needs of the political party from whence they had got their power. However, that is a small point as compared to what is necessary for the station to run. We have to give it money. We always seem to expect the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation to function well and somehow there is some message out there that it has to earn enough money to run itself, but we have never given it enough to start with or to bring it on par with what is required.

When I was Minister, we went out and got the loan from C.I.B.C. or Royal Bank, I do not remember which one but one of the Canadian Banks, to establish the Corporation in the Headquarters where they now exist and to provide them with a buffer to move on into the development of S.T.V. Quite frankly, I had hoped that CBC would have used that opportunity to move on to higher heights and the Governments that would follow would recognise that while a subvention was necessary, that such subvention would be an appropriate one. I am not sure that CBC got the appropriate assistance financially that it should have got over all the years to do all of the things that it should have done.

If you are going to talk about local programming you cannot expect anybody in Bridgetown to sponsor it. The people in Bridgetown would only sponsor local programming after it has been demonstrated that local programming has been successful. If the station can develop a proper programme and then that programme is deemed to be popular and successful by the public, then you can afford to go out and look for private sponsorship. It is unlikely that the private sector in Barbados will invest in the development of local programming. Therefore, the Government of the day must seek the seed money for the local programming because the local programming is not for the management to look good. The local programming is for the people of Barbados to have an image of themselves on the television, especially in the face of the importation of 37 channels or 68 channels.

We have to provide the basis on which young children born in Barbados who did not have the benefit of any television to understand that seeing an image of themselves on television is perfectly normal.

We are in danger, Mr. Chairman, under Direct TV and the so-called Multichoice and this needs to be better investigated. The speed with which Multichoice was being implemented suggest to me that they need a lot more research but in order to get on the bandwagon they had to match Direct TV.

If we are to benefit as a country from having television then we have to be prepared as a people to pay the cost of helping our people to grow in their own image. What we have to require of CBC is that in choosing who will help to produce the local programme that we choose only the best. I do not think that it is sufficient merely to say that somebody is a producer. I think that it is important that we go out of Barbados if necessary and find our own people who have the capacity and ability to use modern technology in a manner that will be both efficient and worthwhile.

Mr. Chairman, what I am talking about is manifested in some of the things that you can now hear on radio and television. On television and on radio, in Barbados today, there seems to have been an almost conscious decision to ignore the use of standard English. There are persons in this country who have lost the art of saying 'th[1]. The 'th[1] sound has been disappearing from the language in Barbados. They talk about the figure 'three' as though they are talking about 'the sycamore tree[1] and they are stars on television and radio who are illiterate. We have something now called Sports. I like to listen to sports but they have driven me from the radio and television. Any Saturday you can turn on the radio and hear them. Mr. Chairman, turn on the radio. There is some new thing that you have to get somebody who knows something about the sport to broadcast, not about broadcasting. You do not need anybody who knows anything about broadcasting you need somebody who knows something about the sport. So they do not worry about the broadcasting at all, they deal with the sport and it is bare sport! Bare sport on a Saturday. Any Honourable Member who doubts me, just turn on and you will hear them. Mr. Chairman, it is a thoroughfare!

Now, Sir, we are all in here because we have epitomised something about which we are proud and do not let anybody tell us that because somebody taught us English and English comes from England that we are now to abandon it. 3.05 p.m.

Honourable Members understand what I am talking about. We are not going to develop in this country unless we take a stand against that rubbish. We have to take -a stand against it and we have to hold CBC to account. We cannot do anything about the private stations, that is

their business but CBC belongs to all of us and it is my contention that Ministers should not worry about who get on television or who get on CBC radio because when the people ready you are gone anyhow. You should be concerned about what comes out from the station and we must insist on excellence. If the Minister responsible for CBC does not insist on excellence, whether he does it through his surrogate by whatever name called or he does it himself by direct intervention, if he or she does not insist on excellence then the Minister should go. I will be back, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a very short intervention in this debate because a lot of what has been said already really encapsulates my feelings on this matter in relation to the ownership and administration of a Government entity for broadcasting.

I believe that in any developing country there must always be access to a form of public broadcasting because it protects the very integrity of the country to ensure that it has an image of itself and of its people at all times available to its people.

We live in a world today, Sir, where the power of the visual image is perhaps stronger than the power of the written word. In those circumstances, Sir, it becomes even more critical that we are capable of ensuring that the images which are available for broadcast on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation are those which reflect what we would want to reflect in terms of values and in terms of the message which it is communicating.

Indeed I endorse the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West as it relates to the question of the standards which we expect of those persons who are charged with the actual communication, whether it be through radio or television and I want to give a short example of a story told to me of an experience of some teachers at a school about a year ago in relation to their capacity to communicate to the children.

There was a group of children, about 12 to 13 years old at a particular school in Barbados and the teachers were trying to elicit the names of the children that had just come in, in the September term and they were trying to elicit their addresses. She said to the young boy "What is your name?" and the young boy looked at her as if she was speaking gibberish. She repeated it. It was only when a teacher who was passing said, "Listen, she ask you what you name". The boy answered. And equally when they asked him what was his telephone number he did not answer and the teacher said "You got a phone? Wha[1] you phone number is?" and the boy answered. The point I am making is this, that people communicate in terms of interpersonal relations or in terms of what they hear and what they take in and unless what they take in knows a standard as well as a type of language that they can understand they will never be able to communicate effectively. It is a serious problem because I contend that a large part of the difficulty faced by young people in this country relates to their inability to use vocabulary and to have a sense of understanding of vocabulary to adequately communicate how they feel and what it is they want out of life. Very often people, because of the inability to communicate, will reach out for a cutlass or put out and cuff somebody largely because they cannot effectively communicate the feelings of frustration or the feeling of anger or the feeling of accomplishment or whatever the feeling may be. If you listen generally to young people communicating you will realise that there is a certain handicap in respect of most of them when it comes to use of vocabulary.

I am saying therefore, Mr. Chairman, that the use of television and radio is perhaps one of the most effective means of non-formal education that we have at our disposal. It would be a travesty for us not to appreciate that fully. Indeed I would want to suggest that we have not effectively used it in the course of our development as well as we could have. It does not mean that there have not been instances in the past where it has been used or even in the present now. But I would like to suggest that we could far more effectively use it, particularly as I understand it with the increased advances in technology and CBC having access to other channels now. I would want to suggest that not only should a channel be dedicated to parliamentary broadcasts or whatever but one of the channels should be dedicated purely to non-formal education through the provision of all types of information, particularly that is culturally relevant to us. Equally one other channel should be dedicated especially towards the broadcast of local sports so that those images of themselves whether it is children playing school boy cricket or the inter school sports that is going on now or whatever, I am saying it should be all year round. There is no reason why you should have to wait and only see it once a year in terms of athletics. We have the capabilities now in terms of the channels and if we are serious about it we will also find that we will be laying the ground work to allow many of our sportsmen to be able to turn semi-professional because once you create the demand the supply must come. If you are creating a demand in terms of broadcasts and people's interest then you are going to create a demand for live attendance, you are going to create a demand for commercial sponsorship because if a person is doing well in a particular sport week after week then people would want to associate with that person on an on-going basis and as well as the private sector then in terms of its capacity to sell its product or its services.

I believe, Sir, that that needs urgent attention in relation to how we use the capabilities. I do not believe, Sir, that it makes much sense for us to simply cry

about the incursions that are being made in relation to the foreign media. That is a reality. I have not lived in a world where the foreign media was far away. As far as I know myself and can remember there has always been access to information from outside. I however believe that the proper approach for us to take is to start to understand that just because information or programming is out there it does not mean that that is necessarily what the people want all of the time or that particular type of programming is what people want. We must therefore seek to develop through the development of programmes, niche markets that can have our programmes, that reflect the images of ourselves. We, Sir, have five million people in the Caribbean diaspora alone outside of the Caribbean in relation to black Caribbean people in North America and Europe we have another five million within the Caribbean itself and I am not yet even talking about moving into the Spanish market or the French market for which subtitles can easily be made available. We have access and there is nothing that stops us from seeking to distribute that product targetted at those niche markets in relation to Europe and North America.

Sir, I lived as a student in London and there is nothing that the group of us looked forward to more than watching black programming or Caribbean programming and only Channel 4 at that stage was putting out that type of programming in any serious way. 3.15 p.m.

Equally, there is a fringe market among the academic community both in North America and Europe who have an interest in black studies or have an interest in Caribbean studies and therefore by extension, an interest in Caribbean programming.

We have therefore, to find a mechanism that:

1. Allows us to be able to disseminate, first of all, news and information on a daily basis to that diaspora in North America and Europe.

2. That allows us to disseminate on a regular basis even though not daily, preferably weekly, in terms of our music, and the other aspects of our oral culture.

3. To disseminate on a regular basis as well, aspects of programming which reflect comedies, tragedies, sitcoms and all sorts of mechanisms in order to be able to communicate our way of life.

I make the point at all times, Sir, that the world is no longer preoccupied with the cold war. Its primary concern now is that of ethnic conflict. The Caribbean remains one of the few areas in the world where we see ethnic polarity existing in relative political and social stability in spite of a few incursions, like what we saw this week because of the actions of one or two companies who would wish us to revert to a situation where ethnic polarity may not be the norm of the day.

For the most part, in comparison to Bosnia, in comparison to Rwanda and in comparison to other regions of the world, we enjoy relative stability with our ethnic polarity.

I want to suggest that the only way one can deal with the prejudices that come about as a result of people's feelings and that lead to the level of violence and dislocation and discrimination, is by altering how people perceive themselves and on how they perceive others around them, and that understanding that you and I can live in the same environment and be from different, racial or religious backgrounds.

The Caribbean story is a valid story to communicate how that can be done. What I want to suggest is that we have the talent, we have the story and for the first time, because of changes in global concern, we have markets that are prepared to listen to that story to determine how can blacks, whites, Chinese and Portuguese and this and that all live in a country that is 166 square miles and live well. Or, a country that is 1000 square miles and live well.

You do not disseminate that story by reason of a documentary alone. In truth and in fact people respond best to stories that evoke emotion in them. So, you find a way through comedy, through drama or other aspects to be able to communicate that story, so that people see those images. In the same way we complain about how TV is used as an instrument to colonise us, we must understand that there is nothing stopping us:

1. From producing the programming.

2. From distributing the programming.

3. From deriving the long-term medium to long time gain from such distribution.

The reality is, Sir, that people only trade with people if they know something about them. The Caribbean has benefited in a funny way from the colonisation of the region which led to a perception of us as persons in sand and sea and coconut trees and all of that.

We have now, through the media available to us, to change the world's perception of us by utilising that media, and ensuring through formal and non-formal education means. Non-formal education primarily being the cultural media, that we can now create an image of us through television, radio and through education, in terms of the production of text books and other audio-visual

materials. We can also start to influence the thinking of people in other regions who we would wish to trade with in 10 years time or 15 years time, because they then understand who or what it is to be a Barbadian, a Jamaican or a Caribbean person.

The reality is, that the average concept of a Japanese person of a West Indian is a rastaman playing reggae. It is instructive that when Arturo Tappin came back here people knew more about him in Japan, than they knew about the place called Barbados and that has largely been as a result of the capacity to distribute through the means of technology his music to an audience there.

I am saying, Sir, that yes, there are difficulties in relation to Direct TV and Multi Choice and the incursion generally. Not only by way of TV, but by way of video, by way of movies, by way of music, in terms of the faults of other people. But we, pound for pound have more than they, intellectually and creatively. We, pound for pound can produce it at a cheaper price than they. We, pound for pound can do it in a way that already has a sense of appeal to people, so why therefore, are we not making the quantum leap and understanding that we need, therefore, to use the very same media to fight back and to influence other regions in the world on topics that they already have a vested interest and that they themselves do not know how to deal with as Governments and societies, and to do so in a way that provides economic opportunities for our people, because they are not going to ask for anything or perform in a play or nothing, or record a piece of music for nothing.

At the same time they have a way in terms validating them psychologically because they are capable of retelling their story and knowing that it is going to have some benefit, toward helping regions solve problems, particularly as it relates to ethnic difficulties in particular regions across the world.

So, I want to suggest, Sir, that I am enthusiastic about the discussions that we are about to undertake in relation to Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, NCA from private sector entities toward a vehicle that can, in fact, produce this programming.

I want to continue to support that there must always be a vested interest in broadcast on the part of a Government to ensure that its people can always see and reflect what is necessary for development on the images of television and radio. Also, that there are difficulties granted in relation to how we have managed a single entity, over the course of the last 30 years, but that those difficulties should not lead us to a position where we abandon the concept of Government ensuring it has a stake in public broadcasting.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let me hear the case of the Opposition party.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I agree that the Opposition party should have access to broadcast time. In the same way that political parties in Government do not have access to broadcast time, and, as General Secretary to the Barbados Labour Party, I would be the first to agree that all of us should have access to broadcast time, as political parties and not as Government or Opposition.

But, the point that I am making also is this, that at the end of the day, mechanisms, however, I believe should be put in place to allow the public also, to be able to own part and parcel of the entity with Government still retaining a sizeable shareholding there too.

So that Sir, I believe the time is right for serious discussion in this country as to how we want to proceed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made the point that if we do not watch out Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation would become irrelevant. And, that is true.

But, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation cannot become irrelevant if it changes its paradigm in terms of how it relates to the public because at the end of the day, every child, who participates in the interschool sports today, has a mother, father, brother or sister that wants to see them run in the sports, and they cannot see them run on ESPN.

Every child that participates in the under-15 northern telecom cricket who plays, has a group of people who would like to see them participate in that. Equally with other sports and equally with other areas of activity which the television must reflect for the society.

So there will be a niche market for local broadcasting. Where we need to go however, is that it is insufficient for us to tell the private sector alone that you must have an export focus without telling those who have responsibility for the very media that has the greatest export potential that it should not also have an export focus. 3.25 p.m.

I therefore look forward, whether on a joint venture basis or otherwise, to the serious production of local programming but, as a first step, developing an entity that has the capacity to distribute news on current affairs on a daily basis to people in North America and in Europe and to our people who live in those regions. It can be done and it can be done cheaply.

The other point, of course, is the question of regulation as well because while production

of programming is one way to fight these incursions another way is regulations in terms of protecting your population from those things that are truly not of a value that should be shown on television and should be shown to young minds in particular.

Sir, I do not consider myself a prude nor do I think that I am in any way conservative, but I am horrified from my own personal taste when it comes to watching videos or television where almost every picture has somebody shooting somebody or stabbing somebody. It does not really start in terms of ordinary programming at 7 and 8 and 9 o'clock at night. Cartoons are perhaps the most violent programming that you can ever want to see.

Therefore, you already start before a child can talk properly by reinforcing images of violence in the cartoons in a child's mind.

While I do not support censorship fully, I feel however that there has to be some mechanism which seeks to regulate those images, particularly where those images are being carried by agencies that have been established locally or regionally to be able to do so.

I hope, Sir, that the infocom policies that we are awaiting from the Infocom Committee will seek also to guide us in these areas because there are difficult questions to address and ones that cannot be solved overnight. Therefore regulation must be keyed in the overall framework.

With those few words, Sir, I would wish to support the Government in its general policies in relation to the management and administration of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and generally in relation to seeking to develop clear and proper criteria that is capable of advising the Government as to how to proceed in relation to other licenses.

Like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I feel that had we opened the system a long time ago a lot of the difficulties that exist today in terms of this 'one interfering at CBC and that one interfering at CBC would have evaporated, largely because there would have been other avenues for people to have access to the general population.

The medium of television and the medium of radio is no different from the tool of the computer. They are merely processes by which communication becomes easier and the sooner we accept that, the sooner we will accept that if you block a man from communicating here, he will communicate there.

With those few words, Sir, I support this Resolution.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I could not let this debate pass without contributing. I want to make my position clear up front.

As a former Chairman of CBC, I have hesitated throughout the years to get too involved in these debates about CBC. What I have to say today will involve a criticism of both CBC and GIS. It is not meant to be a criticism of individuals, because I recognise particularly in the case of CBC, there is new management and management has to be allowed time to settle in.

I believe that I would be stifling my conscience if I did not say how I felt about some of the things that have been happening in broadcasting in Barbados and elsewhere.

Before I come to CBC let me just make 1 or 2 general observations. First of all, in die absence of an infocom policy accepted by the Cabinet, I feel myself free to make the comments that I will make and until such time as there is a collective policy for which I will have to share responsibility. At a very personal level I feel very strongly that if Barbados is holding itself out to the rest of the world as offering services of all kinds, financial, tourism services, cultural and we have made a conscious effort in the last 2 1/2 years to turn the economy of Barbados outwards it seems to me that in accord with a certain logic of philosophy that our broadcast medium should also be looking outwards.

I remember as a student in London in 1965 Australia was playing in Barbados and those of us in London used to go to the West Indian Student Centre at 1 Collingham Gardens every night during the test match to hear the test broadcast by a station from Grenada at the time called WIBS. We used to get it I think in those days on the 90-metre band. We were able to keep in touch not only with the 201 runs that Seymour Nurse made at Kensington and the 100 or whatever that Kanhai made but ever so often if we wanted to hear what was happening in the Caribbean we could go to the student centre in the evening around 6 or 7 o'clock and we could tune in and hear.

That, I believe, was the last short-wave station that we had. Sometimes you got Radio Demerara broadcasting short wave but I do not think that they still broadcast in short wave. They used to have them in the 49-metre band some years ago.

Our brothers and sisters in England and North America have no means of getting regular information live and direct from the Caribbean because of the fact that all of the stations in the Caribbean are now either AM or FM. I do not know if the technology is such that we cannot beam to North America or England on short wave. I would doubt it. I know that I have 2 or 3 transistor radios and they all have short wave. I do not buy AM/FM radios.

I buy AM/FM and SW, so that I can hear what is happening through Voice of America, Radio Australia or wherever else almost religiously every night.

I feel that we should be using or developing the capability and the facilities to project what is happening in Barbados outside. A very serious decision has been made in Trinidad, for example, and I am urging the Government of Barbados not to be so insular as Trinidad has gone. 3.35 p.m.

Time was when you could get two stations on the AM band from Trinidad - 610 and 730 MBS Radio and Radio Trinidad. In the last two years they have reduced power on those stations and changed the format of the programming with all its religious stuff and Indian music. So you cannot, from Barbados, keep in contact with what is happening even in Trinidad unless you are fortunate like I am to erect an FM aerial that allows me to get 100 or 97.3 or 98.9 or 105, which is not always very good, or 106, any of those. There are few people in Barbados who have that facility to get stations in Trinidad now, since they have contracted their broadcasting and limited their focus to within Trinidad and they want to go towards South America. Let us get that understood. They want to go towards South America.

I feel we should have a more open and a liberal policy than Trinidad and that we should aim not only at the regional 900. I picked up 900 as far up as Antigua and VOB. Apart from the AM stations we should try to hit the North American market and the European market, particularly, England. Even if we start on a limited broadcast basis five hours or whatever you want to do until we develop, but I feel that it would be consistent with present policies and it would be a useful tool in the development of our services to us. I feel that there is, in addition to short wave, there is a case to be made for an exchange of regional information almost on an hourly basis, Sir, by radio, between all of the islands. I can see the development of a news cycle through some particular channel, however you do it, Sir, a frequency that would allow people throughout the Caribbean to have news broadcast regularly, Trinidad, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Barbados, Grenada, right up to Jamaica repeated throughout the day so that everybody in the Caribbean can be in touch. If we are talking about single market and economy and bringing the Caribbean closer together as one, then these are vehicles we have to examine. I do not know the technicalities. All I am asking for is a feasibility into a system that would allow for a more regular, I am not talking about the fifteen minutes programme of CANA in the evening. I am talking about a regular thing throughout the day, that I can tune in and I can get a station that will give me news throughout the day from throughout the Caribbean, and I would like to see that developed. I would like to hear what are the implications, cost and otherwise of that kind of system because if I ground my two points in terms of philosophy, Sir, what I am saying is that in the first place we should develop a communication strategy that harmonises with Government's thrust and strategy for the development of a services industry.

Secondly, that if we are serious about single market and economy we should develop in the communications field a medium that would allow a regular interchange and exchange of news and other information throughout the region, Sir.

Now, in respect of CBC, Sir, my criticism , I must confess, first of all, that I am not a great watcher of television. I tend only to watch the News, the hour between seven and eight, and if there is a sports programme or live music. There was a show on Sunday evenings a couple weeks ago of a big orchestra, those kinds of things. I do not go for the...the soaps, I do not know what they have on.

In respect of the News, my criticism is that there seems not to be an appreciation for what is News and no analysis of the News. I heard this in Jamaica Sunday night. I think it was Sunday night. CBC led the News with a story that has no factual basis, about something down in Sandy Lane and people talking about private beaches, foolishness! No factual basis, and that is the lead item in the News, a non-existent story.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was not here. I happened to be telephoning Barbados and I heard that somebody was horrified. That is foolishness! You lead your news item with a non-existent factual story, no judgement.

I am sure there were other positive things happening in Barbados that day that could have started the News. I have seen GIS no more than a month ago on CBC radio, television, not on the radio have a story broadcast on it "Public Affair" about the sugar industry and four people, putting forward views about the sugar industry in Barbados, talking about why Bulkeley is kept open or not. Now that is a policy decision. The Minister of Agriculture's face and voice were noticeably absent from that programme. How can you deal with policy in any sector unless you ask the person who is responsible under Section 65 of the Constitution what is your policy? As Ministers, we have constitutional role. In saying so, the Cabinet is the principal instrument of policy and you put on a programme with four people talking about sugar and you did not ask the Minister if what they are saying harmonises with your view, your Ministry's policy for sugar? Sir, judgement, no sense of balance. Well those are things that get people angry.

Those criticisms that are incurred in those types of cases are well merited. All we are asking for, all the viewing public is asking for is some balance and fairness.

If there is something said by a Member of the Opposition and they want to carry it, get the response from the counterpart in Government and *vice versa.* Nothing is wrong with that. A Minister makes a statement about something that is not "run of the mill", a new piece of policy or something, a proper reporter would take the Minister's thing and then say today the Minister said so and so. You as Shadow Minister of MTW what do you think about that?

Aside.

Hon D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is the last person who should complain about the *Nation.* A few weeks ago I saw him on the front page of a newspaper doing something in a suit, in the middle of the day in the hot sun with a paint brush in his hand, and black paint, painting our red paint. The *Nation* gave you all of that and today look, look man, you can complain about the *Nation.* It is that type of greed for publicity that causes the media to become unbalanced.

Sir, I endorse much of what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has said, and the Minister of Education, particularly about the need for persons on radio and television to speak in a way that is intelligible. It is unfortunate. I suppose that they would say this a generation gap and that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and myself belong to a different age, but I really make no apologies for striving whenever I write, to write correctly, and whenever I am speaking in a serious...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I always write under my own name. I have not written any letters. I wrote one letter since I have been a Minister, I believe. No, two, one in reply to an editorial Jack Dear wrote and one last week, Sir. When I was in Opposition, I was pseudonymous. I had many, many names. 3.45 p.m.

I do not have time for that now, Sir, but that was part of Opposition politics. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is all kinds of people, Sir, Blair Simmons, Claudine Brathwaite, he is several of them. I know him well.

I feel that people should, in the broadcast media, try seriously to adhere to basic principles of grammar and syntax.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I wish to repeat what I said in here a couple weeks ago, that I am particularly distressed with the sports coverage on television. We complain as a nation about the falling standards of our cricket and apart from the tied test which was shown - it was shown on television two Sundays ago - apart from that, there has been no attempt by CBC to show as a matter of policy...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I feel that if we want to attempt to maintain the position of Barbados in regional cricket, we can only try to make sure that the television station plays its part along with the coaches and everybody else. I feel it would be a great service to the sportsmen of the nation, particularly the cricketers, if CBC had a determined and definite policy that over a period of time they would show some of the past greats of West Indies and other cricket, and have a panel analyse some of the technical characteristics, flaws and attributes of it. I think it would help. The footage is there. Some of it can be expensive.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The BBC has footage going back to 1957 when television first started in England. I have a few shots of Sir Everton Weekes and Sir Clyde Walcott.

The regional stations ought to have other footage. CBC does not have all. I do not believe, from what I hear, that CBC even has that over of Holding to Boycott in 1981. I heard that has gone through the eddoes. But it is available. They wipe it off, that over when Boycott did not touch one. TWI has it because it was shown last weekend. CBC does not have it. They should try and get them.

They can enter into negotiations with India. There is a lot of footage of West Indies in India particularly the 1983/84 tour. I know that for a fact. There is footage in Australia. They could take out a nignt, put it on STV, not necessarily Channel 8, and make a dollar out of it that on a particular night on Channel X between 9 and 11 o'clock they are going to show this and that and have a discussion on it. I am sure the young cricketers would watch and could probably learn something.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not getting into horse racing. I have begged, I have suggested and nothing has happened. The Gold Cup is our biggest event in

horse racing. It is shown all through Canada. The people come down here. We saw it in Jamaica the other night and yet I find that chasing after the dollar, which CBC would claim is part of their mandate, they have denied the racing public and others the little opportunity on Sunday afternoons after lunch to sit down and see the previous day's racing. I was hoping since July last year when I was sick they would have shown some.

I was hoping that, perhaps, if you have 8 races a day, show the feature race the Saturday night and then consciously every night in the Sports News show a race beginning with Race 1 so the people who want to tape the race to see what happened and so on, be it the owners, trainers, jockeys, the public, whoever, would know that every night they are going to get a race. No. A race is how long? The Gold Cup is 9 furlongs, that is 1 minute 49 4/5 seconds. That is how long it is. It is less than 2 minutes.

Sir, you know what they do in Trinidad on Sundays? They show the races one after the other, no commentary between. They do not show them parading. They go Race 1 into Race 2, 3, 4 and it is finished. That is gospel. We cannot do anything like that.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Then we make a big fuss once a year, the first Saturday in March for the Gold Cup and everybody goes wild but throughout the year you do not even get a chance to see how the horses have performed leading up to the Gold Cup. I do not think it is asking too much as a public service to organise it in such a way...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am tired. I give up. I am just hoping.

The last point, Sir. Every summer every primary school in this country tries to have a Speech Day. All the children dress up. You know what they do? Teachers and themselves write little p'ays and do them. Those who go see some wonderful little skits, 15 minutes. It is free. If CBC went in there with the cameras the children would be so glad. Nobody would ask them to pay for rights. They could build up a can of those things and show. 3.55 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, just a brief intervention on this matter relating to CBC. I am looking at it not so much from the perspective of a politician or any political standpoint but I want to look at the whole matter of CBC from the position of an armchair consumer. I want to begin, Mr. Chairman, by saying that at this point, I fear for the actual survival of the local station. I fear for the survival of CBC.

I believe that this is the greatest challenge to CBC since its existence. I think that Direct TV and Multichoice together comprise the greatest challenge that CBC will ever see. Mr. Chairman, I believe that what is necessary now is for CBC to make itself self-sufficient, for CBC to make itself competitive in the face of this competition from Direct TV. The programmes of CBC should be such that people must now want to watch the local channel. People must now want to watch the local news. In other words, Mr. Chairman, CBC now has to be a valid choice in light of the vast number of alternative channels which consumers will have to choose from.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that local programming has to be upgraded. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever, Mr. Chairman, that the authorities at CBC must now try to get some creativity and some ingenuity into their programmes to make it of such a quality that people will want to watch them. The ability to produce the programmes, Mr. Chairman, that ability is there. We have programmes like NIFCA and HYPE. People have the ideas but when it comes to the quality and even the quantity of local programming, I think that is what is absent.

We have to move beyond a couple of documentaries, we have to move, Mr. Chairman, beyond spelling bees. I believe that CBC is something like 33 years old, if I remember correctly and all like now, we should have something like our own soap opera. A local soap opera.

I remember when I lived in Jamaica I would rush home from Law School to get home by a certain time to watch a local Jamaican soap opera. I think there was one in Trinidad as well called "Cane Arrows". We have sat down in Barbados and we have done nothing of the sort. I feel that we are being very unfair to Barbadians when we are depriving them of local programmes. If we do not do it in the face of this competition, we may very well see the demise of CBC. Whatever we do, Mr. Chairman, the programme has to be palatable. It has to be of high quality, the standard has to be high. Right now we are feeding our local consumers of television to a diet of United States soap operas and so on and a lot of that, Mr. Chairman, the language, the setting and the cultural norms are far removed from our people and therefore our people are called upon to emulate things which in truth and in fact are not theirs and with which they have absolutely no connection.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, we can do it. I also recall an excellent programme in Jamaica called "Trail". It was done by Roy Browne, that was the name of the producer. It was an excellent programme, Mr. Chairman. I do not

believe that the local production units at CBC has done enough and we cannot just sit back and continue to feed our people on this diet of United States soap operas because we might be making this country a little U.S.A. with that type of programming.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said about cricket. I also emphasise this point on cricket. Three weeks ago, when CBC showed the Tied Test there were some fellows who came to watch that programme, they got there late and they were so vex that they even asked me to approach CBC to ask them to show the Tied Test over again. It is as though they are hungry for that type of programming. Cricket is something with which we can identify. Even more so than basketball that is shown on the television. We can identify with cricket. On Saturday afternoon we have a lot of cricket being played in Barbados, keen knock-out matches which should be shown on television but we do not show it. We seem not to think that CBC should cater to local taste. The more we get from North America the better we think it is. We should have nicely packaged and edited highlights of our first division games on Saturday evenings. At the end of a Saturday you should be able to sit down and watch for an hour what has happened at cricket whether at Carlton, St. Catherine, wherever. But our sports, I believe, has been shortchanged by CBC. That is my personal view, I make no apology, Mr. Chairman, whatsoever, for making that point.

I believe too, Mr. Chairman, that CBC should have seen this coming with the advent of S.T.V. It should have been a signal to them that competition was going to come to this channel. For a long time CBC has been the sole provider of television programming in Barbados and I have always felt that we have allowed too crucial a section of our population to go to the great beyond. We have allowed a vast amount of knowledge to go to the great beyond and we have done very little about it. By now, a knowledge bank should have been built up at CBC with persons who are part of the 1930s riots for instance who could be on television and painting a visual picture for the young people who are with us today. But, the point as I said, Mr. Chairman, is that the local production unit at CBC, certainly to my mind has not done enough for us. 4.05 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has given way. The point I made in my speech is this. We insist that the CBC should do things that we as Governments have not given CBC the capacity to do. So what are you talking about now? CBC does not have a morning show because if they had a morning show they would have to bring in a crew. The cost of that crew is such that CBC would show a net loss every month, so the CBC management decided they are not having a morning show. The only way they are going to be able to do that is if we have a special subvention with CBC to take care of local programmes. That is what the Government should do. Any Government has to give CBC some money for local programming otherwise it is not going to happen.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I have no -problem with what the Honourable Member has said. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I would go as far as to say I agree with the Honourable Member. What I would go as far as to say though is that if Government gives CBC-TV the money for the local production unit to perform and it does not perform then I believe that the same thing which applies to let us say, the University, should also apply to that unit. In other words if you do not produce out you go. I feel that that is the policy which Government should adopt but certainly it is too crucial a section, especially now at this stage, for us to just say Government has not given us any money. Give them the money and if they do not produce then treat them like how they do the ones at University. In other words if you do not produce at University out you go. So, Mr. Chairman, the point I am making then is that CBC Channel 8 should be seen as rendering a public service to the people of Barbados and to really and truly get local programmes for the Barbadian public. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate at a time when CBC and the workers sometimes must take some of the blame for the loss of interest in cricket in Barbados. I said that, Sir, because once cricket is played in rural Barbados, especially beyond the Judge Gap, we find that it is extremely difficult for the camera crew to find the available time to go beyond the boundary of the Judge Gap to televise anything that goes on beyond the Judge Gap.

Let me give you an example of what I am speaking of. Beyond the Judge Gap, Sir, there are two community projects, cricketing in nature, one at North Stars in Crab Hill and one at Rockfield in St. Lucy and they have found it very difficult to use their cameras to go to those places and show them on television.

It seems to me, Sir, if those two projects were before the Judge Gap that those projects would have been shown in Barbados already. So how can the people in St. Lucy feel comfortable to give subsidies to corporations in Barbados where they are not prepared to use...

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am sure the camera was there and I also saw it shown on CBC-TV the very night.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will have to forgive the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. He saw cameras but not CBC cameras. The video camera he saw was a constituent from the constituency of St. Lucy and I can assure you that it is a worker from the Community Development Ministry, your own Ministry and you do not even know your workers that work under you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, the camera came from the GIS and it came with a GIS person who works with me.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would have to ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip North if Mr. Corbin that lives in the beautiful constituency of St. Lucy, whether he works at CBC, GIS, or Community Development but I am sure he works at Community Development so it was no CBC camera. He has admitted it was not a CBC camera anyhow, that it was GIS.

Anyhow, Sir, what I would like to see CBC doing and I am prepared for the Government to give CBC some money to promote certain issues and that is why I support the broadcast of debates in this Assembly and I will tell you why. In October 1996 we had a big debate going on in this country. A supplementary came to this Assembly, Sir, for $100 000 for the Security Exchange of Barbados and I know the Honourable Member for St. Thomas remembers this well because he put an aside in me and the Prime Minister also remembers it well because he did the same thing. I said then, Sir, that the Securities Exchange of Barbados must protect the interest of small shareholders in this country and I got two asides for that, Sir. I said that a small man who has $5 000, accustomed putting that money in the bank, would normally get $500 in return. If he invests that money in a large company in Barbados there is no guarantee that he would get any returns.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was looking at a news item generating from BS&T. BS&T has stated that Almond Beach has made a profit and they tell me it is either $7 million or $8 million but they have not declared a dividend because they have plans for expansion. Can you imagine that? The same thing I said in here in October they are now saying. I am saying that if we had changed the Companies Act in October 1996 those poor shareholders would have been protected. So I am saying today, Sir, that this Assembly has to take some blame of what is happening to the shareholders.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying this Assembly has to take some of the blame because when I put the point to them I did not get the necessary support from them.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, I wish to make it absolutely clear I assume no element of blame for anything done by BS&T.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It was said in this Assembly and I remember my members on this side telling me, push the point Kelly.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I also remember the members on this side saying to me, "You understand anything that he is saying"? How could we support something we did not understand?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad for the intervention. The Honourable Member, Sir, for St. Thomas got up on a point of order and I remember this well, and he said that it is a common law principle and that dividends are discretionary. I said I am not arguing whether dividends are discretionary or not, that I know that and that is why I was calling for the law to be changed, so thanks for your intervention. He has now admitted in this Assembly that he did not grasp the point even though he rightfully said at the point in time that dividends were discretionary and I agreed with you so you cannot claim that you did not understand what I was saying. We agreed on that and that is why I asked you to change the law. 4.15 p.m.

So you see, Mr. Chairman, that what is going on at BS&T today, if the Government had taken the point made by myself, those poor shareholders would not be now asking St. James Beach Club to pay the same thing they are going to pay BS&T, and no way would Almond Beach be able to hold on to $8 million in profit without declaring appropriately.

All I am saying is that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has a right to educate poor people on when to and when not to buy shares. They must be able to tell poor people that there are large companies in Barbados who are prepared to come and issue shares when they want cash, when they have no intentions of giving them dividends.

I went on also to say, Mr. Chairman that there are companies in Barbados, after they have received the investment by poor people, they frustrate poor people by making sure that they do not declare dividends.

Is not the example the same today, Mr. Chairman? Eight million dollars and no dividends declared. Frustration of my poor people. I am calling on the other side. We cannot change the law. I am calling on the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to do what I asked him to do ever since October. To protect the interest of the poor people in this country by drafting the necessary amendments to the

Companies Act to make sure that when companies in Barbados make profit, they are forced to declare a dividend and they do not use frivolous excuses about expansion of the company to deprive poor people of their earnings.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We must tell poor people in this country, Mr. Chairman, that when you invest in shares, you have no right for a return unless the directors feel so. If we are going to encourage people, saying that poor people must learn to invest and buy shares, I am one of those people who do not believe in that. I believe that most companies in Barbados only accept poor people when they are cash struck and there is enough evidence to prove that to the public.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that when they want them onboard to get their cash, they issue shares to them and anyone who has an open mind can understand that.

At the Centre when I made that point, Sir, I was sure in my mind that the Honourable Member for Christ Church, who is not now in his seat, would agree with me. I said that he would support that and he did not object to that, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that we just cannot see CBC as a place to produce soap operas. The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation should be used to educate people about investments. The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation should be used to show people how they can develop their own businesses, etc. But this belief that Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation must only be here to be used by the exploits of the large business people, is a joke and should not be tolerated by this Assembly.

I want to say something, the DLP had a policy for CBC, which I would like to endorse now and I am going to say why. Twenty per cent share ownership going to the workers, etc. I support that.

You would imagine that if Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was privatised today that ABC or CNN might have controlled the whole Press in this country. Because, the same people you sold it to, would have turned around and sell it to CNN or ABC. There is good evidence to prove this assumption. There is good evidence in this country that when you are handing your privatised things to people in belief that it is going to locals, that they turn around and sell it to people in other countries.

You understand what I am saying, so, if the Barbados Labour Party wants to continue criticising the Democratic Labour Party by only giving 20 per cent ownership in Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation let them continue and then go and privatize the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

Let me tell you something, you are talking about foreign programmes, Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in two years time would belong to ABC, NCC or CAB. So, we have to be very careful.

I am saying to the Barbados Labour Party that if you want to do anything with the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, go to the manifesto of the DLP and use the policy put in place on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party.

The Press. I have listened to the Member for St. Thomas and I heard what he said. It is rather strange, because it seems to me that whenever you criticise somebody who happens to be a Government Minister now, the only way that it can be published is if you get a remark from the Government Minister.

If the Government Minister refuses to comment, it means what you have said, cannot be published. I do not agree with that policy, Mr. Chairman, because, we are sure that there are many Ministers over there who would make sure there is no comment on what you have said, so that it would not be published.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You said it in here, the right to reply.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. For the sake of accuracy, anything that I said never led to the conclusion just made by the Honourable Member. I do not think the Press misunderstood me. In fact, I am sure that the members of the Press reporting today's proceedings have a sharper capacity for understanding than the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Chairman, what I said is that when one speaks of judgment and balance in reporting, if a Minister makes a statement on a matter that is worthy of further exploration, that one would expect the Press, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation or whoever to go to a counterpart of a Minister for a comment and *vice versa.* If the Opposition starts something, get the Government's view on it. That is all I said, Sir.

Sir, while I am on my feet let me just apologise. I am told that the Programme which I criticised entitled "Public Affair and Dealing with the Sugar Industry" was not in fact a GIS production. I am sure I saw GIS at the bottom in

the caption after the programme ended. I am assured however, that it was not a GIS production and therefore any remarks that I made Sir, which reflected adversely on GIS, I would humbly withdraw. I am sure that it was a Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation production. They said it was a Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation exclusive.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, what the Minister has stated sounds like something I have heard from a newspaper. I want to know why a statement made by him could be so near to a statement made by a newspaper and that is why whenever you criticise a Minister they must get the alternative opinion from the Minister and if you call the Minister, and the Minister refuses to reply to you, what you have said cannot be published.

I want to know whether it is the Newspaper's policy or whether it is the policy for the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. 4.25 p.m.

It is rather strange that the wording of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas seems to be pretty clear and close to the same wording of what was said by the newspaper. I do not know whether the newspaper is advising him or whether he is giving the newspaper instructions and I would like to know which one is correct.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: An original shareholder. Now I understand why you cannot get any statement pertaining to Ministers in the *Nation.* Now I understand the person giving the instruction.

Mr. Chairman, in the 2 or 3 minutes left to me I also want to deal with an issue that was dealt with not too long ago. We had a hedge in this Parliament when the Prime Minister came in here and said he was doing a swap and ended up doing a hedge. Do not mind that he used the word "swap". When you really looked at it, it was just a hedge or contingent liability. It is a fact.

I am saying, Sir, when you look at what is going on with St. James Beach Club, and this point was made by my comrade yesterday, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, which we agreed on. He told the Prime Minister at that time that he was making a mistake. We were told in this Assembly that he had not signed any agreement with Citibank North America as yet and I am telling him now in light of what is happening at St. James Beach Hotel and Almond Beach that he should put a stop, fire his advisors and hire some accountants to get some proper advice on that decision.

I am saying that that decision was given to him by some economists who have misled him and he should hire some accountants and they will give him proper advice. If we ever enter into any arrangement with Citibank we are going to find ourselves giving away large sums of money as we did to the Japanese. Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, during the course of my submission, I made in the first part some general statements about what I would like to see for public broadcasting and I also dealt with the general attitude of my political party to share some of the ownership of CBC with the public.

I now wish to ask some questions of the Minister who is holding the brief for CBC because, as you know, Sir, the Minister responsible for CBC is not down here and he is very fortunate in that he does not have the difficulties or the vicissitudes connected with working in what is the danger of the House of Assembly and being accountable to sharp minded people. He is protected so to speak in the Other Place.

You may say that the Prime Minister is responsible for CBC but the Prime Minister is nominally responsible. There is another Minister who really has the *de facto* responsibility. I wish he was in this House while I am asking these questions. Anyhow, Sir, I will ask the questions in the full knowledge that they will be passed on to him.

In 1989, a Committee was appointed by the then Prime Minister responsible for CBC and they reported in January 1990. This Committee comprised a Mr. Selwyn Smith, Mr. Michael Rudder, Mrs. Cecily Clarke-Crichlow, Mr. Lionel Moe, Mr. Michael Owen, whom I believe came out of Baltimore somewhere and Mr. Michael Worrell. These are all potential heavy hitters and therefore any recommendation they make presumably is something that should be taken seriously. Michael Rudder, for example, used to be a General Manager of CBC at one point, if I remember correctly.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He acted as General Manager? He was General Factotum at the time. You are saying that was a grave error to have made him General Manager, Sir? I withdraw any imputation on General Manager. He was on staff. I think Mr. Moe was a Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office at the time. Mr. Selwyn Smith is one of those persons who is known and I think he is now the chief director of arrangements by the Prime Minister in the Civil Service.

Without prejudice to what positions they held or do now hold, I would like to ask a question. That report

made some startling discoveries. Some of them were that the situation on television showed a heavy imbalance in favour of foreign programmes. 75% foreign, 18% local and 7% devoted to commercial. That tells you exactly what the position is. I would like to find out what is the arrangement now, to what extent the ratio has been changed. I wish to know whether this report has been acted upon in any respect. Has anything at all been done at CBC arising out of this report? This report was laid before the Board of CBC and I wish to know if any decision at all - I would settle for the smallest one - arising out of this report?

That report had some other things in it. It said that not enough effort was being made to produce or encourage the production of a reasonable number of local programmes of quality. Now, having said earlier that I believe the Government should make money available and having sought to give excuses for part of the problem I still wish to know if it is still true that not enough effort is being made by the management to give encouragement to the production of a reasonable number of local programmes of quality.

That report also indicated that there was a lack of conceptualisation of the overall purpose of television programming and not enough use was being made of media houses, regional offerings and departments of Government in the same type of business. That was a serious indictment and I would like to know - that was some 7 years on - what progress if any has been made in this regard.

The report also talked about production and it said that when they examined production on television they concluded that the output of the production department was quite low and that technical studio facilities were a limiting factor. I would like to know 7 years later if anything has been done with regard to improving this situation as it was identified by that Committee on that occasion. 4.35 p.m.

The Committee recommended in its report that greater emphasis should be placed on local programming for production facilities and better management of the department and there should be regular surveys and evaluations. I should like to know whether seven years later there has been anything done in that regard and to what extent it has been successful. The Committee also felt that the library services were so important to programming and to the national history of Barbados that efforts should be made to upgrade and maintain those services.

I have reason to believe that they had appointed a librarian as part of their attempt to remove persons from the front line of broadcasting for reasons which have been alleged and which I am not going to put in the record. They appointed one of the then anchor women to become librarian and it is my understanding that there is where she languishes.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I would like to know if the Honourable Member got permission from the Member for St. Michael South to make that statement.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I think that is an assault on your Honour's integrity, Sir, to suggest that one Honourable Member in this Committee would have to get permission from another Honourable Member is a suggestion which carries some heavy weight, but what is more, it demonstrates the total ignorance of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew of the procedures in this House. I am surprised that... he must be suffering from some kind of fear. I suspect that he is under pressure, much pressure maybe stress, on hearing that certain things are going to happen in St. Andrew, he has become very, very strange, but I am not concerned with that.

The Committee also found that the production for radio was not well served and the Department was operating with half its complement. I would like to know whether it is still true that the Radio Division is operating with half of its complement and if it is true that they were not well served.

I have reason to believe, based on the information which has come to me that the Multi-Choice which we have chosen in Barbados will be obsolete within three to five years. There are some who think that it would be obsolete in even less time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I am noticing what you are reading sounds very interesting but I would like for the House to know the authenticity of this document. Could you tell us the authenticity of the document?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir, I will tell you nothing of the kind, Sir because these are my notes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If you are reading from a document...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not reading from a document. I assure Your Honour that I am not reading from any document. I am following closely notes that I have made with my Pentel.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could you have this document available for viewing?

Mr. B. M. TAUT: If somebody wishes to read my notes I will let them read them but my first three pages, Sir, start out with some thought from tourism, lack of clear-cut objectives.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you wish me, Sir, to start reading from my notes? I notice the Minister of Tourism would like to read them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So these are your notes you are reading from?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: These are my notes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So it is not an authentic document?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would not say that it is not authentic because I have authenticated it but I would say that it is not a document that is in the public domain and therefore I am not prepared to make my notes available. I have made notes from a document that exists, which was the report to CBC.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, do not let him mislead you, Sir. Whoever came and raised questions about this document must be concerned about what I have in here, Sir. If they wish me to get straight to the bottom, Sir, I can do that. On this same sheet, Sir, I have something here to do for the establishment of the Facilitation Unit, you wish a piece on that, Sir? This document is really the book on the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism but I have a little CBC in it as well. So I may proceed then, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you very much, Sir. The point I am making is that that particular report felt that there were weaknesses in a number of areas and when it came to news and current affairs it had some things to say, Sir, which I do not wish to repeat them because I have never heard them said publicly but they....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What I would like you to tell me is why you dig up the Sports thing in Passage Garden without discussing it. It did not belong to the government. It came from the ordinary people and if CBC was dealing with these local matters CBC would have had a camera when the Honourable Member for St. Andrew sent a bulldozer into Passage Garden to dig up the hard courts which the boys used for road tennis and which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would support me on because most of them come from over in the City. They put their own money in and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew sent a bulldozer. He is a very difficult person, Sir. He sent a bulldozer to dig up the hard court which the boys put down with their own money and CBC should have captured that for all times so we can see how wicked this Government can be when it is directed by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You cannot get up on a point of order because then I would talk about the people who are about to lose their jobs because you demand that they should resign when you have no authority to do so. CBC should be carrying all of these things. I have never seen this on CBC; I saw it in the newspaper but they probably got direction from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, that they must not carry that, because based on how he wants to stop people from speaking in here, I am satisfied that given an opportunity he would not allow CBC to cany information about anything in St. Andrew, but I am not going to deal with him now.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not have anything here about you. I know about you by heart. You wish some more?

Mr. Chairman, I want to go on though to ask some more questions about CBC. I would like to know what is the level of staff that CBC has now and what was the level of staff when the present Government assumed office and when the present Minister assumed responsibility for CBC. I wish to know if there has been any change in the professional staff at CBC and to what extent such changes have been the result of direct policies, directives from the Minister or as a result of decisions from the management of CBC. I think that it is very important that the people of Barbados have a clear picture of what the present policy of CBC is in regard to news and with regard to programming. Soon after the...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir if you say that my time is running out let me just go on to make the point. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central earlier raised questions with regard to the alleged Shiprider Agreement, the potential Shiprider Agreement. I have been very disappointed that the Caribbean Broadcasting

Corporation has not even sought the views of certain of us who have responsibility for these matters, and yet there has been some implied suggestion that the Opposition might not be giving the Government support on their stand on Shiprider.

Now, Sir, I have said from this position in this Chamber on more than one occasion that I firmly believe that it is the responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to execute the foreign policy of this country. It is no business of the Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs to be second-guessing the Minister of Foreign Affairs when a matter of crucial importance to the country is at stake, and to the extent that we have not made a statement on Shiprider is to the extent that we agree with the position which the Government is taking.

If the Government wishes a statement, if the Government is insecure in its position, if the Minister is insecure then I would say from this position that the shiprider's position that the Government has enunciated so far is the correct one. But I would have been surprised if in light of what the Minister would have found on her files as the manner in which we have been dealing with the United States Government over the years, I would have been surprised if there was any other different position. Those countries in the Caribbean with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, which should be dealt with separately, who would rush to sign an agreement with the United States Government would be following in a tradition which they have established and which they continue to follow. I went to a meeting at OAS when we were electing the Secretary General of the OAS. We had agreement as to who would be supported for Secretary General. 4.45 p.m.

When we got to Washington, before one could say "Jack Robinson," half of them had succumbed. The next thing we knew the candidate of the United States had become Secretary-General of the OAS. Now in Washington they have the temerity to be saying to people like myself that they should have listened to me. I have no problem with the foreign policy of people in some of the countries in the Caribbean because I understand that Barbados stands alone quite often.

Now, Trinidad and Tobago is a horse of a different colour. The present Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago cannot be properly described in this House without incurring the wrath of the Chair. That man who has been to the highest courts in the world, to argue some of the finest points, could now find some difficulty with the best entrenched international legal principle known to anyone who has read a law book, is not only a source of disappointment, but it is a source of grave concern.

It is a source of grave concern that he can stand up in the Caribbean and give somebody the impression that sovereignty is a thing of the past and allow an Attorney General of the United States to look with some kind of contempt on the suggestion by countries like Barbados that we could be sovereign.

I pay no attention to the quacks who host television shows in the United States, some of whom can barely read and write but whc are put together by a series of people like how you put together a committee.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When I am in this mood I do not like to talk to you so leave me alone.

I know how these people are put together so what the man on the television station says about our Prime Minister who properly stated that "Massa day done," that does not bother me, as long as the Prime Minister understands and the Foreign Minister must understand that when they go out to speak for Barbados they are to say those kinds of things. They are to say them because that is how all Barbadians feel.

When Errol Barrow spoke for us on the first occasion in the United Nations and said that we would be friends of all and satellites of none, we were the same size that we are now. That is what we believed then, that is what I believe now, and that is how we should behave all the time.

I know there are some intellectually challenged people who write to the newspaper from time to time and interfere with some of those statements but I think that is part of the democratic system we have so I do not quarrel with them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What it meant precisely is the fact that no matter how small we are, to say to the United States: "We are your friend but we are not your satellite." We would rather all of us lie down and die than to accept dictates from a group of people who are not intellectually equal to those of us who make the decisions for our country.

The Democratic Labour Party's position on Ship Rider is exactly as it has been in foreign policy from day one. We are not signing. You should not sign and must not allow yourself to sign any agreement until you are satisfied that it is an agreement you can live with and that Barbados can live with, not only intellectually but emotionally, socially and in keeping with what has been the accepted norms of public international law.

Mr. Chairman, I ask your indulgence for two minutes. I can speak on public international law without let or hindrance. The people up there have said so. I do not require any permission. The position which the Attorney General in Trinidad and Tobago and the Attorney General of the United States have essayed to take on international law is an abomination. The suggestion that a state that is accepted in the United Nations as a sovereign state loses its sovereignty because it does not have a certain level of resources is a travesty and should not come from the mouth of anyone who dares to call himself or herself an Attorney General.

I shudder at the thought of having to kneel at the feet of either the Attorney General in Trinidad and Tobago or the one in the United States to make a decision about my or any other person's prosecution based on their utterance of their understanding of international law. An Attorney General is unlike any other Minister. An Attorney General is expected to be and understood to be someone who understands the law.

Those two persons speaking in their official capacity delivered of themselves trivia which even newspaper idiots like some we have seen in our lifetime could not have uttered and he dares to say that he is an Attorney General of the Caribbean. I have no respect at the intellectual level for anyone who says that. I have no quarrel with any political position that people take but when the Attorney General of a country makes that kind of statement it is an insult to all of us at the intellectual level.

Anyone who wishes to know what the Democratic Labour Party's position is will need only to find out how we have dealt with the United States on all matters. We have been helpful. The Barbados Government of all stripes has been helpful to the people of the United States.

Mr. Prime Minister, the United States is in no position to bully you on an occasion when the United States Government did not have the numbers at the United Nations to help the President of the United States get out of a predicament he was in. It was the Barbados Government that assisted in bringing the other people in the Caribbean into line to allow us to send troops into Haiti. That decision made by the two of you would have been based on policy positions which you had taken. That is why I say that the foreign policy has to be executed by the Foreign Minister of the day and must not be second guessed.

The Honourable Member will know that I attack her on all other matters but when it comes to the foreign policy I stick with principle. Only if I disagree with it profoundly I first would have a duty to say to the Minister privately, "I disagree with the policy. Is there anything which you have not told me before I made it public?" Because as we go outside of these borders that are ours, we must speak with one voice. So go ahead and speak to the President of the United States with one voice that he either pitches up or he shuts up. The President of the United States is a head of government and the Prime Minister of Barbados is the head of a government. Let no one confuse you. Do not worry about us over here. We know what we are about.

I hope the call-in programmes will cease to wonder why we are not supporting the Government. This is not a bread and fish issue. You do not need to support the Government when the Government is right on a matter like this. The Government knows that it has our support. I wish that the Government would occasionally tell some of its yardfowls that these matters are under control, all like Claudine Brathwaite, Yvonne Wood and all those people.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to put the record straight because I speak for the Democratic Labour Party on matters of this kind and I want to let you know.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, it is the duty of the Leader of the House to signal to me that she got up on a matter of Business of the House. She never did.

Asides.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, 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. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 5.15 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 5.15 o'clock in the afternoon was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 4.55 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 Honourable Chamber is in Committee of Supply.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I indicated that I would like to make a few more comments in the vein in which I was speaking before. There are one or two points I would like to bring before the attention of this Honourable House stemming from the area of security of Barbados.

Not many people seem to understand or appreciate that the development of Barbados and its transformation over the past 40 years was achieved with little or no official assistance from the United States of America and therefore there is no need to become alarmed or for this country to be in anyway diminished or lose confidence in itself over threats of any withdrawal of aid through international organisations. Indeed, it should be the policy of Government to drastically reduce its borrowings from international institutions. As has already been stated in this House, when the commercial markets are good, whether it is worthwhile borrowing from them at all and whether it is not cheaper to go on the international money markets and borrow money without any types of strings attached. I do not think we need to be unduly concerned about any prospects or any problems in relation to reduced flow of aid from international financing institutions, nor should we bother about the antics of prostitutes in Barbados who are committed only to making money and do not care about the nationalist goals or the development of Barbados and who would find themselves signing with any foreign country if they perceived that their profits should be reduced for any reason at all. They care not about the development of this Nation. I understand clearly that it is only because we have been a sovereign country that we have been able to allocate the resources of Barbados in the interest of the majority of Barbadians. I also understand very clearly that the type of Estimates that are taking place in this House, at this moment, at this stage in the 1990s could only take place in an independent country. It could not have taken place under a colonial regime, Estimates that deal with the allocation of resources.

There are a few questions that I would like to ask. I noticed that the Prime Minister spoke about the development of a single market and a single economy. We are supportive of that view. We appreciate the many difficulties that one may have, the areas of developing the capital markets and so on. I noticed that he did not mention a word about the Assembly of the Caribbean Parliamentarians. The question which arises is what is the Government's position on that organisation, is it still as lukewarm as it was a year ago, do you think it is worthwhile to have such a forum where Members of Parliament throughout the Caribbean can get together and discuss matters which would come before the Heads of Government at some point in time. What is the attitude of the Government. Is it lukewarm, is it warm or is it cold? Does the Government see itself as playing a facilitatory role or is the Government being just polite in this particular matter?

Another area I want to address very quickly is that area of political broadcast and political advertising.

Now it is amazing, if someone wants to go out there and sell some sex enhancing drug which is of no value at all, they can freely advertise in the print media, on television and on radio. Do you realise, Mr. Chairman, that as the law is interpreted by the electronic media that they are debarred from accepting advertisement from political parties except during an election period? Have you ever noticed that if you wanted to place an advertisement say with CBC to advertise a meeting that they would advertise the names of the speakers, the date and the location but any political content of the advertisement is taken out? I think it is completely ridiculous that in this day and age, that with the electronic media being listened and being viewed by a majority of the people of Barbados that you cannot have a political advertisement outside of an election period.

It is my understanding that this stems from an interpretation of a provision in the Representation of the People's Act. If that is the case, it is my feeling that the Attorney General should examine the matter because I am quite sure that in this day and age that this type of thing should not happen. There is a problem and the problem is that VOB and all the electronic media and television say that they cannot accept any form of political advertising from a political party outside of an election time. In other words, if I put advertisement that we are holding a constituency meeting in St. Lucy at 7.00 p.m. at such and such a date, they will carry that but if I am going to talk about the disaster in the Ministry of Finance, they will check it out because they would say it is advertising and it is a political message.

Now, what kind of democracy do we have. This is a joke. Any Tom, Dick & Harry can go and advertise anything on television or radio but politicians and political parties who are trying to get a message across even to educate the people of Barbados or to advance the cause of a political party are debarred from doing so except after nomination day. An election period is interpreted by those organisations as "between nomination day and election". Try it and see. You cannot place an advertisement on CBC or any electronic media.

Again I make a further plea for us all to understand that if we are going to stop the alienation of people on the political process then the political process must be able

to reach people through the media which they listen to and make contact with them. People listen to radio all day and watch television at night. Many people buy newspapers and they look at the sports page and look at the comics and that is the end of the story. A lot of the political communication that takes place, takes place through the newspapers and you reach a very small section of the population in that way.

Another question I want to raise is this. What is being done to enhance the security of Barbados in terms of its inner harbours. This has always been the weakest point in our security. We have one Airport and one harbour but there are several areas around Barbados where sea craft can land and sea craft do land from time to time. 5.25 p.m.

I have advocated for a long time that one of the main thrusts of the Defence Force should be to develop a naval small vessel capacity to make sure that there is 24-hour surveillance of those small harbours around Barbados. I believe that this is probably the weakest point in the security of Barbados so I do not know exactly what is being done and whether resources are being put in that area to develop the naval arm of the Defence Force with fast small boats that are capable of effectively patrolling the inner harbours by day and night, and whether or not those boats presently owned by the Barbados Defence Force are functioning and whether or not they still constitute such a tremendous cost to keep afloat.

In the area of Parliamentary debates not much has really happened. I think we have had more frequent broadcast of debates over the past $2V_2$ years but at the end of $2V_2$ years we should have reached the point where there should be a systematic and well organised situation in relation to the broadcast of parliamentary debates. For example, I would feel that the Appropriation Bill which is Part 1 of the budgetary process is probably a debate that could be televised. It is an important Bill and there was a time in fact when that debate on the Appropriation Bill was accorded the same status in terms of reporting by the printed media as the Budget. If you look very carefully you will see what is happening that as the years have passed on very little reports on the Appropriation Bill have really come out. There was a time when the main speeches, for example by the political parties then represented in Parliament were published in full but now you get very little of it and the Appropriation Bill is really step 1 in the entire budgetary process.

I think we need to set out priorities, the important events in the year that should be televised and see what Members think about it and also to really have a streamlined system so that the kind of problems that arose.... It is true that we may have to change leadership of the House if it is ever going to work smoothly but nevertheless I gather that is on the cards anyhow so there may be some hope for the future.

One final point I want to make and this is something that we have to be very careful about. We spoke of the dangers of the Ship Rider's Agreement in respect of our sovereignty. One thing that is absolutely important is that we must make sure that our judicial system which I believe is 99% fair, one which does not discriminate against people because they are black, one in which the people of Barbados have confidence, one which we have inherited out of a long process, a very long process, of law coming straight out of the British system. We have to make sure that that is not contaminated in anyway by what passes for a judicial system in the United States of America, one which has been underpinned, infested by racism over the years, one which creates all kinds of problems for black people and this is something that we have to be very careful about. Very often you allow people to come into your country, arrest people, harass people and then you find that after awhile they impose their own judicial systems on you.

I make this point here because I recognise what has happened in the Bahamas and I am very pleased to see that the Bahamian Bar Association, about 9 months ago, they were forced into a position to issue a statement complaining about the infiltration of certain North American judicial processes within their system creating problems for the administration of justice and for the dispensation of justice in the Bahamas on an impartial basis. So the implications of the stand that we take on this Ship Rider Agreement are far reaching and we have to be very careful and have the confidence to stand up and let people know where we stand because we are on good ground.

The oldest democracy in the Western Hemisphere has nothing to learn about democracy from anybody else. A democracy which is rooted in the Westminster system that has a judicial system in which all the people in this country, black or white, poor or rich, have confidence, they have nothing to learn from anybody.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Finally, a law and order system which is not rooted in racism, which is not tainted by racism has nothing to learn from anybody else. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, very briefly on two areas, one relates to this question of Ship Rider. I must confess that I speak from a background of relative ignorance not having seen the document that is

popularly known as the Ship Rider Agreement but it is indeed passing strange that before a proposal is negotiated it is called an Agreement. The Americans decided that there is a document that should be signed by a number of territories and they do not consider that it is a document for bargaining so it is not a proposal by the American Government it is what they call an agreement. In other words it is sealed and signed before it is even put in your hands. I have to issue some words of caution based on my experience in these matters. One is, I would caution the Government, despite the strong words of encouragement and support coming from certain quarters to negotiate with the Government of the United States out of the public view. 5.35 p.m.

It makes no sense at all for the Government of Barbados to be negotiating its position. I do not care what the position is, it is a strong position and one that I support wholeheartedly. But, I must say that it is quite wrong to let anybody encourage the Government to negotiate with Americans in public. It cuts off a lot of options, it hardens positions and it makes Governments, like the United States, who also feel rightly, that they are a sovereign state, feel that they are not pressured publicly into shifting position or making concessions if the debate is going on in public. So I throw that caution out to the Government that although it should welcome the support of all factions of Barbadian thinking on this issue, it should not allow that support to make it show its hand in public, because it would detract eventually, from the success of the position that it ultimately wants to accept.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman that you do not build up credit when you are dealing with diplomatic matters in countries like the United States at all. You do not build up any credit at all, Sir.

You do not say that we are friends, we are allies, we are going to cooperate on a particular area, we are going to make some concessions and hope that down the road your attitude and your position are going to bring you any benefits. That has not been my experience.

I also remember, Sir, when the United States Government, President Reagan, introduced the Caribbean Basin initiatives, it was accompanied with a great deal of fanfare and indeed, representatives from all the Countries in this Region, the Latin-American Countries that are washed by the Caribbean Sea, were invited to sit down with President Reagan and his advisors in the Oval Office, in the White House, it was all a great deal of good feeling camaraderie.

Caribbean Countries, I was present. Sir, put their position, everything was hunky-dory until the Americans had succeeded in achieving what they set about to do. I do not want to get into those details, because that takes me into the area now of Industry and Trade.

There was an inter-Grenada incident, Sir, where the Americans, again, spoke to the Caribbean. Those were good days. President Clinton, I understand is coming to Barbados in May. President Reagan came in 1984 and had bilateral discussions with the Government of Barbados, and also multilateral discussions with the Countries of the Eastern Caribbean.

The meetings were upbeat, they finished with high promise, but again, as soon as the American Government had achieved its objective, the territories of this region, including Barbados, were put on the back burner.

I have, Mr. Chairman Sir, a very intimate knowledge of what transpired during the time of the Grenada crisis. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I know more about what happened during that period than anyone else on this island, because I was very intimately involved. I saw all the movements and I was part of all the late night discussions, both here in Barbados and in Port of Spain and I know what decisions were taken and what promises were made. And again I know, Sir, that as soon as the crisis was over those who cooperated...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Prime Minister Chambers of Trinidad and Tobago went to the meeting in the dark. Mr. Chairman, I have my own handwritten notes at what transpired at those meetings. In fact, the most important of the meetings I wrote down almost verbatim, everything that was said in the meeting.

The substance of what I am saying, Sir, is that when the American Government was pursuing a policy in its own interest, it was quite willing to cooperate and collaborate with the Governments of these small islands of the Caribbean and hold out certain promises for the future that they did not deliver on after they got what they wanted.

You will remember, Sir, in 1983 in Beruit, the American base was bombed and all 500 American soldiers were killed. President Reagan had to seek re-election in 1984 and it was a period in which the American public was showing certain hostility to the Administration because, as you know, Sir, this whole thing about when Americans start coming home in body bags, the mood of the country changed.

Grenada was an easy, nice and soft target to rehabilitate the Administration in the minds of the public. Sir, I only want to advise the Government that it must be cautious in any negotiations with the United

States, because one must not expect that it is a question of casting your bread on the waters and that some day it will return to you, multiplied. No such thing. But the point that I made initially is the cardinal point that I want to make in this area and that is, it does no good for the Government of Barbados to negotiate in public, to shout its position from the house tops, to give in to a lot of colourful and dramatic language that makes negotiating difficult in the end.

One other point that I want to make, Sir, relates to the question of land use regulation and certification. The last section under Head 13.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TOLL: Mr. Chairman Sir, since I am advised and as the Lord said "and verily believed" that this land use Regulation and Certification Programme is no longer under the Prime Minister's Office, and indeed, now I check, I see that no funds are made available for 1997-1998.1 accept that, Sir, and therefore I would wait until the appropriate Head comes up. I would then at that point state a position that I would want the Government to reply to me on. 5.45 p.m.

I have asked in the past and I ask again about the land management efficiency programme that was raised between the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank when the Government was involved in the investment sector reform programme. In that programme, the Government held the position that there would be certain radical changes in the land use policy in this country, that it would involve certain amendments to the revisions to the physical development plan. It would also be based on a best use of physical resources in this country. In other words, they would look at the agricultural land and the marginal to be better used in industry or tourism. They would go in that direction.

My question, Mr. Chairman, is asked only to assist me to advise clients when you are practising law. People ask questions all the time and you have to be able to explain and advise people as to the position in law and policy of the Government of Barbados. That document did state that there would be transparency in the formulation of all land use policy and decisions and that there would be openness in applications and there would also be a review of the appeal processes and in the training of persons to deliver properly under the new policy.

I have some difficulty in knowing how to advise anybody. One of the things you learn within the first few weeks that you are in law school is that the law must be certain.

I, as a practitioner and other practitioners need to know exactly what the position is, both from the point of view of the law and the policy so that we would be in a position to advise clients as to the specifics and not only the general intent of the policy in relation to this new policy.

I have always understood for all the years that I have been involved in these debates that this is the appropriate time of the Committee for specific questions to be posed and specific answers to be given. I would like when the Prime Minister is replying to do what he can in helping me and other practitioners understand specifically where we stand in that regard.

I want to make 2 or 3 sentences about the information policy because I was not here all the time and I understand that there was a lot of debate about CBC and the information policy and so on. Before I left I heard one Honourable Member - I do not remember which one - express the view that CBC will become relevant.

I think that we have to bear in mind two things. One is that blinding faith in technological change would make it extremely difficult for Barbados to adopt the ecstatic position on the question of information and its delivery because today's policy is outdated by tomorrow because of the pace of change in technology.

What need not change, Sir, if we are to have a medium in Barbados for the delivery of information services for what is considered standard like education and culture and civics and so on, no matter whatever the face of change and no matter how many other media we use for the bringing of multichannel and Direct-TV and ultimately cable television which, I understand is part of the Government's plan, no matter if that is brought into Barbados, the Government continues to have an agency that will meet the specific needs and aspirations of Barbadians.

You can bring in all the multichannel tomorrow all over the place and all the satellite television, none of them will address the specific needs of Barbadians in relation to education in culture and so on. There will always be a role and a place for a local television station.

The second point I want to make in relation to it is this question of censorship. That is a difficult one because it is extremely difficult to control, even in the United States. As I speak probably they are still discussing the question in Congress tonight of deciding what should be made available for viewing in the homes of Americans because they are concerned like other people who think about these things of what fare is given to the children in a nation.

I understand that some of the channels that we will be seeing in Direct-TV and ultimately cable if we allow it, or when cable comes, will make it very difficult for parents in Barbados to be able to watch television with their children. It will be very tough.

Having said that, Sir, we have to recognise that it is not going to be easy for us to block out the kind of programmes to which I make reference. Therefore, it is going to be incumbent on the Government to use a lot of moral suasion to influence parents and the community at large to be in charge of their own children. In other words, we cannot rely on censorship because it is not going to work. We will not have the means or the resources to enforce it and therefore the Government will have to spend some of its energy in this effort of moral suasion to persuade Barbadian parents to take charge and determine for themselves what it is that will be available for their children.

I have a few documents that have been sent to me from a friend overseas that address these very problems and I would like to make them available to the Government, the Minister or whoever because I believe that that is what we have to be looking at.

I speak from a vantage point of observation of deviant behaviour through my daily exposure to people who are before the law courts. I see (hem in every form, shape and fashion and I marvel at times at the forced ripeness of a number of young people in this country. At the heart of it, without being any social psychologist or any of those fancy "ologists", from a pragmatic experience, I determine that a lot has to do with the fact that there is a woeful lack of parental control and guidance in this country.

A lot of the ills, although it is difficult to measure how many of those ills, are the direct consequence of a cultural penetration in this country of a kind that is inimical to the well-being of the quality of life of young people in this country. We have not been able to do much about it, but it has to be foremost, in the planning of Government, not only in its information policy, the grant of licences for radio and T.V. and all that but in every other aspect of its endeavour with young people, to bear in mind the tremendous amount of damage that has, and can be done at the exposure of young people to the less desirable and less wholesome aspects of information in whatever form you care to describe it, that is available to the young people of this country. So I am just saying that as the second caution. Grateful to you, Mr. Chairman. 5.55 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not rising to wind up the debate but just to react to a few things that have been raised, and before I do so, Sir, this Head includes a provision for the cadets and the Government is trying to revive the cadets and, in fact, we are trying to revive the scouts and brownies and expand, Sir, but we want to revive the cadets.

Subsequent to the Estimates Committee Meeting the Defence Board met and received representation from the Defence Force that it is proposed to have a regional jamboree for cadets in Barbados but, unfortunately, the cadet force does not have tents and they will have to have this jamboree in schools and the experience will be lost, and they have asked, Sir, that we provide an amount of $120,000 under Head 13, Programme 2, Sub-programme 3, Object 316 as a grant to the cadet corps to allow it to purchase tents. This would be a Cadillac position, Sir, but it is a sad thing that the cadets do not have tents and will have to camp in schools, and we want to change that, Sir, so that I propose to move in $120,000 under Head 13 Programme 2, Sub-programme 3, Object number 316 of that amount.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member for St. George South raised the question of the status of the Fiscal Development Plan and its preparation and, just to say that we are in the process of complying with the law, that the law requires that every 5 years the Plan is to be updated. The 1988 Plan is extended by order for five years and it is due to expire in 1998. The IADB assistance is to help us to do that - of the consulting work for the preparation of the Plan but the process of the Plan's preparation, the process also of the public enquiry into every aspect of the Plan and the purpose of the Plan as set out in Chapter 240 of the Laws of Barbados Part 3 will be fully followed. As soon as the draft plan is ready we will have it published as is required by the law for persons who have any enquiries whatsoever into the purpose of the Plan to make those enquiries as is provided for by law, and therefore, Sir, I am truly not in a position to speak to any new proposals or any new policies precisely because we are now in the stage of preparation.

There is a view that has been put that we should adopt a fully liberal approach to land in the country and to allow land to be so governed that only the fullest economic use is to be had but I just want to tell the Member for St. George South, Sir, that Section 9 of the Act says that subject to this section the Minister may approve any development plans submitted to him, either without modification or subject to such modification as he considers expedient and there might be some people who feel that we should allow the land to go to the highest bidder, Sir, and go on and draft a development plan with that, Sir, but the Minister has the powers to force such modifications as he may think fit.

The view of some people, like the IDB, that all the land should go to.... is a view that people hold but it is

not to circumvent the powers that be to have proper plans drafted, a full public enquiry into the plans and the Minister, Sir to make a final determination based on his perspective of public policy. Sir, I want to thank Members who have spoken in this Debate, concerning the security interest of Barbados, and to make a simple suggestion, Sir.

There are three sets of bodies of speeches that I believe that the Clerk of Parliament should give the Members of this House when they become Members. Rex Nettleford's book on "Norman Manley and the New Jamaica" that captures all of Norman Manley's speeches should be wonderful good reading for Members of this House, Sir, and they capture an important perspective on the Caribbean approach to governance so too is the collection of Errol Barrow's speeches and there is also a collection of Eric Williams' speeches, particularly all of his famous speeches in the Square. I have not yet seen Mr. Sandiford's speeches, Sir, and the Member for St. John wants to give them away by giving them to me, and I say "no".

All I want to say in this matter, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that I will do my duty in relation to the matter of our security as that duty has been so wonderfully well defined by Members of this House and by people who have had to speak from time to time on what is in the best interest of the Caribbean people. The Member for St. John raised the question of the Commission for Social Justice to say that many Members, - I am not going to go into the invidious exercise of saying who has accepted and who has not accepted payment, Sir, but it is a fact that many Members of the Social Justice Commission have asked not to, that they are serving in an involuntary context and I would not want to divide and rule them but just to let that be said.

We have a number of Commissions that advise on a number of things, Sir. Some advise on economic policies, some advise on direct policy, some advise on drug abuse, on AIDS, on whatever else and if you have a commission that advises on social justice and the Prime Minister feels that that is something that he needs, Sir, then so be it. Another Prime Minister at another time may not want such a function.

The Commission has, to date, Sir, been instrumental in helping us to set up and advise on the casino gambling. They also assisted in the establishment of a commission on the Constitution which is now functioning, and the commission on gambling functioned and submitted its report. They also, as you know, Sir, were very instrumental in trying to devise a broad-based approach to consultation on ways to deal with honouring our national heroes. The commission is now meeting and has been holding several meetings with representatives of various sectors including the media, businessmen, teachers, unions.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is often very useful, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to have these persons in society, former ambassadors, and so. Just to say, Sir, that I think that the Commission is doing good service but it is just for another Prime Minister in the future to say whether he wants such a function or not.

Now, Sir, I will allow the debate on the CBC to continue but I thought that I would intervene at this stage to let the House know that there is a proposal for a moving of the amount to cover $120,000, Sir to cover the tents to allow us to be able to sponsor a regional cadet jamboree in the country during the course of the summer.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief on this. I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael West for essentially setting out the Democratic Labour Party's position for the record on what we know of the so-called Ship Rider Agreement or proposed agreement and to say that. 6.05 p.m.

We will lend full support to the stances which the Government of Barbados takes which are in the best interest of the people and I believe the stance which the Government is taking, as in most foreign policy matters, is consistent with trends which form a consensus which has been part of Barbados' post Independence experience and so I do not think there is any divide.

I want to, perhaps, bring to this debate a younger - there may be some in here who may say less mature, and they can say it if they wish - perspective on the role of the United States of America. I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. I have heard the Honourable Members for St. George South, St. Michael South Central and Christ Church West. The issues of sovereignty mean a lot more to them and their perspective on what sovereignty is. The fight for sovereignty and so on has a lot more significance than it may have to younger generations.

We live in a world with one super power and we do not need to be naive enough to assume that the presence or absence of any Ship Rider Agreement or other agreement will stop the United States from doing what it wishes in countries like this. I send out a very stern warning, cynical as it may be, that if they really want to do what the Ship Rider Agreement permits, they are going to do it anyway because their attitude has absolutely no regard even for international public opinion on matters of this sort.

The McLaughlin Report...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If it were not young then you would not have wasted your breath going into all the lofty details about building up credit. That is why the point you are making about building up credit is not worth repeating because we all know, as the people speaking on the NBC programme know, that the Americans will do what the Ship Rider Agreement purports to permit them to do anyway regardless of which country in the Caribbean signs it or not. The experience in Panama has told us that already they will drop helicopters on the lawn of Ilaro Court and do what they have to do if they think it is necessary in pursuit of their approach to international matters of this sort.

Now, that does not mean that we should not resist it. That does not mean that we should not take the stance which the Honourable Member for St. Peter in his wisdom, based on the experience of the Barbadian people has taken, and we support that. We also have to be clear that we are not dealing with a group of people who are about to have a second thought if they think it is necessary for them to undertake these kinds of exercises. In the Caribbean we talk as if they have ever thought that the sovereignty of these nations has meant anything. They never thought that and we have never been in a position to change their viewpoint.

When Errol Barrow called a United States President a cowboy, it may have been bad manners, it is true, but he was a cowboy. If he felt that Errol Barrow was a cowboy he could have said so and he would have said it. The position must be public for this reason. And now I am disputing what the Honourable Member for St. George South said in here.

The position must be public because the Honourable Member for St. Peter when he leaves these shores, and that does not happen in CARICOM matters normally or any other matter, at least he knows that he has the full weight of public opinion and political consensus on the issues on which he speaks. That is why more of these things need to be public.

I disagree fundamentally with anybody who adopts a stance that matters of that type should not be public. It is precisely because of that that when CARICOM meetings are convened and leaders go to those meetings without a sounding or a consensus on issues on which the public and political parties can add to the weight and the voice of our leader, that you do not, in fact, achieve the results that you should be achieving. Debate the issues in public.

This is a democracy in which we have been able to contain debate to sensible proportions, both in this House and in the public domain, as Mr. David Ellis calls it when he is on the call-in programme. Therefore, I think it should be public. What I am saying is that there are some issues on which there is going to be consensus and there are some on which there will not be consensus. In a world with one super power it is not as though when you shout you are lining up half the world with you against the other half. The position you have to take in a matter like this has to be one, in my view, based on the strength of public opinion in your own country.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter can forge ahead knowing that within the bounds of propriety he is entitled to take that position on behalf of the people of Barbados with political consent because we have debated it publicly now. Had we not debated it, the Honourable Member for St. Peter would never have known that this was our stance because we do not have a tradition of consultation on these matters, regrettably. We simply do not have it. What I learned about CARICOM, I learned from other sources. I do not learn them from the Prime Minister of Barbados, as happened in your time. That is the point I am making, so let us put in place the formal institutions, it is necessary, of our leaders to be able when they leave these shores to leave with a strong consensus on issues which we have to fight.

As I said, I do not wish to appear cynical. I do not believe that signing or not signing the Ship Rider Agreement other than its public relations value, is going to stop the United States from decertifying Barbados if it wishes to. It will do that without reference to anything the Honourable Member for St. Peter says, anything I say or anything the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, or the Honourable Member for St. George South says.

As I said, we are in a world with one super power. That level of cynicism, regrettably, has to some time inform our action. If you say you are not signing it, we take that position until something is before the Government of Barbados which meets the criteria which our people think is acceptable for our relations with other nations. Then you are entitled on our behalf to resist it to the fullest.

The second point I want to mnke is again that point about CARICOM. Despite the West Indies Committee Report, despite the Honourable Member for St. Peter laying some documents in Parliament which are to be debated under Private Members' Business in relation to the OECS, there really is not enough debate or discussion on issues in relation to CARICOM and I regret that. The Caribbean Assembly of Parliamentarians is one means of solving it but not the only one.

I believe there needs to be a better way of dealing with matters of this sort. It is just not an issue for Barbados. It is an issue throughout the region where, as

I say, leaders build the consensus, not after, but before they leave. There are not a lot of issues on which there is going to be a major divide so it means a little more hard work, a little more explaining and advocacy of the issues which are on the table for discussion at meetings of CARICOM.

I urge the Honourable Member for St. Peter to find time in his schedule to reach out to a variety of interests in the country, to explain many of these issues, to expand on them and use the opportunity to build consensus before the intercessional or regular meetings of CARICOM or other meetings which take place and I hope that will be done. 6.15 p.m.

Let me revert for a minute to CBC and Multichoice because I have not followed the debate on this. I was offered the facility of Direct-TV and I installed it but I am committed enough to CBC that I made an application for Multichoice. You get Channel 8 free and I therefore think that I should pay for something so I decided I would ask for Multichoice, and I did. I would therefore end up with both because I have been a strong supporter of CBC over the years and I will continue to support it and somebody has to pay for local programming even though the route for paying for it is to put in Multichoice. I hope earnestly that some of those resources will find their way into the general resources of CBC which would assist with local programming.

I will compare the two, Mr. Chairman. Within two days Direct-TV was set up and was operating and to date despite the guarantee and the major investment, I do not know what the size of the investment was for Multichoice, there is no guarantee that you are going to get wide enough coverage to make the investment worth it. This also happened to STV. Nobody has to bring statistics to me or I will ask the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because he is a shareholder and the Honourable Member for St. George South, although he pretends he is not a shareholder, he will tell me whether the Barbados Rediffusion invested $12 million to set up Direct-TV. I know that could not be the case, not even $8 million. I want to get the information at some point in time.

We say that the private sector is not efficient but in matters of this sort, very often we put a lot of money up front to put in expensive and complicated equipment. At CBC when they set up STV they put in three different computer systems and they were not compatible. I was on the Board then, the Billing Department could not speak to the Installation Department and the Installation Department could not speak to some other part so they then had to get people to come in and re-design it.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The three computer systems could not interact but substantial sums of money had been spent on the STV project, we were already committed to them and we could not pull back from it. I hope there can be some guarantee given that in the face of competition that CBC will be able to work down the $12 million and will really be on a sound financial footing in the face of all of these issues. I think that is important. In addition to that there will not be a situation where they employ a whole set of excess staff for the project even before six people have the television installed. It often happens that way. They want 50 vans, 112 drivers, 30 customer service reps. etc. even before the system is up and running and the other people can set it up with 3 people working shift and answering a telephone and pressing four and five buttons. When Government does it we have to overdo it and put in place the most elaborate system and then cannot respond to the financial needs and meet the debts and so on. We see this constantly in relation to CBC. The Honourable Members for St. Michael West can tell you the grey hair that he would have gotten over the introduction of the STV project and we are now repeating almost the same scenario ten years later and we have to be extremely careful. I wish the Managers well but I know there are some aspects of CBC that will never change and which almost seems God given in the context of what is happening in the Corporation in the last 30 years.

I would like to hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter on Multichoice and on deepening the involvement of CARICOM and the attitude of the United States to issues on the Ship Rider Agreement.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, just two short questions I want to pose for the Minister under this Head and since I know we are going to soon finish it, I want to get them.

First of all under this Head, provision is being made for Independence celebrations. My request is not heavy or anything.

I would just like the Prime Minister to see to it that he instructs whoever it is that is responsible for arranging these programmes to include in their programming and thinking a small area of Barbados that begins at the corner of Hindsbury Road and Bank Hall. It goes all the way down to Bridge Gap and then it goes down Bridge Gap and comes down Westbury Road and ends at Exmouth. It takes in a little bit of Deacons Road and then it comes around and take in the Garden Land and all those areas. That is part of Barbados. It is not known by a Department of your Ministry that does not understand that Barbados includes that part.

Independence celebrations for the last few years have taken on a community aspect and somehow

St. Michael West does not have any communities in it. I am not quarreling, I am just helping with the geography of the area so that whoever is responsible will not get lost out of Bridgetown. That's all I wanted to say on that.

The second thing I want to raise concerns the whole country. Under Defence and Security. I have been very concerned and I would like the Prime Minister, if it will not in anyway cause him to divulge any of our state secrets, if he could give me some idea of what is the succession planning that he perceives in relation to defence and security.

We have been very well served over the last many years by a Colonel and Brigadier. They have been head of our Defence Force and I think without prejudice, I have criticised the Colonel in here 20 years ago, I have had some things to say during the Grenada invasion but if truth is to tell, the Brigadier has served Barbados well in terms of giving the Defence Force some depth and some structure and indeed the regional security system has benefitted from his wider experience.

Experienced people always have to give way to successors but I think that it is important that in the context of what we call our defence and security system that we need to have some assurances that the future is going to be at least as stable as the past. I am saying that as delicately as I can without creating unnecessary headlines about this question.

I have looked down the ranks and into the system and I am not myself aware of what kind of training or what kind of programmes have been put in place so that when the Brigadier finally has to go, as go he must at some point, I would like to know that the Defence Force will be in the same kind of stable hands as it has been with the Brigadier.

Let me go on record, I am now not speaking for my party because this has not been canvassed in my party but I am not one of those persons who would have no difficulty if a contingency arrangement for continuation of the Brigadier's services had to be put in place. I believe there are some institutions in this country which have done extremely well because of the special expertise of those who have been heading them and I believe in certain circumstances it is in the interest of the country to continue positions even if arrangements have to be made. 6.25 p.m.

We have benefitted or otherwise from an import of a large quantity, relatively speaking, of persons from the British Forces who have come into Barbados and have performed certain functions. I have often wondered, since it was not within my billet I paid little attention to the details of it, but I have often wondered about succession planning. While we have a whole host of people who come in and perform functions for us they are not natives of Barbados or of the Caribbean and then sooner or later they go back out, they are beneficiaries of our salubrious climate and other things we have here and presumably they do the job for which they come. I am never sure that I can see the people who are going to be taking over from them functioning and getting the same kind of clout which they had when they were in those positions.

I do not need to belabour the point but if the Prime Minister is in a position to give information on this I think it would be helpful because I do not think I am alone in the country in terms of wondering who and what will succeed that group of persons who have been responsible for running our affairs in the Defence Force.

While I am on that there is a section here which says that you are responsible for administering the security aspects of the country, this includes checking on various foreigners, visiting and living in the country, screening of applicants, seeking employment in the civil service, processing of applications and the importation and exportation of firearms, ammunition, explosives and advising on security matters.

Now recently, Sir, we had a flying visit by the Vice President on his way home. It occasioned a substantial journalistic outpouring and we had a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We had two editorials from the *Advocate* which suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was lying. I tell you that was what I read. We had one or two stories or features which suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was covering up but that the newspaper reporter who was on the scene had told the truth. I take no position on that because I am not one of those persons that will glory in that sort of thing but I would like the Minister to tell the House because I think part of the problem may have been that when that issue comes up the temptation is to treat it as another one of those things. But for the younger people of Barbados, to use the phrase of my distinguished colleague from St. John, for the younger perspective I think it is important that information be put into the marketplace in an authoritative way as early as possible. Tell us what really happened? Is it true or false that the Americans took over the Airport?

I am not taking a position. I am saying to you that it is important that you speak to that issue authoritatively. A statement put out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a statement is not going to be sufficient for those who look behind every rock to find out what is happening. If they think that they saw arrangements for the Vice President, I hear from reliable sources, that is to say, the newspaper, that the President of the United States is going to visit Barbados. Well we had a Vice President who was going

to come here some time, Dan Quayle, he was to come to this country and he was going to spend a day and stay with Claudette Colbert, something like that, and the Americans in their pre-arrangements, as the files will show, indicated that for his visit there would be an entourage of 80 persons. We had to start looking for accommodation, it was the height of the tourist season, for 80 persons to look after the Vice President's security. Without in any way revealing unnecessary secrets, after some discussions we thought that perhaps it would be better if the Vice President postponed his visit for another time because to have to accommodate 80 persons to see the Vice President in Barbados for one day on the terms and conditions which the advance party was advancing suggested that it was not worthwhile. We did not say to the Vice President that he should not come but we could not agree to the request and we could not meet the demands which we perceived to be coming for accommodation, not for the Vice President, not for anyone who was close to him, but for the security people.

I just draw it to your attention that if they think that the needs at the Airport for the Vice President Gore...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The arrangements for Vice President Gore will pale into insignificance as compared with the arrangements that would have to be made for President Clinton.

It makes no sense to pretend that we do not have to make arrangements and some of the fanciful language which I have seen written in the newspapers, about what one ought, or can do, in the face of a visit from these people I smile when I read it, but I think it is important at the same time that the Government gives some perspective on what might be anticipated by the population in terms of the same very sovereignty that we have been talking about.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There are some people who will never believe anything the foreign ministry puts out about the issue of the Vice President passing through. They are never going to believe it but the newspaper editorials written in the *Advocate* those are the two that I read, need to be clarified, rebutted or condemned, one of the three because they suggested beyond any measure of doubt that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was misleading the population. That is a serious matter. Mr. Chairman I do not believe that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would knowingly mislead the population.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member you are asked to wind up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not believe that but I think that in the interest of a large number of people in this country some clarification needs to be given bearing in mind that the *Advocate* in particular, and some of its columnists have suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lied to the population.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in respect of the unofficial visit of Vice President Gore to Barbados some weeks ago, I rise to say that I stand foursquare behind the statement put out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That was it as it occurred. It was an unofficial visit therefore as protocol would have it, I was not there at the Airport to meet him neither was the Permanent Secretary in Foreign Affairs. 6.35 p.m.

The Chief of Protocol probably was there. The Airport Manager was there and the statements spoke to their own observations, and I do not think I can say much more about it.

We do not take security at all seriously in Barbados. In fact, I would venture to say, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that in Barbados security is notional even in this Chamber. We are not serious about security. We only hear about security.

The Prime Minister came back to Barbados from a meeting in Trinidad where President Fidel Castro reportedly had an even larger entourage of security personnel accompanying him even in and out of the toilet as well.

Mr. Louis Farrakhan came here with an entourage of security people and all sorts of arrangements had to be made for firearms and so on. It is something that I think we like almost to boast about in Barbados, that we do not feel the need for security.

The Vice President travelled in a large aircraft with an entourage of 67 people. It was an unofficial visit. He got off I am told, in jogging gear and you know, you get cramped up in an aircraft. He was flying all the way from the Sudan and he was flying virtually across the other side of the world to California. He jogged around the parking area a little bit. He went into the diplomatic VTP lounge.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: All that means that instead of walking he did a little thing like :hat. It was a refueling stop.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: He did not take over the Airport. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, do not

let us get into these things. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East reminds me that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has an obsession with airports. That is as I know it.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for the City is not misleading the House this time and we will get one soon.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You never know he might be right. Mr. Chairman, that is as much as I can reliably say to the House. I really do not know anymore of my own knowledge, neither do I know anymore than what has been reported to me and I have absolutely no reason to doubt what has been reported to me,,

I would like to say that we in Barbados have to learn to become more serious about the whole question of security. Our Press core will, in a due course, learn how they will behave too in the face of that kind of security.

I remember when President Reagan came to Barbados. I also remember an official function at Ilaro Court and they were all through the garden beds, trampling down and pushing and shoving at people, and so on and so forth. We had to bring our own officials to them and make them to know what their place was and that was in fact, the people's place. Our place, but that is their nature, that is how they operate. If you see it on TV, they behave like that everywhere they go.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I do not know anything about the *Advocate*. I told you I was not there.

Now, while I am on my feet, Sir, I also want to just make a few comments in respect of the anti-narcotics agreement. I am not proposing to reach any negotiated positions in which we find ourselves. I do not think that would be the proper thing to do.

I am not prepared to say anything more beyond what has been said, but, I want to say that the Government very much appreciates the support and the confidence offered by both the Opposition Democratic Labour Party and the National Democratic Party. I personally am truly appreciative of it because I think in matters like this, we have to learn to speak with one voice.

This is something that is not peculiar with what is happening now. Through successive Governments we have spoken with one voice office. We are sophisticated enough about these matters, as someone has said in here. Mr. Chairman, Sir, countries can learn from us when it comes to quality of democracy and stability of Parliamentary process.

In October 1966 I spoke for the first time to this matter when I addressed the UN General Assembly. It became clear at that time that Barbadians were four square behind the Government in the position that it was taking. The Prime Minister has spoken on a subsequent occasion.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Ship Rider is nothing new. Ship Rider goes back even before our time. Even when all of this talk is going on, all kinds of Ship Riders have occurred. It is just a fact of life in this world. You cooperate with other countries. You cooperate with certain international organisations like "Interpol" and so on. There is nothing new about Ship Rider.

The Americans have a problem. The Caribbean finds itself juxtaposed between all of the drug producing countries and the drug consuming countries. We are part of the transshipment routings. This is not anything new.

The Americans wish to consummate a number of exclusively maritime anti-narcotics agreements. All that has happened is that in Barbados we have us, any anti-narcotics agreements would have to be wider than maritime. Ship Rider by itself cannot be a solution to the problems as we see them and as we encounter them here. We would want a wider agreement.

The Americans have assured us that every country has signed a different kind of agreement with different guarantees and so on and so forth. We are now in the process of negotiating the agreement which would relate to Barbados. I have every reason to believe that those negotiations are going well. Was it less than a week? Ten days ago, a special envoy from the United States met with the Prime Minister and we have arrived at a consensus on a number of things and I hope that well in advance of President Clinton's visit, we will come to an agreement and come to resolution on an anti-narcotics agreement, a much wider scope than Ship Rider.

Now, all sorts of people, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and this is the nature of the world of diplomacy in this part of the world where we live, have interests which do not necessarily coincide with others. Barbados has been chosen as the venue for the Caricom/U.S. Summit.

A few days ago in the United States, Barbadians are accustomed to seeing a programme called "Cross Fire" where a number of would be parliamentarians and parliamentary rejects and the like, take pleasure in tearing people's reputations apart and destroying wherever they can.

There are several such programmes. There is another one, it comes over on the NBC Network in the United States, viewed by millions of Americans and viewed around the world, in fact the new technology permits that. It is even viewed here in Barbados where a number of people sat down and delivered themselves of much uninformed inflammatory, pejorative comment. These were people who were voicing their private opinions as they are entitled to do.

We have to recognise that there is freedom of speech, there are press freedoms and people could have their opinions. What their opinions tell us is how they view us in this part of the world. Dp not let us fool ourselves, we are not on their tender. We never have been, so that itself is nothing new.

They have delivered themselves of these opinions about decertification without even having any clear understanding of what the implications of decertification could be for us in the Caribbean.

We are not before them with any begging bowl. The implications of decertification of Barbados would be minimal as far as we are concerned. We have paid higher prices in the past to protect our sovereignty. 6.45 p.m.

You are dealing with a country here which told Cromwell where he can put it hundreds of years ago furthermore today. The threats, because the transcript which we have circulated to Members will show that there are comments here which would amount to threats. That is not the way to go.

I would wish to believe that this is not a position that would be supported by the United States Government and I can only say that in the negotiating process which is currently underway in Barbados this kind of talk does not go on. These kinds of threats are not part of the discussion. They could not be. They absolutely could not. I would like to say that our negotiations are as cordial as they can be; but Barbados is being firm. We are very clear on our position and in many respects any agreement has to be on our terms.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ... Wider than maritime. We have concerns about gun smuggling. We have concerns about money laundering. We have concerns about the number of deportees who come back here. We have concerns about our ships' registry which is doing well. We have concerns about issues to do with reciprocity. Other countries in the Caribbean tell us that in their agreements they have reciprocity.

Sovereignty is the largest concern of all. The United States Ambassador has made it clear that that is non-negotiable for them as it is non-negotiable for us. It does not even enter in the discussion. This is discussion at a very highly technical level. The Attorney General himself is involved in the drafting process and I have no doubt in my mind that we will bring this, as I said, to good resolution and that it will be something that Barbadians can be comfortable with and even feel proud about, bearing in mind the climate in which we had to craft it.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. Could the Deputy Prime Minister give the House the assurance that the final proposed agreement will be brought to this House before they sign it?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: As I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would not like to be speaking about the terms and conditions under which we would agree, except to say as I said earlier that this Minister in this Administration has brought agreements of that sort on matters that we did not even have to bring in here to the attention of Members here.

You are asking me to pre-empt the Cabinet.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not asking you to do that. After the Cabinet is satisfied with the agreement...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Cabinet will make that decision.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Are you going to give this House an assurance that you are going to bring the agreement to this House before you sign it?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not going to be railroaded as I said yesterday, neither by the Americans nor by the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I cannot pre-empt the Cabinet. When the agreement is drawn it goes to the Cabinet of this country and the Cabinet will make a decision on how it will be executed and implemented. Do not ask me to pre-empt my Cabinet. I am not going to do it.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, I object to the suggestion that I am asking the Minister to pre-empt the Cabinet. I am not asking her to do that. I asked her to give the House the assurance after the Cabinet has settled on the agreement. I said after, not before. After the Cabinet has done whatever it proposes to do before the agreement is actually signed, would you give the House an undertaking that you will bring it here?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is one of the things that the Cabinet will have to decide. The Cabinet will decide what will happen.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Leader of the NDP must be aware that as I indicated yesterday we have to give consideration to the provision of the Defence Act and the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act. It may be this is not settled. Jamaica is looking at this aspect of it now in terms of their law. It may be that agreement that is ultimately signed. I am not saying yes. I am saying it may be that such an agreement cannot be dealt with as an executive agreement but may have to have parliamentary approval. This is a matter that is technical and we are looking at it. If it has to have parliamentary approval then obviously it has to because the Coast Guard will be involved.

Visiting forces' rights or obligations in terms of the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act have to be discussed. Where a visiting force can act in combination with a local force, that is provided for specifically in Chapter 180.

In those circumstances, the matter may have to come to Parliament for approval just as an extradition treaty has to go to the United States Government for approval. This may have to come here, but the Government is willing to keep the Opposition informed within the bounds of propriety and security considerations and the principles of negotiation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You have spoken like a Deputy Prime Minister. That is the appropriate response that one would expect.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, let me say this in closing. Those people who sat down in the McLaughlin group and had so many disparaging things to say about Barbados let me just say this - "eggs should not go to rock-stone dance". That is a good old-time bajan saying. Eggs should stay away from rock-stone dance.

Who are these people to be pointing the finger? They need to look within their own borders to see that the very thing that they would wish to accuse us of is rampant in their country. I say no more.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, just before the House adjourns I just want to add my voice again very strongly to support the Government's stance and its negotiating stance in relation to this agreement with the United States. 6.55 p.m.

We recognise if we have to put in place various visiting forces, conventions and acts but the military of any country should have the right to come willy-nilly without being subjected to our laws, as I understand it, whether it is the Defence Act or Visiting Forces Act they must not have the right to come within our territorial jurisdiction without us having adequate laws to control how they act.

The United States would never allow anyone to do it to them and they must understand quite clearly, whether we are a small nation or not that they cannot go around the world extending their jurisdiction beyond their borders willy-nilly because they have the military might to do it.

This is not a new issue in Barbados. The Prime Minister, I am sure, is fully aware that when I took strong objection to the United States Lease Bases Agreement on their abuse of their rights under that Agreement, and their privileges that they use the opportunity to attack me, and through me, Barbados viciously on their radio and television system. This is a repeat of what is happening. Unfortunately, at that time, we had people in Barbados who did not understand that solidarity was necessary when we are dealing with people outside of our borders.

I regret very much the lack of solidarity shown by CARICOM countries on an issue such as this. The United States is great at dividing small nations, by giving some of them a few things at one time, which they will take back at another time, and if we are analysing what is happening in the world, the United States, now predominant in military power, is concerned about the shift in power which inevitably will come in the next millennium to China and the Far East, and it is ensuring its economic domination of the world by other means.

Now, the United States is one of the greatest growers of marijuana. California produces more marijuana than is produced in the Eastern Caribbean. That is the fact. It is not the quality that they will get out of some of the Eastern Caribbean countries or Jamaica, but they do not tell people. You would not hear the McLaughlin crowd get up and talk about their failure to police their own plantations and their areas within California and of Southern United States of America. No, you have to talk to the Americans straight. Those people who believe that an invitation to the American Embassy is a passport to heaven got to understand that the national interest is more important than all of those foolish frivolities. So you have to talk to the Americans straight. I do not expect the Foreign Minister to do it. She has to be diplomatic now. She will talk to them but we must talk very straight to the United States on these matters.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: One point, I believe the Honourable Member should also make the point that under a recent proposition that was passed by the people of California, they have legalised the smoking of marijuana, the use of marijuana for all kinds of drugs without a prescription.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is the problem with the United States. It must understand that it has to clean up its act. Within its own jurisdiction it must stop its people

from abusing its own laws where they are the biggest consumers of cocaine and marijuana. If they did not have such a high consumption, then there would not have difficulties with Shiprider's Agreements. Now I want to make this point, however, quite clear, Sir.

It is not that Barbados has not co-operated with the United States of America. We have co-operated with Canada, we never had this problem. We co-operate with the French, we co-operate with the Dutch. We co-operate with the British. We co-operate with the Venezuelans we have to watch the Colombians very carefully and we co-operate with other nations in the Caribbean so that Barbados has an outstanding record. We are not a high producer of marijuana. Barbados is misused sometimes as a small transshipment place, but we have been very firm in dealing with the narcotics trade through our country. What upsets me, Mr Chairman, Sir, is that the NBC programme is the United States subtle economic warfare directed at the tourist trade of Barbados, in order to turn people's minds against Barbados, in order to say we are not co-operating; and you have to let them know we know that.

I, once, when I was negotiating the Lease Bases Agreement, the United State ambassador invited me to lunch at the Hilton and his first step was what would I do if they decided to tell Pan Am and Eastern and the other American airline that was coming in here not to stop in Barbados and I got up and left the luncheon table and I sent a message to him that I would never attend another luncheon if that is the way he wants to talk to a Foreign Minister.

You have to take look, these little two by three people who come from somewhere in the back woods of America and become an ambassador to our country, believe at the end of the day that they have more intelligence than we have, but I remember the United States itself saying that the Tom Adams Cabinet had more sense than the United States Cabinet of the day and I have no doubt that this Cabinet has more sense than the current Cabinet they have.

In the House we have people as well qualified and better educated and with a great experience as they have in their countries. So, Sir, when I speak on these matters, I speak from 25 years of dealing with them in Foreign Affairs in relation to small nations and whilst I do not expect the Government to be as free to talk as its Members of Parliament, I certainly welcome the strong stance that the Opposition parties have taken on this matter because we have always tried in instances of this nature, to show Barbados' national interest against any partisan interest that we may have in these matters, and, Sir, the message must go quite clear to NBC. If United States wants us to conduct our relationships with them as we have always done on the highest plane, then we expect the State Department and the other destabilising United States agencies to rail in the McLaughlins and the others, Sir, because I do not put it past the United States agencies to pass on this type of information that they would begin to use it to frighten our negotiating stance. I wish the Government well in the negotiation, Sir. I think the negotiations are capable of coming to sensible conclusions, provided the United States recognise that there are also vital interests of small countries.

We may be small but we are proud people. We have our national interest, we are as sensible as they are, Sir, and we are not afraid of standing up for the rights of Barbadians as a whole, Sir.

Dr R. C. HAYNES: We are more sensible, not as sensible, Sir.

Asides.

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, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

I would advise Members that lunch will be available at 12.30 p.m. and that we would resume at 2.00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Members must be prepared to work until 10.00 p.m., possibly 10.30 p.m. tomorrow evening.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 7.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. With the House's permission, we will revert to Order of Business.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, March 11, 1997.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minutes for proceedings for the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting of Tuesday, March 11, 1997 which Minutes have been circulated, I am moving that they should be taken as read.

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

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

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: Message from His Excellency, the Governor-General dated March 18, 1997. His Excellency, the Governor-General to the Honourable the House of Assembly:

> "His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that he will be absent from the country during the period March 19 to March 26, 1997 on a visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
>
> His Excellency further has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 (l)(b) of the Constitution, the Chief Justice has been appointed as Acting Governor-General for the period March 19-26, 1997.
>
> Signed: C. Straughn Husbands,
> Governor-General."

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:-

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1997.

2. The Companies Act (Exemption) Order, 1997.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:-

1. Report on the Probation Department for the year 1992-1993.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of $13 197 200 from the Consolidated Fund, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1996-1997 (No. 13).

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

The Resolution which was just given notice of, the House will, in Committee deal with that when the opportunity arises.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House will now revert to Committee of Supply.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY Mr.

CHAIRMAN: We are on Head 13.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Committee has, quite appropriately I think, been focussing attention on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in this debate on the Estimates of Review and Expenditure for 1997-1998.

I say appropriately, because the Corporation was established by Act of Parliament sometime in the year 1963 and one year later, as it was empowered to do under the legislation which established it, expanded the range of services it was empowered to offer by making available to Barbadians television broadcasting. From 1964 until a few weeks ago, the Corporation has enjoyed a monopoly over television broadcasting in Barbados.

The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, therefore, and certainly this debate, provide a classic opportunity to focus on the role of a monopoly television station in a post-slavery and a post-colonial society. Particularly, as that role touches and concerns the issue of the need to socially transform a post-colonial or post-slavery society. So, what this debate is essentially about is the role of a television station enjoying a monopoly in social transformation in a post-slavery or post-colonial society.

All post-slavery or post-colonial societies, certainly the ones in this region, are defined by a peculiarity. That peculiarity is that, if one is talking about slavery, slave masters were in the minority while slaves were in a majority. If one is talking about colonialism the colonizers were in the minority while the colonized were in the majority.

Both slave masters and colonizers dominated these societies at the economic and sociological levels. The majority of the population, the slaves and the colonized, were essentially hewers of wood and drawers of water. They were the under-class in these societies. So that you have the curious paradox of post-slavery and

post-colonial societies manifesting a social and economic landscape in which the majority of the population, although the population can boast a numerical majority, their lives are lived as the economic and sociological minority and the colonizer, although he is in the numerical minority, he enjoys the status of being in the economic and sociological majority.

So, that is the kind of social and economic contradiction that all post-colonial societies and certainly the ones in this region, carry and by which they are all defined.

Therefore, the challenge facing these societies, is social transformation to resolve that paradox and to even out the contradictions which they have carried for upwards of 300 years and, Barbados is in this position, that that has been the challenge facing Barbados ever since Independence.

The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, of course, enjoyed the monopoly, as I said in the entire post-independence period in Barbados. It was established just before Independence and enjoyed a monopoly over television broadcasting for the entire post-independence period.

I have to say that having sat here yesterday and listened to the harsh criticisms in some cases of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation certainly in terms of its television broadcasting that while it may be true that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has not performed as the people of Barbados would have expected it to perform, it is a gross error, in my view, to cast the blame at the Corporation itself. All the failures of the Corporation reflect the policy inadequacies of the governing parties that have run Barbados since Independence. For never, over the last 32 years have the people of Barbados been treated to any dialogue on the role that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation should play in the transformation of this society.

There has never been any clear policy position or any clear mandate to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. 2.10 p.m.

The people have never been consulted to find out what role they want the CBC to play in the development of this society. So as the late Sir James Tudor would have said, for the last 32 years the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat. It did not know what its mandate was, what it was supposed to do. It had no standard by which success or failure could be measured and therefore, the Corporation just managed itself from year to year from month to month, from week to week.

It is not fair, in my view, to hurl strictures at the CBC and ignore the poverty of thought of both major political parties in Barbados so far as designing a role for the Corporation that would have given its policies and service to the people of Barbados some clear focus. That is the challenge which I think the Government faces as we discuss the CBC today: to come up at last with a clear policy focus that can give some direction to the efforts of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and that certainly can play a role in the social and economic transformation of Barbados.

In societies like Barbados, of course, because of the social and economic contradictions to which I referred earlier, necessarily or at least two cultures co-exist in societies like Barbados[1] and co-exist in a kind of tension. There is always the culture of the coloniser and the culture of the colonised, the culture of the European and the culture of the African in our case.

These two cultures co-exist in uneasy tension because the coloniser has always had the power to impose his cultural focus and outlook on the society by dint of the fact that it controlled all the factors of production. The culture of the colonised has always necessarily been suffocated because the very basis upon which colonialism rested was that the bulk of the population should be kept in a state of economic and social subjugation.

You have two cultures existing in uneasy tension and this poses for Government policy and, therefore, for broadcasting policy the making of a cultural choice.

The making of a cultural choice it seems to me presupposes some clear understanding of what we mean by a culture for there is something distinctive about Barbados having regard to the fact that Barbadians relate to nature in a particular way and to one another in a particular way that is different from the people of St. Vincent, the United States, different from people in Russia and different from people at the North Pole.

There is something distinctive about living in the Barbadian environment and relating to nature and to one another. It is that cultural feature of the society that public policy is called upon to harness and to unleash for productive purposes.

People have different aspirations. Because the aspirations of Barbadians are different from the aspirations of, say, people in the United States of America, it does not mean that our aspirations are inferior. Because we build houses different from people in Canada, it does not mean that the quality of our architecture is inferior. Difference does not necessarily imply a relationship of superiority and inferiority. We are different because we are

located in a particular cultural sphere and called upon to relate to nature in a particular kind of way.

Therefore, any serious television station in a society like Barbados has to concern itself with reflecting first and foremost what the society is doing, the cultural habits and traits of the society inasmuch it is called upon to function. That is the more important if that television station is enjoying a monopoly in the society.

So the first challenge that faces CBC today is to reflect the culture, both material and spiritual of the people of Barbados. I think that any objective evaluation of the performance of the CBC over the last 32 years is that it has fallen far short of that mandate.

One of the ironies of the Corporation has been but I will say it is not the Corporation's fault - it is the fault of public policy - that it has been more concerned with showing us the way of life of people in the North Atlantic than with trying to reflect what we are about in this country and in this region. That is a very important point because you can only strengthen the confidence of an oppressed people by accurately reflecting what they do and according an appropriate respect to it.

Cultural pride is a highly prized economic asset. Cultural confidence is a highly prized economic asset. It is when people feel good about themselves and about the things they do and how they relate to nature and one another that you can get those people to tackle the problems of development and transformation and you can get those people to invent and create because they feel that they have a role to play in contributing to the treasury of human civilisation.

If they are made to feel that what they do and what they believe and how they relate to one another and that nature counts for nothing, is somehow inferior to how other people do it, then that places a severe brake on the development process, and all the other policy initiatives, all the other lofty plans for things like economic empowerment and economic democracy and that kind of thing will fall flat on its face because our people do not have the confidence to tackle the development process. That is the challenge facing the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation as we examine its role in 1997.

My time is up, but I suppose I will come back and continue. 2.20 p.m.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, if one were to ask a young child out there about CBC, that child would have its own perception on CBC as probably against programmes. If one were to ask a young adult he might talk about sports or movies and the politician himself, Sir, has his own view of CBC.

Since the inception of CBC, Sir, in the 1960s successive Governments have pumped probably near to $100 million in CBC. If I go back, Sir, just the last three years, Sir, we will see, Sir, that in 1994 CBC had a lost of $1.2 million. In 1995, it made a profit of $1.2 million and if we were to look at the unaudited reports of 1996 we see, Sir, a profit of $2.4 million. So we are seeing, Sir, a doubling on the profits of 1995.

Sir, it is of some significance to me in that in the past, Sir, CBC was in a position where the PAYE deduction, Sir, and the National Insurance, Sir, were running sometimes, Sir, eight and ten months behind but I am glad to see, Sir, that die Corporation is in a position where it can more or less Sir, down the road be self-supporting. I believe, Sir, that hopefully, Sir, with the advent of the STV, Sir, and now with the New Direct Television coming on stream CBC has seen that as an institution it is up against competition and competition is good for any business. It keeps you on your toes.

As I said, Sir, I believe that we would be seeing some kind of profit coming from the CBC, who knows? I hope we can see something between $3 million or $4 million coming from CBC very soon, Sir. It is in this position, Sir, to make money because as it exists right now STV has some 20,000 customers. I know that CBC with this reservoir of customers, or clients, Sir, is in a position to convert some of these.

In fact, they have been converting some of them already, Sir, from STV to the new Multi Choice Television and I believe, Sir, that in a very short time, Sir, they should have all, if not all, Sir, probably 80% of these people converted into the Multi Choice Television.

Sir, I would also like to compliment the Board, the new Board on this, Sir. It would have taken some effort for them to go out on the market, Sir, and talk to the people out there like CNN, Sir, and Disney and HBO, Sir, in order to get permission Sir, to use their facilities. In the past they offered, Sir, ESPN, CNN, TNT and the Pay Per View channels, Sir, but as I said, Sir, this was not enough or is not enough for CBC to live on. I said, Sir, that I hope and I believe that we are in a situation where the television stations can be seeing after themselves. Any organisation, Sir, with a staff that is not happy, Sir, the morale is going to be low.

In a statutory corporation, Sir, and I believe that, like any other company, the staff would be interested in their welfare benefits, the health insurance, Sir, their pension plan and I believe, Sir, that it is time that the Corporation gets serious about settling the little problem

it has concerning the pension plan at the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, Sir, and make a decision if they are going to move it to another carrier, for insurance purposes, Sir, in order that the staff could have this package in place. As I said, Sir, it would help boost the morale of CBC. By and large, Sir, I said it is on its way again and with the competition that is out there I see no reason why we should not have a new-look CBC in the near future. I thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I was heartened by some of the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South because I think that the debate has tended to focus on the revenue earning capacity of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and the opportunities for promoting local industries and these are indeed important. CBC does have a revenue generating role. CBC does have a duty to help to promote local programming and to create an industry and a climate for local entertainment being sold not only within Barbados, but in the wider Caribbean and indeed outside of the Caribbean region.

Increasingly, there is a niche in the entertainment market for entertainment, for music, for things Caribbean, partly because of the large numbers of Caribbean peoples who themselves live all over the world, but also because of the whole concept of the transfer of information and people hear things and see things and become titillated by them and as a result of that increasingly Caribbean culture, Caribbean music is being bought outside of Barbados.

There are Caribbean artistes who have done so well. Bob Marley, for example, Shabba Ranks, Buju Banton. There is a greater market for their products outside of the Caribbean than there is within the whole Caribbean. Here in Barbados we have seen wider acceptance of some of our local artistes. The Mighty Gabby who was honoured only two days ago - Nicholas Brancker, Arturo Tappin, John King, a whole number of them, Allison Hinds and Square One, Edwin Yearwood, Red Plastic Bag.

One could call a whole number of artistes but the point I am making here is that if that sort of cultural promotion not only in relation to the music industry but in relation to other components of Barbadian art is to be satisfied, then there would have to be a fusion of effort between the NCF and the CBC working together to form that promotional knob to take our art culture from Barbadian shores, outside of the Caribbean, by way of exposure on the medium of television and by way of promoting through video tapes and other avenues, but there is yet, in my view, another role for the CBC and it is the role to which the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke. I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, as a relatively young, I would not say young anymore, black Barbadian that with the influence of Direct TV, with the coming of MultiChoice Television that nationals will seek to watch the non-national television in large numbers and television is a very powerful medium for controlling and influencing the mind, for controlling and influencing behaviour, cultural and socio-economic choices.

Television conveys modes of behaviour. We saw via television, people in New York, throwing their sneakers onto the utility pole wires and within months of that first appearing on television, a pattern here sparked where if you drove through certain parts of Barbados you could see people going into town, buying expensive brand name sneakers and then throwing them up on utility wires.

Now that may seem like a very simplistic point, Mr. Chairman, but there are other examples of the effectiveness of cultural penetration by the use of the television media and by the use of the media generally. It is therefore going to be incumbent on CBC as a government-owned station to be in the vanguard of protecting our mirror image of ourselves. They are going to have to ensure that those things which we regard as being Barbadian, that core of values which help to shape our people remains a part of the focus of the national psyche by ensuring that these things continue to be on television and that our time and our minds are not completely monopolised by foreign values.

Very recently the point was brought home to me in a very graphic way. A nephew of mine who had been born and lived all of his thirty years in England, came to Barbados for the first time and night after night before he went out feting or to various night clubs or seeing activities in Barbados, he would sit and watch television for long extended periods, particularly the CBC News. Now I could not imagine that he was so totally fascinated to hear what was happening in Barbados on a day-to-day basis, and therefore, I sought to enquire of him what is it in particular that causes him to watch television so much. He said that for him as a black person, it was completely novel to see programming from a television station where one could see so many black people, and so many black people in leadership positions.

That is part of the rationale why Caribbean people have done so well when they have gone outside of the Caribbean, because they have a perception of who they are and what they can become and what they can rise to, because they are heroes, they are role models. The people whom they aspire to be like or to follow can be seen on television, whereas when you look at black children raised in the United States, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere they have a sense of dislocation or a certain lack of self-esteem because they do not have similar role models. All of the people who command the television stations, all of the images of beauty are Eurocentric. 2.30 p.m.

They are not negroid at all. All of the influences that control their minds and time are based on different cultural values. I would wish to urge that in our going forward in relation to establishing Direct TV and Multi Choice Television that we bear in mind the role of CBC in protecting what is local culture, in continuing to give us a positive image of ourselves and in ensuring that there is not total cultural and social penetration by foreign images alien to the Caribbean and often images which cannot be transferred. In relation to health one sees it.

People look, for instance, at CNN and they believe that every new technology in relation to health care can be imported into Barbados in a situation where the Government could not ever afford it. Where things become obsolete in the United States within a matter of months and can be thrown out, in any developing country where there are limited resources, you cannot afford to be changing things at the same rate. Similarly it applies to other things.

They look at television. They get images of the way things are outside Barbados and they have a feeling that should happen here too, sometimes in circumstances where it cannot and where it is not in the best interest of the wider society for it to happen. It is therefore critical, in my view, that CBC should look to this component of its role.

While I endorse the opportunity for Barbadians and tourists visiting our shores to have a wide choice of programming in relation to what they are offered on the television screen, I really genuinely want to see a similarly wide choice about national cultural things, national social activity and national economic activity being developed for our entertainment and understanding because very often, and I hope there will be enough channels to this, we are not given from the media a broad enough understanding of issues of the day. Very often because of the demands of space within the newspaper or of times on the television station there is not a sufficient follow-up of issues which might be of interest to the general public. All of these are opportunities which will now be presented to CBC with the new Multi Choice system which is going to be available to them.

We have in this debate been focussing too on issues of sovereignty in relation to the Ship-Rider Agreement. This matter in relation to CBC must also be viewed in the context of the assault on our sovereignty which can be made by international influences and international penetration on the local stations.

Mr. Chairman, I know that my time has virtually run but I want to speak at a later time to the matter of Ship-Rider.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, in examining CBC, I would not be limiting my contribution to the question of CBC TV alone. I think that when people think about CBC they tend to consider CBC TV but I would like us to look at the whole operations of the Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, my question is - to what extent has CBC asked itself or in reviewing its operations looked to the position of where is Barbados now and where is Barbados going? I think if we consider that as a young nation, newly independent, we need a measure of social development for people. The Corporation itself is going to have to re-assess its role in terms of, to what extent it has contributed to social development, or to what extent it has not contributed to social development.

Mr. Chairman, the whole question of a state-run medium conveying information, producing entertainment, and passing knowledge assumes very great importance in circumstances where we have a people who are out of the experience of colonialism, fresh into the experience of independence. We have a situation where it is tempted to conclude that notwithstanding all that Barbados has gone through that CBC, like the wider media, sometimes tends to limit its main thrust of activities to entertainment.

There can be no denying, Mr. Chairman, that if you consider the TV component that programming is skewed heavily in favour of entertainment in a situation where, perhaps there can be a greater role for education and unbiased, objective information.

Mr. Chairman, in my time following the programming at CBC, I cannot honestly say that I have seen the Corporation do anything to push patriotism, push nationalism and to encourage young people to want to make a greater contribution to the development of their country than they may be inclined to without motivation.

The whole question, Mr. Chairman, of how does CBC TV compare with CBC radio will show that except for the FM station, that CBC radio itself may very well have been performing better when it comes to educating than CBC TV. I am saying that following the radio programmes, I am satisfied that a greater effort is being made on radio to do for Barbados what needs to be done in Barbados at this time than on TV.

Looking at the whole question of TV with its skewed emphasis, as I said, Mr. Chairman, on entertaining, very seldom in any one year you will see enough programming that would entice us to want to be proud of our own indigenous culture. A lot of the entertainment programmes that we see come from North America transmitting North American values and extolling a particular set of standards that may not be good for Barbados at this stage in its development.

I was speaking to a female psychologist, Mr. Chairman, who told me that one characteristic feature of the behaviour of infants and small children is that they like to see things in motion and they like to see things that are happening moving. In a situation where in those homes in Barbados that have TVs young children are exposed to motion pictures, the whole question of how impressionable they are sensing at an early stage in their development that what is being given to them is of a particular variety, then one must wonder, with all this foreign programming with little children and young people watching in their impressionable state, to what extent are we going to produce Barbadians as indigenous Barbadians for the future or ultramodern type persons who heavily relate to foreign non-indigenous values.

This is a legitimate question, Mr. Chairman, for the reason that we at this stage in our development in Barbados need to sensitize all our people, especially the young, to reassure and love learning, treasure and love education, treasure and love wholesome cultural things and relate to the arts as they appeal to them or should appeal to them and help them to be able to develop values for proper living in modern Barbados. 2.40 p.m.

I am satisfied on reflection, Mr. Chairman, that CBC radio is maintaining an acceptable standard and that it is doing its best to promote programmes that will encourage people who are given to wanting to develop themselves to listening to them. A lot of the radio programmes have a high educational component.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be accused of saying that all the media should do is produce educational programmes, but clearly if you see this nation as a young nation, see our young people as people who should be developed socially, then clearly a case could be made out for more educational programmes. In a situation where the TV is not producing enough educational programmes, and where sometimes to be able to ingest a diet of Barbadian culture you have to wait until around Independence time and no other time of the year. Do you see many things Barbadian? One must challenge CBC to really examine its mandate, ascertain precisely what it wants to do and see itself as being placed powerfully, to influence the Barbadian way of life.

TV and radio are not the only means by which values can be transmitted and not the only means by which people can be affected, but clearly programming coming over TV in particular is sent by a very powerful medium and as such can go a long way towards impacting on society in one way or another.

Just after 30 years of Independence the population is now being challenged to opt for Direct TV and Multi-Choice TV. Mr. Chairman, I fear that the programming on both the Multi-Choice TV and the Direct TV is going to be presenting an imbalance of heavy entertainment from foreign countries, more than heavy educational programmes that would do our country very well. I know that a lot of people love to watch TV but one has to access where they have come in life in respect of their heavy addiction to TV. A lot of them have not developed proper values because they have been duped by a form of cultural penetration, Mr. Chairman, that certainly is not good for this young nation.

I join the Honourable Member for St. Philip South in saying that we must be more mindful of our indigenous culture, that there is a role for the Barbadian way of life to be promoted, there is certainly a greater role for the fine arts and the creative arts to be promoted by way of CBC than is being done at the moment.

All in all, without in any way impugning what is being tried right now, I say that the Corporation must look at its role, re-assess its role and in the light of what has been said, try to work out what formula it will present to this country over the next 10 years.

CBC should come with a technical plan for the next 10 or 15 years in relation to improving the technical component of its operations. Also at the level of programming there should be some sort of projected programme to see what it can do for this country. I sympathise with the view that CBC has a developmental role to play at this critical juncture in the life of our nation.

With these few observations, Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, when I was last on my feet I was on the question of the role of CBC in reflecting the culture of Barbados and I was making the point that this society has a material and a spiritual culture which is separate and distinct from the material and spiritual culture of any other society on earth. Nature confronts the people of Barbados in a way that is peculiar, that is different and Barbadians respond to that confrontation in their own way.

I believe prophetically, a local poet, the Mighty Gabby by name in perhaps one of the best songs to be written in Barbados, pointed to this issue some years ago when he sang a song called "Culture" and challenged the nation to look inwards and to draw on its own spiritual and material reserves and challenged the nation to respect its own creations and to give them the kind of prominence that they had always deserved but which had been denied.

He pointed to how Barbadians related to one another; leaving the child at Granny, that is we culture; going

court for the child money, that is we culture; mismatching the latest fashion, that is we culture; and love making with a passion, that is we culture. I am not necessarily endorsing everything that the Mighty Gabby said in his song. But he made the point that there is something distinctive about the Barbadian way of life which requires it to be protected and to be legitimised and to be promoted.

I know that for some Honourable Members of this House the phrase "love making with a passion" is a synonym of nostalgia. That does not weaken the point, Mr. Chairman.

A state-owned television in a post-colonial society must reflect the culture of the oppressed and the oppressed people of Barbados, it happens today, are the black people of Barbados as well and some design has to be worked by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation to reflect what black Barbadian aspirations are really about and how the black Barbadian way of life manifest itself in this society.

It cannot help the process of national development to continue to emphasise the cultural habits, the cultural preferences of the coloniser 30 years after Independence. If Independence de-colonialised us in terms of our constitutional status the time has now come for a de-colonialisation of the mind and that is where the real challenge of Independence is. To begin to believe in yourself and the things you create, the things you produce. To begin to believe that your environment is as valid and as legitimate as any environment anywhere else in the world and that we as a people have a unique contribution to make to the treasury of human civilisation. That role of reflection is very important and allied to that role is the role of reinforcement.

It is now fashionable in Barbados, I mean, I am flabbergasted when I talk to a versatile range of Barbadians to hear how many people engage you with a kind of delight on the latest goings on in the soap opera "Days of our Lives". Men who formerly discussed cricket and football and politics now indulge you on "Days of our Lives. Who got who, who had who and who 'tek way' who from you. That kind of cheap topic. There is something sinister about that, Mr. Chairman, and I think while "Days of our Lives" and soaps of that kind may present people with a certain kind of sensual delight they also pose a dietetic danger for if we are to transform this society and play our role in the world as an independent nation, we have to shed that musk and all the flabbiness that comes from the North Atlantic environment that lulls us into a false sense of security and forces our gaze away from the talents and the energies and the foci which we possess. So the role of a state-owned television station is to reinforce our cultural conviction. 2.50 p.m.

It is not without significance that that great Martiniquan Scholar, Frantz Fanon, defined culture as that whole body of effort made by a people in the spirit of thought to describe, justify and praise the means by which they create themselves and by which they continue to keep themselves in existence and there is a role for describing, justifying and praising the way Barbadians create and recreate themselves. You can best do this by a sensitive state-owned television station reflecting and reinforcing what the people of Barbados believe.

When I say the people of Barbados I want to make my position clear. I have always said that the descendants of the colonisers in Barbados do not need my defence they have always been able to defend themselves. I am talking about the descendants of the colonised. They are the ones who need my advocacy and the advocacy of Honourable Members of this House. Allied to that role of reflection and reinforcement is the role of transition.

Where have we got the idea from that the whole world has something to tell Barbados but Barbados has nothing to tell the world? That idea has been substantially promoted by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in this society. I am not blaming the CBC. I want to get that clear. I have said that never over the last 32 years since CBC was in television has any mandate come public on the role that CBC should play in this society. I think my friend the Honourable Member for St. James South just lapsed into the same error again of asking the CBC to look at itself and to come up with programmes to achieve developmental objectives and so on. That is the role of the state. The state has to set an agenda and CBC has to be the medium through which that agenda is communicated to the public. It has to be reinforced. Goals have to be set for the people of Barbados. It is not enough to talk about economic growth. That is a routine goal but life in Barbados is not only about working and earning and going to the United States and going to Puerto Rico and so on. The people of Barbados want to know where they fit into the international scheme of things and what contribution it is contemplated that they can and will make, as I said earlier, to the treasury of human civilisation. We need a clear statement of national goals if our people are to be given some meaning for living beyond working, earning and travelling.

I remember once the late Dr. Eric Williams, observing, assertibly that looking on at the people of Trinidad and Tobago he sometimes got the impression that their view of life was that they were just intransit from Africa and India on their way to the United States and they had no sense of the role that Trinidad had to play in the world and the contribution that Trinidad had to make to civilisation. That is what Barbados needs today.

I am satisfied that on both sides of the House we have been culpable in this regard. We have tended

to focus on economic objectives. Nothing wrong with that. Men must eat. Men nust have shelter. Men must wear clothes but beyond that there is a realm to which people should aspire because they feel important about themselves and they feel that they have a role to play in making the world a better place.

I think that we have to snap out of the mind set that conveys the impression that the whole world has something to tell us but that we have nothing in particular to tell the world. There are some very simple men in our midst from the poorer sections of this society who have been path breakers in this regard. I speak of somebody like Sir Gary Sobers who stepped on to the world stage from an obscure village in Barbados and laid down the rules by which an inherited game should be played. So too from another obscure village, perhaps I should say little known, because I do not want to incur the wrath of the Honourable Member for St. George South, but 'Suki' King stepped on to the world stage and today you can play draughts well or badly depending on whether you can play it like 'Suki' King or not like 'Suki[1] King. These are signals coming from below, evidence that there is a vast reservoir of talent and energy that is still being choked off in this society and that a cultural choice to promote the culture of the masses of Barbados can unleash on this society and it can promote the same objective at which the Government aims in terms of economic growth and the consequential objectives of economic empowerment and that kind of thing. So a state-owned television station has a critical role to play in the transformative and in the developmental process in a post-colonial society like Barbados.

The only fear that one must voice at this stage is that with the advent of Multi-Choice television and Direct Television we may be a little late in recognising that it has this role to play but I am aware for some time now Barbadians have been very impatient and fed up with the servings of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in its well known state and welcome the opportunity for the relief granted by the advent of Multi Choice and of direct TV. But even from the rear guard we must now ensure that a state owned television is given all the support it needs.

I do not get too neurotic about having to subsidize state owned enterprises. I am unapologetic on that point whether you are talking about CBC or the Transport Board or any other state-owned enterprise, as long as those state-owned enterprises perform the role of empowering or creating opportunities for the masses of Barbadians, a subsidy does not worry me at all. I am not saying I condone inefficiency. We should aim at as much efficiency as is possible in the circumstances but I do not get too worked up over subsidies. I am aware that when you subsidize the Transport Board to the tune of $2 million or $3 million or $5 million or $6 million, the people who travel on Transport Board buses from Bayfield to Bridgetown are working class people. The people travelling from Sam Lord's Castle to Bridgetown are working class people. The people who travel from Boscobel to Bridgetown are working class people, and the people from College Savannah, not to leave out my friend the Honourable Member from St. John.

The Transport Board serves the masses of Barbadians and I am concerned here with the role that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation can play in serving the masses of Barbados in having their talents brought to the fore and reinforced so that they can make their contribution to the development of this society. As it stands now their roles are downplayed, their talents are choked off and what is transmitted by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation does not reflect the talents on the ground in Barbados,...but reflects what goes on in the North Atlantic predominantly, and, in any event when black people are portrayed on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) the impression is given that black people are good for a laugh; the Jeffersons, the Desmonds and Sanford and Son and that kind of thing. 3.00 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I know of them. But, the other impression given on the CBC is that the white race is serious and that the stakes are high, sometimes as high as life itself. That is when we start to talk about violence on television.

As far as I am concerned, that whole focus has to change and I want to assure the Honourable Minister of Information that from this side, he will have my wholehearted support, if he is committed to the preservation of a state-owned television station and if he is committed to using that state-owned television station as an instrument of social transformation and to reflect, to reinforce and to transmit the culture of the masses of Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a brief intervention here today. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the CBC has a role to play in today's society. I believe, Sir, that over the last 30 or so years, the CBC has undergone tremendous changes from black and white to a station that is fully modernised.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that today, the CBC is now showing more local programmes than it did previously. I understand from reliable sources, that 20% of the CBC programming is now concentrated upon local programming.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13 do now pass.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is a motion before the House. Continue please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I understand the Honourable Member hastens to go on to other Heads, but we have to fully ventilate this programme.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that it is appropriate at this point that I just remind Members about Standing Order 40: and it says:

> "The Speaker, or the Chairman in Committee of the whole House, after having called the attention of the House or of the Committee to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance or in tedious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech and resume his seat."

I am not referring to any specific Member, but I am just giving the House this direction that you would proceed accordingly.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The talk en the CBC is relevant I am surprised that other Members spoke on the topic, but the point I am making, Mr. Chairman, is that the role of the CBC is still relevant in today's society. Members spoke quite frequently and eloquently on poverty alleviation in this House, this week. There is a need to have local programming. As I see it, Mr. Chairman, how can we on one hand talk about the irrelevancy of the CBC and promote Direct Television?

The last Honourable Member made the point that sometimes the CBC does not portray the programmes that are relevant in today's society. Are we saying that there is a need for Direct TV where there is no programming showing local concerns? How then are we going to say that there is no role for the CBC.

As I understand it and as I have viewed the CBC's programmes over the last couple of months. I have taken quite an interest in it and I have seen programmes, Mr. Chairman, of local concerns.

Only yesterday in this Honourable House, Members were able to view in the break session, programmes of athletics in the schools. We were able to see this. We were able to see programmes, Mr. Chairman of local concerns and I am satisfied.

I am satisfied, Mr. Chairman, that the CBC is on the right path, I am satisfied that the CBC is making a head in the right direction. I believe that for the very first time in many years it has made a profit. We are not congratulating the CBC, but if one has to carry out a survey among all the Members of this House, you will see that the majority of them on the one hand want to promote the CBC, yet they are opting for Direct Television. There seems to be a contradiction here.

We must understand that if we are saying that the majority of Barbadians are poor, they cannot afford Direct TV. Therefore, we must all make an effort to try to help the CBC rather than criticising it. We must try to help the CBC get on the path as we want it outlined.

I am satisfied, Mr. Chairman, that there is a role for the CBC and it has changed. When one looks at the programming one sees things like "looking back" you see "strictly gold" and, "strictly bajan." These are programmes that highlight local concerns. These are programmes that are mainly of a Bajan flavour.

Therefore, I see the need to help the CBC along the way. I do not think that criticism will help. The CBC, as I said before is more than 32 years now and I see a role for it.

I think in a modern Barbados the CBC will be here to stay and we have to help it as we move forward.

I want to thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I only intend to spend two minutes on what I have to say and that is, we are going to be shortly having a separate channel for broadcasting debates in this Assembly, and I want to suggest to the House ... and also to CBC that if they are seriously thinking about implementing that policy that I would advise them first to look at the system called "Scrum" in Canada in which Ministers when they leave Parliament are subjected to questions from/the Press. I believe that if a system like that is adopted and broadcast on evenings that the interest of the public will come back to live debates. 3.10 p.m.

I also want to suggest that the Standing Orders of the House be changed so that Question Time is not what it is right now. That is, that the Ministers every sitting be subjected to certain questions and those replies be broadcast on television. That is all I want to say, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to bring this quite fascinating debate to a close. I should just say that in listening to the very rich contributions of Members that have spoken I became more convinced of the truth of Shakespeare's view:

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves,..."

CBC has over 32 years been forced to operate in a highly charged, political atmosphere characterised by great uncertainty, shocks and changes. The record, Sir, is interesting. Over 34 years the Corporation has been the responsibility of 7 different portfolios, 14 Chairmen, 16 Boards of Directors and 11 General Managers. That surely could hardly be the kind of environment within which any long-term planning, any sense of corporate direction, could be brought to bear on the management of CBC's affairs.

I believe that the notion of CBC as a political football is very much at the centre of the Corporation's performance today. We heard it clearly in this House during the entire course of this debate insofar as all 3 political parties succeeded in accusing the Corporation of giving their opponents more time on CBC than the Corporation gave to the political party itself. That really captures the difficulties surrounding the function of an institution such as the CBC in all kinds of political contexts where nobody wants to yield an inch whatsoever to the opponents. The Corporation is, I think unfairly in many respects, supposed to carry the blame for a fault which is not in the Corporation but in ourselves.

We see it in the wider society. The typical Barbadian asked to respond about the CBC would complain about the soap operas and the entertainment but us politicians, if we are going to canvass, should we dare go to people's houses if the soap operas are showing? I hear talk, Mr. Chairman, of local programming but one of the biggest issues in this country today is the substitution of a local programme for a soap opera and that is part of our problem.

I set that as the context within which I say that a lot of the problems is in ourselves that we have to stop treating CBC as a political football. The public wants CBC to be at one and the same time the GIS, the NBC and the emblem of the BBC. It wants it to make a profit and it wants at the same time to perform a public service. It wants it simultaneously to provide entertainment which they love but to provide education which they will not watch and I think what we have to say to the public is. that the time is upon us when CBC has to go through its last restructuring, that we have to put it in a context where the cutting and chopping and the to-ing and fro-ing that has been its history must stop.

I take the point of the Leader of the Opposition that the preparation of the CBC for privatisation and its privatisation or partial privatisation must... We have to have a consensus of what must be the corporate structure of the corporation in terms of its board membership.

I thought I would enter that into the debate because we have to stop wanting CBC to be everything to everybody because everybody in Barbados is an expert on CBC and we saw it in this debate.

I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the Government's position is that we will want to retain CBC as a corporation that is largely publicly owned but that the privatisation will involve offering of shares to its employees and to other institutions in the society, to largely publicly owned. I want to remind the House, Sir, that CBC used to be a matter of debate because it used to come to this Estimates Committee to get subventions and capital injections and it is no longer a charge on the public purse.

We are involved in an exercise of trying to restructure the corporation to enable it to become attractive to people who want to invest in it as a commercial enterprise without losing sight of the public purposes that an institution of its character must perform. It is a very difficult and delicate exercise that is involved. There is a public purpose to be preserved by the CBC - education, public information, expression of our culture, to which they are sensitive, but there is also a commercial that it has to be sufficiently attractive that people will want to put their funds in the Corporation.

Sometimes, Sir, we have not handled that well. For example, the debates of Parliament are carried on CBC but there is no provision in our Estimates to pay CBC for what they must provide as a public service at a cost to CBC. It reflects some of the problems that the Corporation has to manage. How far does it go with meeting the public purpose as compared with dealing with its commercial viability?

I am satisfied, Sir, that the existing management of the Corporation has drafted a development plan, part of which is to restore it to viability. CBC now, in fact, has a cleaner balance sheet in part because of the decision by the Government to convert a loan into equity and because there has been some restructuring.

A lot of people who call for the radical overhaul of the CBC may not like what might have to be involved because part of the problem with the CBC is that the CBC reflects the layer upon layer of political patronage over its 34 years. You have over 20 drivers at the CBC and a radical restructuring of the CBC if it is to be taken seriously might bring some rationalisation and

in small societies where job opportunities are limited we know of the difficulty in going down that line as part of the exercise of restoring the Corporation to corporate viability.

Let us be sensitive to the problems with which the Corporation is faced. I have said enough to suggest that we are trying to put the Corporation in a condition such that a minority shareholding can be offered to the public but that the CBC must retain a public education function. It must assist in the definition of our national identity and the promulgation of it and our culture and our sovereignty. It must educate and it must be balanced. The fact that Members of this House have all complained in some respects says that it either treats all of us unfairly or all equally. I think that is the context in which I want to move that this Head 13 stand part as amended.

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

The question that Head 13 stand part as amended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
3.20 p.m.

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE (as amended)
$5 694 662

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a slight move in as well here of $68,000.00 to cover .... I wish the House would circulate this document to assist because I am speaking from my notes but it is a slight movement of $68,000.00, Sir, but I wish to move that Head 15 as amended, stand part.

The question that Head 75*, as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE (as amended) - $5 513 111

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

The question that Head 16, as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 17 - OMBUDSMAN - $176 318

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will briefly say that in begging to move that Head 17 stand part, that the future of the Ombudsman, Sir, is an issue that we hope will be taken up as part of the Constitutional Review Commission and the Government has therefore thought it best that we await that review before proceeding to appoint a person on a permanent basis as Ombudsman, and with that clarification, Sir, is an issue I know that Members have from time to time raised. I want to move that this Head stand part but there is the future of the Ombudsman, and its office is an issue I hope, that the Constitution Review Commission will take up, and that we are awaiting recommendations before we make an appointment, Sir. I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: Mr. Chairman, I just wish to put on the record that this office of Ombudsman is a very serious office and ought not to be taken lightly. The development of the Ombudsman throughout the democracies is something which came into Barbados relatively late but even so, the reason why it has come to Barbados is fundamental to our upholding of the fundamental rights of the citizens and especially, those citizens who function within the public sector.

Now we have passed in this Chamber an Administrative Justice Act in 1981, the most far-reaching piece of legislation in the Commonwealth; and the position of Ombudsman is part of that general reform of the law relating between the citizen and the state. Now far from our having an Ombudsman, and if the Honourable Member is saying that the Constitution Commission is going to be looking at this whole thing, the Constitution Commission can look at it in terms of how to increase it, but they should not be looking at it in terms of whether to have it at all, because the role which it can perform and the role which it was designed to perform, is a role that is very much needed in a society like ours, in all the circumstances.

I do not wish to go into a long debate on this. I just wish to put my position on the record. I think that we are making an error if we, instead of enhancing the idea of the Ombudsman we allow it to fall by the wayside. The Ombudsman is a Parliamentary Commissioner in the United Kingdom and they have many Ombudsmen in the United Kingdom. It is not necessary for us to follow every pattern that has been established, but it also is not desirable for us to ignore all the patterns that have been established.

I would also like to suggest to the Prime Minister that because it is called Ombudsman, I hope he has not allowed himself to feel that it must be filled by a man and hence, there are persons.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Parliamentary Commissioner is the kind of name that would remove some of the boogie from the whole concept. It is a very serious office. The Chairman of the Constitution Commission was one of the people instrumental in having the concept of Ombudsman come to Barbados. Much has been written about the Ombudsman from the Caribbean point of view and the people who have written about it are serious commentators and serious scholars, and really the question

of somebody not being available, it boggles the mind. It offends me intellectually to think that the Prime Minister has allowed this particular office....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I have heard that, that is why I am speaking about it, because I have heard that there are people who believe that it should be abolished and that is because there are people who keep viewing these things *ad hominen.* They keep saying these things in the context of somebody and the next thing you know, they are perceiving this as some kind of sinecure.

I wish the Prime Minister and the Government to take it very seriously and look at filling the position with someone who can perform this task with impunity and with integrity and without fear. I believe that the last holder of the office suffered frustration because recommendations which he made were ignored. That may or may not be true. I do not know it to be true, but I believe so. I hope that the Prime Minister, and indeed the Government, will pay serious attention to the question of Ombudsman.

I had a situation recently where a man got into a very serious problem, for him it is a matter of life and death. He has no money; he is incapable of hiring a lawyer. He should be able to walk into the Ombudsman's office and ask a question since the matter for him is a matter of life and death and it concerns the state. The ordinary person battling with the state, is not going to feel that justice is being meted out to him or her, if they have to go up against the state and have to tackle the vast machinery of the state, and the Ombudsman is supposed to provide a facility that is not dissimilar from the facility that is provided by the call-in programmes, to allow people to voice their disaffections in the society. I do not understand how any serious Government can treat the position of Ombudsman in that way.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know, I have the honour of having been asked to chair the Constitution Review Commission and the three political parties are well represented on that Commission. We have been taking evidence on a wide range of subjects and one of these subjects includes the future role, if any, for the Ombudsman. Whether or not the Ombudsman office should be placed within the Constitution itself enshrined, if necessary, his or her functions expanded and the role that he or she can perform to strengthen civil governance and civil society. Obviously, there had been, so far, only three public sessions, but I have been heartened by the submissions coming from the public about the office and we have had various private submissions as well on the matter. I obviously cannot, at this stage, to the House draw any further to say what will be the recommendation of the Constitution Commission. We view it too early to say that. In fact, we have a long way to go and we are looking forward to Members of Parliament themselves and the political parties coming before us. As a matter of fact, we are more than willing to meet with representatives of the political parties and we are now in the process of negotiating, meeting with them, where, when and how. We .are also awaiting their written submissions and I expect that individual Members of Parliament who may wish to advance any particular point of view will also come before us.

The role of Parliamentary Commissioner or Ombudsman became part of our law from two things, one was the strong recommendation of the Cox Commission and certainly when the Mencea Cox Commission in the 70s sounded out the public on this matter, the public was strongly in favour of a parliamentary commissioner or an ombudsman who would review cases that do not necessarily lead to a breach of the law but the breach of mal-administration, where the citizen felt he had to have recourse against some form of administrative action which did not necessarily invite the sanction of damages. 3.30 p.m.

Now, those cases still exist. Indeed, if we would take time and read the reports of the two Ombudsmen so far that were laid on the Table of Parliament, we would find that there were several cases - I think in one year I remember 119 cases - of mal-administration being investigated by the then Ombudsman, Sir Frank Blackman, and his recommendations.

Now, the Ombudsman has really one sanction outside of persuasion and that is the sanction of contempt which has not been used. In some jurisdictions they have used the sanction of contempt so we will have to look to see whether or not his or her sanctions are too limited.

Another area we can canvass, as is canvassed in other countries, is for the Ombudsman, although his recommendation may be made by the Prime Minister or the Government of the day, coming before us for the sanction of Parliament as a whole. There is more and more a tendency to take offices such as that of the Parliamentary Commissioner, or the Ombudsman, or the Auditor General, and make them offices that report to Parliament directly and allow Parliament to strengthen their powers in the way in which sanctions can be applied where civil servants are short in bringing to them reports, giving them access to files, following up on action and that action can be taken in that way.

I believe, Sir, in this way if we look at the post again it is not too long past the Cox Commission, to examine the usefulness and maybe, the history of other countries will show us that there are roles for such offices to play.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: As I said, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central wants me to express whether I believe in the role of Ombudsman or not. He is saying so from his seat so let me answer him directly. My position on the Ombudsman was very clear because I piloted the Bill in this House very strongly. In fact, I had done a tremendous study of the role that Ombudsmen can play. I have seen in other countries the success of the Ombudsmen being so great that it has been expanded even to banking Ombudsmen, to deal with banking institutions. Do believe me that there are areas of our society, as has been manifested in the last few days in the commercial sector, as to how people behave and where there may be increased roles for people that mirror the role of an Ombudsman.

There is an Ombudsman in the area of giving protection, for instance, to consumers outside of the politician playing a particular role or outside of the court playing a particular role under the Administrative Justice Act. I know very well that it has been part of this administration's policy that it wishes to broaden civil society and widen the areas of civil society.

In fact, I think it was only a few weeks ago that the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Barbados, signed the CARICOM Treaty or Agreement in order to improve civil society and civil justice. In order to enforce those provisions and to see that those provisions are policed, there will have to be some independent commission, or body, or person in order to give reality and life to those provisions in some way.

Although CARICOM may think that by merely signing a treaty it has advanced the quality of life and the access of people to proper administration through the region as a whole, particularly in regional matters, it may not achieve this unless there is an effective force with executive responsibility for our seeing that the treaty provisions are enforced.

I do hope the Constitution Commission will be able to report on time and that the evidence we gather from the public will lead us along the path in order to deal with this particular office.

I have expressed a personal position on the matter because I have studied the matter but I am not trying in any way to preempt the findings of the Constitution Commission.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, and as I have said previously, and already on the Floor of this House, I have every intention, and I will say the day, Sir, April 10, to give evidence before the Constitution Review Commission.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In my personal capacity. That is my constitutional right which I will exercise.

I intend to speak on a number of issues when I speak before the Commission, but the question of the Ombudsman is not one that I thought I would speak to but preferred to raise it here. It is my considered opinion, first as a citizen of this country and as a Member of Parliament of almost 21 years standing, that the institution of the Ombudsman has not worked at all in Barbados. I do not think it will work either in the future.

Mr. Chairman, I am waiting for a copy of the Ombudsman Report to get to me. I hope it gets to me before I sit down. I just want to be able to look to see how many complaints the Ombudsman entertained in a year.

We are being asked in here to vote $387 170 to support an office which deals with less than 100 complaints in any given year. This is not cost effective. What has happened over the years, Mr. Chairman, is this. Barbadians have a well-established understanding of where the avenues of enquiry are for what they want to discover in this community. People know where to go when they have complaints about individual things. Over the years, since we have put the Ombudsman in place, people have continued to use those avenues.

If you stop 10 people outside this building now at 3.45 p.m. and ask them who was the Ombudsman, they do not know. If you ask them what is the Ombudsman, they do not know. If you ask where is the Ombudsman's Office, they do not know.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Look at the size of this report! This is serious. In here I can think of so many social sector needs. I can think of the Home Help Programme and what it would do in the City of Bridgetown if we had this $387 000. 3.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Programme 1 in these explanatory notes read "Investigation of Complaints Against Government Departments". It is the business of the Ombudsman his primary or her primary business to entertain complaints from members of the public in respect of Government departments but it is very difficult

leafing through this report of the Ombudsman for the year 1993 to see exactly how many complaints were made.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister advises me that the 1993 report refers to nine different kinds of complaints. I do not know if it means that is all the complaints that they had in 1993 but the fact of the matter, Sir, that it has not worked in the past, I do not believe that it is going to work in the future and I think that we might as well face the fact that it is better in our interest even to take these monies to strengthen other areas of the Government service.

Mr, Chairman, Sir, in the annual report of the Ombudsman of Barbados for the year 1992,1 quote at Page 3 "The Ombudsman so bereft of complaints, calls to mind the words of the hymn:

> "There were ninety and nine that safely lay, in the shelter of the fold, and one was out on the hill far away, away from the gates of gold, away on the mountains wild and bare, away from the tender shepherd's care."

So what the Ombudsman is doing, for want of complaints is fanning out his Report with verses from hymns. He also goes to call to mind some parable or other which on a loose translation is that one good deal spread could make the whole better. On days when he has nothing else to do for want of complaints, this is how he is reporting his frustration to us. Now, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will believe it only when he sees it. He would know the hymn well.

Mr. Chairman, the whole thing is now reduced to a laughing stock in Barbados. Even in other countries where this position exists, it is already under review and I do not think that many jurisdiction are likely to go into the new Millennium with such a post as Ombudsman.

The Constitution Review Commission should have this for review with a view to termination and that we would put to better use these monies by tightening up and making more efficient and more effective other avenues for dealing with complaints against Government's operations and Government departments as a really serious alternative. I really do think that this is one of those areas where we have gone over the top and out-sophisticated ourselves where because other jurisdictions have this we thought it would work.

There is an Honourable Member who has said on this Floor before that it is entirely possible that this was invented in Barbados because it was another case of finding jobs for the boys. I do not think that we can afford that nowadays because there is a genuine need for complaints against Government Departments to be dealt with expeditiously and in an effective and efficient manner but the office of the Ombudsman, in my humble submission, is not going to do. It has not done it in the past and it is not likely to do it in the future.

It is bordering on disgrace, that a man so frustrated, writing a five page report is padding it up with verses from hymns and reference to parables which all speak to the lonely one.

Mr. Chairman, my point is made.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Ombudsman has been reporting to this country since 1987. The first report of the Ombudsman was in 1987. Now it is regrettable that Parliament has never than on one occasion found the opportunity to seriously debate the role of the Ombudsman.

On one occasion when I was Leader of the Opposition, not only did the Ombudsman report annually but he made special reports. The special report for March 1995 reported about the inequitable operation of the Severance Payments Act. I believe that you will get an Ombudsman, like you will get politicians who are good, you get some of them who are not so good, some who are mediocre, you get Ministers who are good and you get some who are mediocre.

The point is Sir, in this position, if you look at the report for the year 1988, you find that the Ombudsman lists the number of cases that he had dealt with and I think that by 1990, there is a list of the growing number of cases and they range from those cases of mal-administration in the Government to the delay in the payment of compensation for land acquisition. Despite the 28 politicians that we have in here there are several cases that this was turning to the disadvantage of the subject. So much so, that as recently as within this session, I have heard Ministers themselves talking about the fact that there has been delay in the payment of people for compensation. Now that is a matter that we might have to address by Constitutional Reform, in the fundamental rights.

What can be more fundamental a question than the manner in which you acquire and then do not pay for people's land over a period of time. The complaints reached the Ombudsman, this is happening in 1990 and the Ombudsman managed to achieve the payment in the cases that came to him which the politicians were not able to achieve. Now issuing of Imports Licences and the release of goods from the Port; improper conduct by a Police Officer other than in connection of the investigation of crime in 1990; grievances of inmates of Glendairy Prison; environmental matters; income tax refunds - when people could not get their income tax refunds; town planning matters; matters concerning the National Insurance Corporation. All this in 1987.

In the 1990 Report, the Ombudsman, which was acting for three years, made the point that he had begun 114 cases in 1987,97 cases in 1988,101 cases in 1989 and 120 cases in 1990.1 can go back, Sir, to matters that had been investigated and dealt with, some of which were premature and the Ombudsman also talked about his role and the efforts being made to deal with his role. 3.50 p.m.

I hope that the Honourable Member, in her personal capacity, would come and make her submissions before the Constitutional Review Commission which we will listen to as objectively as we can but, Sir, I would not like to use the fact that any particular report of any particular person may be conclusive of the necessity for this office to deal with whether or not how effective the office could be. It may well be that there are various things missing in the office but for the years as one goes on and reads it I am pleased that perhaps this is the second time that Parliament has found time to discuss the role. If there is a failing let me say the failing is that we, in Parliament, when reports come before us do not take those reports seriously enough to find parliamentary time to debate them.

I would like to submit to this House that the Ombudsman has performed better than the Public Accounts Committee of this House has performed since 1961. He at least got a report before the House. In my experience from 1961 until now there have only been two reports from the Public Accounts Committee of the House so the House might ask itself if the Public Accounts Committee serves any purpose at all in the same way that it is asking itself whether an Ombudsman serves any purpose.

So Parliamentarians must not be too quick to jump to judgement on emotional feeling rather than on objective analysis of positions particularly, where we ourselves have not been as astute on the Committees with which we serve. In fact it is a disgrace that the Committees of Parliament hardly meet and all the more reason why we want an Ombudsman to investigate why Parliament itself does not carry out its duties and meet. You might need an Ombudsman on that.

The point is he has not got those powers otherwise he might do it, Sir. I just want to say, Sir, ...

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: There is no Back Bench revolt, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East sits down and talks as though this is a Parliament of dummies or that a party does not have views. The point is that in 1979 the Cox Commission recommended the post. The Government of the day accepted the Cox Commission's Report. I think the Honourable Member for the City was a Member of the Government who agreed with this. The Ombudsman was appointed finally in 1987. He began to perform his duties and those duties are now up for review. I believe that we should do the review in an objective manner and listen to the objectivity about it and understand the role. If it is needed in the society then we will deal with it but the fact that one Ombudsman might put in a short report.

Aside,

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Well whatever it was Parliament never found time to consider the report in order to say how it should be improved and therefore it hardly lies in the mouth of Parliament at the moment *ex post facto* to deal with a matter such as this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When the Honourable Member for the City gave information to this Committee and I sent for the report she made the comment that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will not believe until he sees and it is a good thing. You hear her over there talking about a 5-page report and making pooh-pooh remarks. Mr. Chairman, it is a 20 page report.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member must tell the House that the Ombudsman put the whole Act creating the post to pad up the report. How many pages is that?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now, Sir, there is nothing in here at all about the Act and there are 20 pages. I want to make another point. The Ombudsman at the time was the best Cabinet Secretary this country has ever had and for the Honourable Member to get up in here and suggest that that particular distinguished Barbadian would pad up a report is a clear indication of why you cannot believe anything that the Deputy Prime Minister says. Anytime you get the Deputy Prime Minister making a statement about anything at all you have to treat it with the greatest reserve.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I think you are using unparliamentary expressions. You are accusing the Honourable Member of speaking untruths.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I have done no such, with respect, Sir. All I have done is to give you additional information. I can tell you that is why you have to treat anything she says with the greatest reserve. That is not unparliamentary I submit, Sir. I treat it with the greatest reserve. I recommend that you treat it with the greatest reserve and I recommend that all Honourable Members treat it with the greatest reserve.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am most sure the Honourable Member referred to the Honourable Member for the City.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying, Sir, that I treat anything I get or hear from the Deputy Prime Minister with the greatest reserve. That, Sir, is not an unparliamentary comment,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay if you replace what you said earlier with that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, in 1992 when Mr. Blackman, the Ombudsman mentioned the hymn "There were ninety and nine" he was mentioning there were ninety and nine having made a point. At paragraph 8 which says "the question continues to be asked of whether there is sufficient public awareness of the existence of my office and of the assistance which is available to members of the public for receiving redress for grievances caused to them by the conduct of Government Departments and other agencies whether they are acts of omission or of commission". The question is whether sufficient use is being made of it, meaning his office. This question undoubtedly arises from the figures which have been given from time to time in these reports. He goes on, Sir. "But the answer surely depends on the yardstick being more and more especially on whether one is speaking of quantity rather than of quality. In considering quantity alone regard must be paid to the size of the adult population being served. In considering quantity and quality together we may need to remember the lessons we would have learnt from the scriptures and elsewhere about the value of looking after and doing good for even one soul". He went on to say this calls to mind the words of the hymn "There were 99 that safely lay in the shelter". That is what he was doing, Sir, and to think that a distinguished Barbadian like that could be laughed to ridicule because the Deputy Prime Minister inadvertently failed to give the total picture as she hurriedly, advised by the Prime Minister himself, allowed herself to fall prey to a tactical error.

I will not go any further, Sir, because we do not need to debate this issue today. Suffice it to say that the journalists of this country should take the reports of the Ombudsmen and examine them and analyse them and help the population to come to the conclusion whether an Ombudsman has been helpful or useful since the Honourable Member for Christ Church West introduced the concept. I started off by saying that I believe, since I represent so many poor people and since the State crushed people inadvertently, since the State is a formidable force for someone who does not know what to do or who does not have the means to do what should be done, any office that is created that allows an ordinary person to find justice in this society is an office worthwhile and $387 000 cannot be too much to spend on a woman somewhere in Deacons Road who has suffered at the hands of a Government who acquired her land and has not paid her. If you have to spend $387 000 to give her justice it is well spent but even then that would be a misrepresentation to suggest that $387 000 is spent for that only because a reading of these reports will show that the number of complaints and the way they have been dealt with suggest that many people get justice and feel comfortable that they have had justice because of the Ombudsman. 4.00 p.m.

I do not have any axe to grind for any particular Ombudsman. We will spend seven hours now discussing Tourism in here, but on the question of what happens to an individual, we will wish to put it aside and say it is unimportant. What are we in here for? Why are we in this Chamber if it is not to be concerned about the one that is lost? That is what the principle is about, that is why we work and how we work. Sir, I believe that it is worthwhile to go after the one. I believe so, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, it looks as though we are not going to get to Tourism too soon and, I am going to take this opportunity to begin to deal with the Honourable Member for the City to whom I am going to dedicate this day.

I wish to draw to the attention of the House that her speech was in fact, a scathing attack on the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Mr. Chairman, she said, ...

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I am not in this House, Sir, for division. The Honourable Member may well be very good at that. I have never agreed completely with everything that is said by anybody in this House, whether be it the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Member for the City or my close friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. So, I do not consider any Member getting up and expressing their point of view in here as any scathing attacks.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, whether he considers it so or not, there can be no doubt whatsoever, that the tone and content of the speech of the Honourable Member for the City constituted a deliberate and undisguised scathing attack, or verbal assault, if you like, on the Member for Christ Church West.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. I intervene in this debate to make it clear that the Constitution Commission is considering the post Ombudsman and I was asked particularly by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South West to state what is the position. I said, I cannot at the moment in my own mind come to any final conclusion for a

Constitution Commission. But, I did go on to explain for the benefit of the House, the origin of the post of Ombudsman coming out of the Cox Commission.

The fact that it was accepted by the then Barbados Labour Party Government, of which I was a Member and the Honourable Member for the City was a Member and so many members and the fact that this House had not undertaken its duty. Now, if the Honourable Member has a different view she has expressed it, but I do not consider this to be a scathing attack, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I thought it would be the Honourable Member for the City who would be getting up accusing me of misinterpreting or misleading the House. But, quite clearly, the Honourable Member for the City has remained seated. I have repeated the statement, and she has not risen to object and has left the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to be jumping up and down like a yo-yo...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has made it perfectly clear that particularly in his capacity as Chairman of the Constitution Review Commission, he is disposed to hear differing shades of opinion on this whole question of the Ombudsman, and I have put my opinion. But, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and I do not come from a Party where we cannot disagree in public. We notice that in the National Democratic Party we are now speaking of the Clement Payne Centre.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I think you are going outside the bounds of the point of order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I seem to be touching a very raw nerve. Is not this a scathing attack, Mr. Chairman? When the Deputy Prime Minister gets up in the House, takes up the Estimates, says that we are spending $387,000 a year, wasting $387,000 a year which can be better spent elsewhere, rather than on the Ombudsman which we know was the brain child of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and he was the person who urged the creation of that office on this Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member is either deaf or he is lacking in understanding. I have said in this House that the post of Ombudsman came out of a recommendation of the Constitution Commission headed by Sir Mencea Cox, set up by the then Labour Party Government in 1978 and which reported by 1980. It was implemented in here, I had the honour to bring the Bill and to make sure that it was in accordance with the Cabinet's position.

As a member of a collective body, I accepted collective responsibility under that matter. I do not resile from it or regret it. I do not see what is the problem about that, Sir. That is the position.

Sir, if the Government brings down a vote for $387 000 to this House, and this vote has been approved by a Cabinet of which the Honourable Member for the City is a Member, I assume that the Cabinet has approved $387 000 before it gets to this Committee, so that therefore, as far as I am concerned, it is the Government's programme that the Government has asked me to approve. I have spoken on that Programme to say that as the law stands, that programme, until it has changed must be in accordance with the law. What is a scathing attack?

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have tried to address this Honourable House and I have not even had a chance to speak for a total of one minute...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You will get your time.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Please, I do not mind the interruptions, I shall be dealing with them and systematically. I heard the Honourable Member for the City state, in no uncertain terms, that we were wasting $387 000 a year on the office and the organisation of the Ombudsman. What I am saying, that it is a direct criticism of the person who urged that office on this Honourable House for many a year, who brought the legislation before this Honourable House, and what she is saying that it has been a complete failure and as a result of his urgings for the establishment of that office, whether it will be on the recommendation of the Constitution Commission or otherwise that we have wasted several million dollars over the past years. That is what the Honourable Member for the City was saying. 4.10 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. It did not go into millions. It did not go anywhere into the money as compared to the money that the Democratic Labour Party put down at Warrens saying they were building a crematorium, and going all the way to Australia.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I do not know of the NDP putting down any crematorium. All I am saying is a simple matter, that it is a blatant criticism of what the

Honourable Member for Christ Church West has cost this country, several million dollars down the drain.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is putting in the record that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has cost this country several million dollars down the road. I object to that. I have been in here too long. The Honourable Member may be successful in getting a newspaper report about the Honourable Member for St. Joseph but he is not able to get newspaper reports about me on anything that is not correct.

I have made it absolutely clear that the Ombudsman Bill came down here as a result of collective responsibility of a Cabinet of which I was proud to be a member. I had the responsibility for filing that Bill and I did my job. It has been voted on by this House including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central when he was Minister of Finance, bringing a vote for the Ombudsman as he did at the time. If he says that that was wastage he had more direct responsibility for that vote than I could possibly have had because I have never been Minister of Finance.

This Government has now brought it back and I consider that the Government if it brings a vote in this Committee is serious about it and will not bring a vote that is wasting money.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member for the City is to be believed then I, too, will have to confess that as Minister of Finance I might have been misled by the urgings of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West on the value...

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member again is misleading this House. I have never spoken to the Honourable Member other than to criticise him for his disastrous economic policies in this country that brought us to ruination and all I have urged him to do is to have some common sense and not to have brought the policies that destroyed the economy of this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, all I am doing is making contact in a debate with a speech by an Honourable Member who holds the high office of Deputy Prime Minister of this country.

I think, whether I agree with her or not, to make it clear to this Honourable House that she has informed this House that millions of dollars have been wasted over the years - $387 000 a year. That is what she said.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir,* I really cannot believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, a former - no wonder he is a former - Minister of Finance, is speaking like this. It is $387 000 a year. That was not what it was in the year 1987 or 1985 or 1990. It certainly would not have amounted to the multi millions that he is talking about.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, in point of fact I am being generous. It was $389 000 last year. I merely underestimated the amount of it. That is the first point that I am making. She was bitterly critical of the office.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to proceed. I think it is being a bit tedious in repetition.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have not finished what I am saying. Each time I try to speak and make the point I am interrupted. It is your duty to stop the interruptions which are becoming increasingly rude.

The Honourable Member said that it certainly gives the impression that the office was created to provide jobs for the boys. I made a note of it here. She has accused the Honourable Member for Christ Church West on urging on this House, in his ministerial capacity, the creation of the post of Ombudsman and has reflected on what took place and, I believe, quite honourably, because despite the protestations of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, he genuinely believed in the post of Ombudsman and today she has sought to reduce him and to attack him in public to say that it was created to provide jobs for the boys.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Again, Sir, I am taking objection to the Honourable Member stating that in this House I have supported a measure to create...

Asides.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Obviously, the Honourable Member does not understand.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is giving a speech which reflects his perception and impression. I think he should continue to make his speech and you may make your speech at a later time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: If it does not reflect on my character.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can respond after.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, I have not accused the Honourable Member for Christ Church West of anything. All I am saying is what the Honourable Member for the City accused him of. I made a note here when she used the term "Jobs for the boys". That is what she said. She said 'that she was concerned that the office was

created to provide jobs for the boys. I think that that is a serious indictment of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and it is unfair to him.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir, the House will have to determine whether the Honourable Member is accusing me of anything.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not accusing you of anything. I am defending you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I wish no defence from the Honourable Member. I am quite capable of defending myself and the Honourable Member if necessary.

The Honourable Member is putting in the record a statement that the Honourable Member for the City indicted me by saying that I encouraged the creation of legislation that was creating jobs for the boys, implying patronage, Sir. I object to that implication. I submit to you as Chairman of the Committee that it is unparliamentary for him...

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member for the City has never said that I created a post for jobs for the boys and therefore it cannot be correct for his interpretation as a statement of fact.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will support the objection of the Honourable Member because I know what the Honourable Member for the City did to him today was undignified and unfair. The Honourable Member should never have afflicted an attack on a former Attorney General of Barbados, particularly on the recommendation of...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is giving in his speech his own impressions and I believe that he is giving his impressions of what the Honourable Member for the City has said.
4.20 p.m.

I believe that the Honourable Member for the City, if she disagrees, should intervene, therefore I am not accepting any interventions unless we can have him disproving that the ...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Quite clearly those were just the two points I wanted to make and I rose, in fact, to defend my representative in Parliament. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West whose integrity I have never challenged and because I felt hurt that he was being assailed in this manner on the Floor of the House, quite unjustifiably, by the Deputy Prime Minister who gave no thought whatsoever to what she was saying. It was an empty-headed speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please, order, order please. I am asking the Honourable Member to withdraw the unparliamentary expression of empty-headed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I withdraw that particular remark, Sir, but quite clearly, if she was giving thought to what she was saying then she would recognise that what she was saying must have reflected very adversely on a distinguished former Attorney General of this country who is also my representative in this Honourable House and I have a duty, he has a duty to me as my representative and I also have a duty to him, and therefore, Sir, I rose in this Honourable House to his defence and I sincerely hope that he would express appropriate appreciation of the quality of the defence I have put up on his behalf. Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I would like to make a very small contribution to this question of the Ombudsman and I want to draw Honourable Members' attention that the matter will unquestionably engage the attention of the Constitution Review Commission; but also that we must remember that in Barbados, there are a number of the mechanisms which have been brought into law subsequent to the passage of the Ombudsman Bill particularly the Administrative Justice Act which have had the effect, in my opinion, of seriously impeding, in Barbados the activities of the Ombudsman. So that, in the light of the subsequent developments of the law the office will obviously have to be re-evaluated. There are also other areas in Barbados which, in my opinion, need far greater investigation and it relates to another matter which I hope will come before the Constitutional Commission and that is the failure of institutions to function in a manner in which they were envisaged that they would function, particularly something like the public service commission of all types, and we have to look at those matters in the light of the fact that we have a series of institutions in Barbados which do not perform the functions in a manner in which they would have envisaged that they would perform them, but at the same time, they relate to matters, which, under the existing legislation dealing with Ombudsman they cannot come within this purview.

There is no way that an ombudsman can make the public service commission, not suspend a person and keep them suspended for three, four or five years. These are matters that we have to deal with, Sir, so

that every institution that we have in relation to the executive has to be looked at. So in all this debate I think that we should remember that this is under review now. Let us get on to another Head, Sir.

Rt. Hon O. S. ARTHUR: I rise to bring this debate to a close and to just in closing it to simply reassert the basic position of the Government, Sir, that the ombudsman was a concept that was developed in the Scandinavian countries long, long ago. Even in the countries in which the concept of the ombudsman was conceived it has now been changed, overtaken and the notion of the ombudsman as originally conceived no longer even exists in the very country in which it was conceived. It exists but broadened and so on.

All I am saying is that we now have had virtually a number of years of the operation of the post; we are carrying out a constitution review. We are looking at the functioning of this post, commissions that can handle some of the issues that go to the ombudsman, Sir, and that we want to take a decision on whether or not we broaden, retain, restructure its role in and of itself and in relation to other things, Mr. Chairman. What we are seeking to do is no different from what has been done in other countries in the world when you started with the concept of an ombudsman, then law was introduced to deal with the administration of justice, various organs of Government that deal with dispute, resolutions were strengthened as we continued, Sir, and hence Sir, the notion that the Government should want to pause, before it reappoints a person to a preconceived post in circumstances where we had this review is quite understandable.

The record also show, Mr. Chairman, that the ombudsman, although he might look at a hundred cases a year generally finds that only about nine are justified. It is obvious, Sir, that the very existence of the post might be exciting to the public to submit things to him that are either frivolous or vexatious or that can be otherwise handled and that has to be taken into account, Sir. For example, in 1992 a hundred and eleven cases were submitted to the Ombudsman but only nine were found to be justified. So that you create an institution and people invent problems merely because the institution happens to exist and the reality has therefore to be that because there is so much other recourse in Barbados to resolution that this post has itself also to be reviewed; and that is the position that the Government has made, Sir.

I am therefore against that explanation simply asking the House to agree that Head 17 stand part and that we will in some time in the future, Sir, know what is the fate of this office and I will urge also Members to have an open mind on it and not necessarily gaze in wonder on the splendour of this manufacture. I am obliged to you, Sir.

The question that Head 17 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 35 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT (as amended) - $88,210,728

Hon Miss B. A. MILLER: Now, Mr Chairman, Sir, Under this Head Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport, I intend to speak to matters dealing with foreign affairs and tourism. The Minister of State in the Ministry, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, will speak to matters dealing with international transport.

Asides.

Hon Miss B. A. MILLER: In respect of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sir, let me start by saying, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996/97 and certainly as we go forward to the approaching financial year 1997-98 is really quite a different kind of Ministry than it was ten years ago, even five years ago. I think I can safely say that we have put into this ministry an economic component such as was the Government's manifesto promise over the past two and a half years. We have defined for ourselves a strategic plan in the Ministry and we have identified some forty odd objectives flowing from our mission statement. There are a number of activities which were undertaken by the Ministry in the financial year in which we now find ourselves in 1996-97. The particular highlight was the fact that we held for the second time in two years a Heads of Mission meeting here in Barbados where all our Heads of Mission were invited home to sit down with the home-based officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also with those who are part of what we describe as the country team, the Ministries with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has very particular linkages, shall I say? The Ministry of International Trade and Business, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of International Transport, the Ministry of Culture. 4.30 p.nii

In fact, what I have just described to you, Mr. Chairman, is the nucleus of the ministerial country team which meets on a quarterly basis here at home and which monitors, not only here but abroad how the country team works out of our several missions. Now, every mission is different in its thrust.

At Miami where the pilot for the country team is performing well and pleasing us greatly, we now have in place a Vice Counsel, Tourism and a Vice Counsel, Industry and Development. This is at Miami. These people have certain protocolary duties because, remember, they come under the wide umbrella of the privileges and immunities which attach to a Barbados Mission

abroad. Essentially, they are representatives of their home Ministries, Tourism or rather the Barbados Tourism Authority in the one case, and the BIDC in another.

Now, Miami is an important Mission for us in that it not only services an increasingly wide jurisdiction in the South East of the United States of America, and we bear in mind that that country is still our major trading partner, but we begin to see Miami as a bridge head into Latin America. Latin Americans do a great deal of business in Miami. It is also the cruise centre. Cruise has become an important aspect of our tourism. In fact, in 1996 more cruise passengers came to Barbados than long-stay. It has actually overtaken long stay. We believe this will be a continuing trend so that Florida, and more particularly Miami, will be the hub for the cruise industry which tends to service the Caribbean in general and Barbados in particular.

The country team is working well so that the thrust at Miami tends to be business, some international trade and business, some manufacturing, tourism, culture and education as well. A number of Barbadians are now going for their tertiary education to Florida and other parts of the Counties of the United States of America.

At Caracas, the thrust is different. Caracas for us is a stepping stone into countries in Latin America which, in our judgment, have the potential to become major trading partners in the early 21st Century, countries whose democracies have stabilised and who are anxious to trade with us. I speak of Brazil. I speak of Chile. I speak of Uruguay. I speak of even Columbia.

Mr. Chairman, many years ago, 20, 30 years ago, you go into the supermarket and you pick up a can or a box and look at it you were likely to see "Made in Hull, United Kingdom, Made in Cheshire, United Kingdom, Made in Ohio, United States, Made in Missouri, United States." Today, you go to those same shops and you pick up a can or a box and you are likely to see: "Made in Columbia."

Almost all of the highly refined and highly designed leather goods we see on Broad Street today and in the duty-free shops, a lot of them are out of Columbia. You are likely to see: "Made in Peru." You are likely to see: "Made in Brazil" and very likely to see: "Made in Venezuela."

Venezuela also, again we feel in tourism is a good vantage point for us to begin to look for new markets. Airlift, of course, is an important component on that quest so that that tends to be the preoccupation of our Embassy at Venezuela.

In Canada, it is a different thrust. In Toronto, I would say we have the most important headquarters for international trade and business and certainly the informatics thrust. That is our pre-occupation at this time. Tourism, and I am very pleased to say that we are now seeing for the first time in a long while a welcomed increase in arrivals out of Canada. Canada is a long time market for our tourism. As the Canadian economy suffered certain recessionary trends in recent years, so too did our arrivals out of that market. Now, as there is an upturn so too are arrivals improving for us. Canada is important from the point of view of international trade and business and from the point of view of tourism.

In Brussels you have a different focus. Brussels continues, as originally it was set out to do, to service the LOME Convention for us and the places we have around the African/Caribbean and Pacific countries. Brussels has a heightened importance at this time because we are all now engaged upon the task of finding a successor to the LOME IV Agreement and all the implications that it has for the Caribbean. In fact, the CARICOM Heads of Government very much I think, following on to an initiative taken by the Barbados Government, is in the process of reviewing all of its trading negotiations and this makes perfect sense. We are coming to the end of a century now. 4.40 p.m.

We are coming to the end of a millennium. The world has divided itself into major trading blocs, globalisation is accelerating, everywhere in the world trade liberalisation is the way of the future. The WTO which was many years in the making has now had its first formal official meeting in Singapore in December last year. There are many other movements that we are seeing, some in this hemisphere, because when I talk of^all trade negotiations, I am talking not only about LOME, I am talking about CARICAN, NAFTA, FEAA and CARICOM. The implications of the associations in the relatively new Association of Caribbean States. All of these trade and economic trends, cultural patterns, all have to be monitored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It was very interesting to see that the British Labour Party, well in advance of the General Election which has now been called for May 1st, has put out a series of position papers which are quite full papers, but intended to be brought together eventually into a concise document which will be the Manifesto of the British Labour Party.

The first position paper fell into my hand and I was impressed to see that in the very first sentence of that very first paper the point is made by the British Labour Party, that Foreign Affairs, as we are beginning to re-define it in these closing years of this decade in Barbados, we call it "putting the economic component in it", not a very elegant way of putting it, that that is going to be the

way of the early 21st century. The Canadians have also begun to examine and in fact to execute it.

We in Barbados are totally re-thinking the role that a Ministry of Foreign Affairs play and will play immediately in the year ahead of us. Barbados is getting ready, Barbados is positioning itself so that it can be in a situation where we can benefit wherever there is some benefit that can come to us. We do not imagine that we can move and shake any of the huge trading blocs in the world or influence them very greatly. We recognise that as the days of reciprocity approach and the days of protection move away from us that we will have to be carving out our own niches as we see them, to our best advantage. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises that it has a major role to play in this connection.

I think for the first time ever since we had Cabinet Government in Barbados, that we have begun to understand the important linkages of Foreign Affairs to other sectors in our economy. It used to be thought that it was a very different, separate-and-apart kind of Ministry. That I hope, is becoming less and less of the case. There is a lot of policy research that has to be done in the Ministry, there is a lot of analysis which has to be done on what is happening in other countries and what the implications are for us and this is even more important when we recognise that Barbados has again re-found its place as a leader within the Caribbean. I do not think that it is by chance that Barbados has been chosen as the venue for the CARICOM U.S. Summit which is going to be held during May.

I am pleased to say that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals is now fully established and working well. As at December 1996, I am advised that 364 returning nationals have benefitted from the new arrangement which we put in place. Work has started on developing incentives for investment in Barbados by nationals abroad. A number of nationals abroad are coming back not only with skills, Sir, but they are coming back with capital and they want to invest in Barbados. Some have opted for early retirement and as FURN gets to be known about more and more wherever I go and meet Barbadians, I certainly speak about it at some length, every mission has an officer in it, designated to look after matters to do with returning nationals and now that all of the missions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are on line and that E-mail is the order of the day, there is more and more work that the FURN unit is doing.

The Protocol Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now styled more protocol and conference arrangement. The Government has seen fit to give to the Protocol Division this wider function. There are a number of seminars, workshops and conferences that Barbados host during the course of the year and that number is growing more. People like to come to Barbados for conferences and workshops and seminars. They come to shop.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It has nothing to do with Sherbourne Centre. They come because they like to shop. These workshops are held all over Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Barbados is becoming more and more popular as a place to which people want to come for meetings and we find it more cost effective, we find it more efficient, that a particular department of Government now has an overall responsibility for arrangements.

Protocol now has a fairly significant input when we have these meetings and rather than calling on an individual Ministry or be taking up a lot of their individual time making arrangements, it is much tidier and much more cost effective that one group in one place should have this as an overall responsibility. It is working well, it is taking a lot of headache out of other Ministries and departments in Government and what we are doing is building up a certain expertise. We find now that even places outside of Barbados, which is not unusual, begin to call on us for advice and guidance when there are certain functions that they want to carry out.

I would say that throughout this financial year the Protocol and Conference Arrangement Division in the Ministry has been very intimately involved in some 25 international and regional conferences which were hosted by Barbados. This is important, it brings money to Barbados, it has very significant linkages to the tourism, it means hotel beds, it means all of the ancillary services and I think its role and function is going to increase even more and more. I am not speaking of them, I am speaking to the Chair. 4.50 p.m.

Within Barbados' international, political and economic relations, Sir, I would wish to suggest that there are a number of noteworthy accomplishments over the past years in relations with the US agreements on extradition and mutual assistance that were concluded.

The Ministry, as you know, is responsible for coordinating our consultations, and negotiations are presently on the way with the United States in respect of an anti-narcotics agreement. We also recommended a policy position on the Helms-Burton Act in respect of the promotion of human rights and democracy. Very important, Sir, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Chief Electoral Officer developed a proposal for a mechanism to ensure that Barbados participates as much as

possible in the growing area of international electoral participation and human rights missions.

I am hoping that in the not too distant future that we can develop even further a project which I had started on, way back in the opposition years, to make Codrington College a residential centre for the study of democracy and good governance.

Honourable Members would be pleased to know of the candidature of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights endorsed last year by the Standing Conference of the CARICOM Foreign Ministers and we would like to think that we will bring that to good and successful resolution.

We were very instrumental, Sir, in reactivating the marine boundaries delimitation exercise. At the end of August to the beginning of September last year, we organised a major retreat at Sam Lords Castle when we looked at all of our trading positions. We particularly looked at our future relations with Europe. Let me say at this point, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that I am recommending to the Government that Barbados should consider very seriously our Consulate in Germany. I do not think most Barbadians realise that we have one at Frankfurt. It really is no more than the Barbados Tourism Authority's office. But Berlin will become the capital of Germany again, a unified Germany, in the year 1999-2000 and all indications are that Berlin, in effect will become again the centre and the capital of Europe, and it is in our interest that we should upgrade our Consulate into a full Consulate General for a number of reasons. We are in Frankfurt at the moment where it is costly but what we want is to upgrade it to a full Consulate.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The WTO is going to have to be serviced by Barbados one way or the other. I do not know that at the very beginning now we can afford to put people full time in Geneva which is the most costly city to live in, in the world. To some extent we are doing what we can out of our Mission in Brussels. Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is something that is under active consideration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and which I hope that we would be able to bring to fruition in the coming financial year.

We participated in national consultations on Barbados Hemispheric trading relations, as I have said NAFTA, BFTAA, WTO. We have strengthened diplomatic relations with the Czech Republic and most recently with Poland. A number of initiatives were taken as we deepened relations with Japan and we want to move more into Asia. Singapore is another small developing Island state that we have developed warm relations with and the Attorney General, myself, the Minister of International Trade and Business have all been working at enhancing that relationship and it is hoped that that will be a jump-off point.

There is no doubt in anybody's mind that China is going to become a world power in the twenty-first century and that what is now described as the seven tigers of the East are going to increase in importance.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member your time has expired. I believe you may wish to come again.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I will speak again because I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 35 stand part.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and begged 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 the House be now suspended until 5.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 5.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now 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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber reverts to Committee of Supply.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be examined in this Committee during this year. I believe it is important that we, and I have said this before when I was on the other side and I still maintain that it is important,

that the people of this country have a clear idea of what we are doing overseas and how we are doing it and in some instances, why we are doing it.

I am also a little concerned that, because of the structure of the Estimates that a relatively ordered debate does not occur and there will be the flitting back and forth between areas of the Ministry as it is currently constituted.

I was a little disappointed with the Minister because I did not expect the Minister to get up in here and give a recitation of some of the things which she did as though she was reading, it seemed to me at one point that she might have been reading the report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but, I suppose if that is how she feels that she is giving an account to the Committee of her stewardship that she is entitled to do that.

I am going to deal with the matters which the Minister dealt with, but I also will serve notice on her that there are a series of questions in relation to her Ministry overall, that I will be raising when we discuss Tourism in its fullness. I will be raising matters of Tourism substantively, because, I believe that there is need to address the issue of Tourism specifically.

First, let me deal with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Honourable Member says that it is a different sort of Ministry. I do not know what that means. I do*not know if the people will become better looking or if they are shorter or taller, because the same people are there, more or less, in the Ministry itself. Much of what the Honourable Member has trotted out tonight, is what has been there. So, when she said a different kind of Ministry, they have defined a strategic plan and there are some 40 objectives coming from their Mission Statement.

I would like to ask if the Mission Statement has been changed. If the Mission Statement has been changed since we were last there, it means that they have a new Mission. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has it undertaken or has it embarked on a new mission? Is that what you are saying? It would have been helpful if she had given us the Mission Statement so that we can know what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now supposed to do. Is it doing something new that it was not doing before? Or are they still seeking to do the things which they were designed to do?

I congratulate the Minister on having a Heads of Mission meeting in Barbados, and obviously, the Minister of Finance has agreed that the money could be spent, because, the only constraint on having a Heads of Mission meeting in the past was the absence of money. But I am glad that they had one and I hope that arising out of it, we will see a renewed strength and a renewed approach by those who constitute the Ministry.

I wish that the Minister would stop this rubbish of the "country team approach", giving people the impression that the "country team approach" is something that has come down like manna from heaven. The "country team approach" is new wine in old bottles, or old wine in new bottles. It is the same wine, as Eric Williams used to say "the same old tacky pants".

Barbados, by virtue of its size, necessarily must have an approach in its foreign affairs which takes account of all of the entities it has overseas. In fact, the Constitutional arrangements so make it. When we talk about having a counsel for this or a vice counsel for that, as far back as 1967 Barbados experimented, on the bad advice of some civil servants in Barbados, and we had a Barbados Mission at New York. An entity that soon had to give way to the realities of life in the international community.

That was the concept of Barbados having all of the agencies functioning for Barbados, focussing in the same direction and functioning for the same purpose, has always been the objective of the Ministry of External Affairs and Foreign Affairs when it became Foreign Affairs under the Minister who was then the Honourable Member of St. George South.

The "country team approach" must not be seen as an end in itself. It is a means to an end and I do not begrudge her the phrase "country team" if that captures what she wishes to portray, that is fine.

When we were in New York 20 or 30 years ago, the Counsel General had responsibility for the economic development activity in the United States. One of the problems which the Minister, very subtly and quietly skirted by the manner in which she introduced her presentation, is that she has left the Chamber feeling that the hub, in the truer sense of the word, like American Airlines, is now at Miami. I understand that.

It is significant that the Minister, even today, is helping a situation which exists where our Embassy at Washington is one of the best kept secrets in Barbados. Nobody has heard anything about the Embassy at Washington for some considerable time.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Embassy at Washington, D. C. the District of Columbia. Nobody has heard anything about it for a long time. I would have hoped that the Minister would have shed some light and the Minister was very clear in ignoring New York. We have not heard.

Once upon a time things used to revolve around what is happening in New York, and what was

happening at Washington, but, I think after the midnight massacre which the Minister performed on the New York office, that she might wish to keep New York as secret as Washington for a little while.

It is significant that she has decided that Miami is now the darling of the Labour Party's Administration. I recall that when I came in here, and I said, as Foreign Minister, that we have made a decision to establish and upgrade the office at Miami from an Honorary Consulate to a full Consulate for all of the reasons which the Minister has articulated today, the Minister, and her colleagues pooh-poohed the idea and I can almost see her now as she bobbed up and down, suggesting "a waste of time". You know, everybody sooner or later, learns that a wheel is nothing more than a wheel. You cannot reinvent it....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman Sir, the Honourable Member is now into the area of invention. All I said about Miami, and I picked out a few of the Missions, there are nine of them, was that it was the pilot for the "country team" for which we are well pleased, and that we now see a new dimension, as well, to the work that is being done at Miami. It is not the darling of anything and I have no recollection, whatsoever, about the Democratic Labour Party in an earlier administration talking about upgrading Miami to a Consulate General.

I know that when I went into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September of 1994, I found an Honorary Counsel.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now, Sir, that is the whole problem with the Minister. I was anticipating that she would have her annual attack of amnesia.

I took the trouble to find page 4912 in Hansard. In my good feeling, I do not propose to read, except to say that she will find it and anybody who wishes can find it between 4712 and 4713 and following, when I was outlining the approach that I would take as Minister of Foreign Affairs when we were spending $10 477 794 under Head 35 - the same Head. 5.35 p.m.

You know, it is interesting that the Honourable Member cannot now remember how we approached it. I have at least on 4 occasions in this House pointed out how we approached this question of creation of posts. In a strange kind of way we went through all of the areas which the Honourable Member now mentioned. She said that she did not say anything about Miami being the darling. She said that in the consulate team in Miami the pilot is performing well. They have a Vice Consul for Tourism and a Vice Consul for Industry and Development and that Miami is a bridgehead into Latin America and that Miami is a cruise centre, an important part of our tourism. Florida is a hub. She was carrying coals to Newcastle and all I am saying to her is that one of the reasons why I myself never participated in the bashing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when I was in Opposition before and I am in Opposition now is because what goes around must come around.

There is not a great deal that any Government of Barbados can do to reposition the Foreign Ministry in the context of the resources that are available to it. I think that it is unfair for the people of Barbados to try to give the impression that a Daniel has come to Judgment and suddenly you have found a new and different approach to these matters.

Long ago, Sir, we made the people who were in the IDC, in the Ministry of Tourism, consular officers because it was recognised that in order for them to have status in the United States and to function properly that they should have consular status. Hence to say that you have a Vice Consul for Tourism and a Vice Consul for Industry is to make a nonsense of the thing unless you are trying to pad your information.

I am glad that Miami is showing evidence of what we predicted and what we anticipated. We recognised then and we recognise now that Barbados for a number of reasons would wish to have proper representation at Miami. Frankly, I do not agree with putting the office in the Millionaires Row. She has moved the office up there. She is entitled to put it there. I am not going to spend time on that.

I will say, however, that the Barbadians who live in that part of the world have extreme difficulty finding where the office is, knowing b^- to get there, because it is located in a place where black people do not normally go. That is one of the considerations which had bothered me about the attitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recent times.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if the Honourable Member does not really have anything to say it would be better if he did not say it at all. It is not true to say that the Consulate General at Miami is in an area where black people do not go. It is in the business centre of Miami. It is not a place where people live. It is in a commercial business centre of Miami.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not think that that was an issue, but let me just tell you. The people from Barbados who live in Florida have indicated that where the office is now does not suit them. I do not think

that this Administration gives much consideration to that sort of thing in its Foreign Affairs. I have no quarrel with that.

The present location on Millionaires Row is not where...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member would know. The Honourable Member knows more about North America than I do. If the Honourable Member says so I will take her word for it.

I am telling you what they tell me. It is not an issue. You have put it there and it is there. You have said that you are more concerned with business than you are with people. I do not have any quarrel with that.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You locate the Consulate in Miami where you wish it to be. It seems to me that what Barbados does whenever we have a change of administration or a new Minister, we have to reinvent the wheel. We have to do something different. So you have moved it up where you want it to be. I have no quarrel with that but the people who come from Fort Lauderdale and from the other places where the black people from Barbados, and the West Indies live, when they come into Miami they are not accustomed to going up to where we are located now.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Anyhow, Sir, I am glad that the Government has agreed with the framework which we established to say that it is important that they establish a consulate general in Miami.

I think what the Honourable Member should go on to do if I can help her with the policy is to appoint the Honorary Consul in the cities of the south and south east so that you will at last have the conglomeration of implementers in these respective cities in Texas and in other parts of the south and south east that will help Barbados to benefit from locating the consulate.

We will have an opportunity to benefit from locating the Consulate in Miami. As I said, Washington is one of the best kept secrets but I wish the Minister, when she gets up, to give us chapter and verse on the performance of Washington D.C., the ambassador and the office because nobody hears anything about it.

I wish also to hear about what informed the Minister to cause her to disrupt the Mission at New York because it cannot be proper policy to move all the officers from a particular overseas office at the same time. It lacks continuity. I do not care who is in government at any given time, if you move all of the consular or diplomatic officers from a Mission at the same time it means that those who go must spend the next two years learning the place and the methodology, learning how to communicate.

The Minister, for reasons which I am sure she will tell us - she had better - had a midnight massacre in New York. My information, according to what has been put out, is that the motive is purely political. I refuse to believe that the Deputy Prime Minister would operate on the basis of political motive and it may very well be that she has thrown out the baby and left the bath water.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I have waited all day for most of these Estimates to hear what the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister responsible for Tourism had to say to this House and to the country about her stewardship.

If you will note very carefully, Sir, all the time that she spent introducing this particular Head it was disappointing. One recognises no continuity whatsoever in the representation. 5.45 p.m.

It seems to centre around personalities, none of the burning issues facing the Foreign Affairs Ministry were raised or addressed and indeed, no policies apart from those dealing with the manipulating or manoeuvering or dislocations or relocations of personnel were presented to this Honourable House, but, Sir, I am not at all surprised. I am not at all surprised because wherever one goes, with whomsoever one comes in contact in discussing the Foreign Affairs of this country, one is told immediately that the Department is in entire shambles and in reality, everyone is doing his or her thing within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is the highest paid post-woman in the public service because the Foreign Affairs Department is largely reduced now to allocated mail that is sent to the Government of Barbados and one cannot detect any kind of policy in any kind of area emanating from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Now, that is not surprising, Sir, because there have been repeated complaints that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is hardly ever around and when she is around she has to divide her time between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism, so that today we have heard today a recitation of the same thing we heard in the previous two Estimates when she openly declares, and Sir, she does make some beautiful declarations. I must congratulate her for that. When it comes to using language and being quite placid and using high-flowing

languages to intent and when she puts on that international voice, Sir, there is no better ....

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We are not going to be seduced by that this evening. You are going to be held to account at several levels during this debate this afternoon, this evening here in this Honourable House. You recall, Sir, she said that she was going to hit the ground running well she did, in fact, quite clearly now two and a half years, she did hit the ground and you know what she fell on, Sir. She was not running. When she hit the ground she was not running, because everything has remained completely static in that Ministry of Foreign Affairs since then. It is of interest, Sir, that she talks about this country team and what is happening. She knows what is happening in Washington, but does she know, does she ever go to Washington at all? She must know why she finds it uncomfortable in Washington, but we are going to give her the opportunity to tell the Honourable House, if she has any problems with Washington. If she does not tell this Honourable House, we will tell the House later, but we will give her the first opportunity to tell us if she has had any problems with Washington. If she had listened to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, that mistake would never have been made. If she had listened to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, I am absolutely sure that mistake would not have been made and she would not be having the problems that she is having today; but I know the Honourable Member, she has not said a word in this Honourable House about Washington. We want to hear about what is happening in Washington, and we are going to give you the opportunity to tell us whether you are satisfied with the performance and with the money being spent in Washington.

The other point I want to raise, Sir, is New York. We know a whole lot of people have been fired. Sorry, not fired, I withdraw that.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Nobody has been fired. Like with every other Mission, staff changes from time to time. The entire staff in Washington has turned over but nobody is making anything about that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Would you believe it, Sir, that the man who is largely invisible in respect of the office in New York, who nobody hardly ever sees, the man who concentrates 95% of his time on his own business, in the area of real estate in the New York area, in the North East United States and spreading down South for whom nobody can see, the man who, in fact, had arranged to read a lesson at a memorial service in honour of the late Governor-General, and turned up an hour late, a man who held up a meeting of several dignitaries called in and said that he was going to be late and never turned up at the meeting. I am not saying the Minister is responsible but that man remains at his post, whilst others have been removed from New York unceremoniously.

We all know what the problem is in New York. We all know who the problem is in New York and I wonder whether the Minister should tell us whether if there are any concerns whatsoever about that particular individual. I have identified the individual already by his conduct. I cannot call any name in this Honourable House. I cannot call any names because I did not give you any prior notice, and the question arises, Sir, whether or not it is correct that the Minister was constrained despite all kinds of party pressure to give an extension of only three to four months for the time being while she reviews the situation. I am not too sure about that, that is why I am putting it as a question, whether or not that individual's position has been extended for only three or four months because you, like most other reasonable people, happen to be quite dissatisfied with that kind of performance and I put it to you that the problem that you have is that you have a lot of the wrong people at the top in several areas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and whether you wish to deal with the question in New York or not, if you do not deal with it you are going to have more and more problems, like the kind of problems you are having at home. The Ministry with the highest turnover of bright young people in Barbados, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Minister should tell this House how many young people went into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and left, and how many left before after six months, how many left before four months, how many left before two months and never even saw the Minister, never saw the Minister during his stint in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is chaos in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not only at the policy level, but big problems at the management level.

Everybody is aware of it in the public service of Barbados and it is becoming a problem that is affecting the performance of several other Ministries, but, Sir, in my fifteen minutes, I believe only half has gone, is that correct? I do not want to dwell exclusively on Foreign Affairs, because it is very important that when the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister gets up with her platitudinous righteousness and in her international vocabulary in relation to tourism, it is important to understand the background to all this.

It looks, Sir, as though there are many problems in the Ministry of Tourism and despite the efforts being made by the Chief Executive at the B.A. the Minister has remained totally unhelpful in terms of getting policies put in place that would really make a difference to tourism. We remember, Sir, all the grandiose plans that she brought to this Honourable House. We would not believe this,

Sir, that we have situation here where it is expected this year, that there would be a dramatic decline in the number of cruise ship passenger arrivals in Barbados. You would not believe it, Sir. 5.55 p.m.

Would you believe, Sir, that despite all the talk about this wonderful growth in tourism that we had only a 1.1 per cent growth in the number of arrivals last year? You have had a continuous decline in the number of arrivals year by year since this Minister took over the Ministry of Tourism.

Now, Sir, this business of value added! Let me tell you what the trick is, Sir. Let me explain something to you, Sir. Every year, to compensate for what is visible, what is tangible, what is obvious, what is statistically easily understood and presented to this Honourable House and by all of Barbados, that is, the number of arrivals they come up with this bogus figure about an increase in value added.

Sir, it is within my experience that that figure for value added is something the Central Bank works backwards from when it looks at its foreign reserves, looks at its balance of payments and tries to work out a position under Errors and Omissions, and nothing more specific or precise in that.

We have had in the past adjustmfents of over $160 million in one year in respect of the level of tourism earnings in Barbados but that correction is made, 3, 4, 5 years later. When a Minister comes in here and tells you that she has had hardly any increase in the number of tourists, and has some fantastic figure in terms of value added, I say not only is it nonsense on the one hand, but I am saying it is not factual information that you are presenting to this House. Thirdly, that nobody in Barbados can give you that factual information three months after the end of a calendar year or before the end of a fiscal year. It is largely bogus.

The fact is we have had a substantial decline in the rate of increase in the level of tourist arrivals in Barbados ever since the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister took over as the Minister of Tourism. We are not going to allow that fact to escape nor are we going to allow it to be clouded by any bogus figures talking about value added, when in point of fact there are no specific figures that anyone can present and they will be adjusted year after year.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If you look at that particular column, if you look into the Annual Statistics of the Central Bank of Barbados and you take the last 10 years and you go through those figures, you will see how the adjustments are made again and again and it is not specific.

Let me tell you something, Sir, and I am glad the Honourable Prime Minister has come in here right now. I am very glad that you have come in here right now because I am going to tell you something. There is something that you are discounting and not including in the foreign reserves' position of Barbados and attributing it to tourism. Barbados has had substantial repatriations of foreign currency by Barbadian companies over the past two years. Mark my word for that.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Yes. I accept that. It is an important statement. It is an expression of the fact that the fear of devaluation has passed and that the IMF programme is over and the destabilisation programme is over. That is another reason why I caution the Minister of Finance to be very careful how he interprets the present level of foreign reserves. For the first time I have said this evening that you should factor that into it because that will be competing with your assessment of the value added in tourism based on the way in which it has been done and which was done over the years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member can wind up and come again.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is a wide range of error. What we want to see, what the hoteliers in Barbados want to see, what the restauranteurs want to see, .are more and more people coming to Barbados so that you not only have the people on the West Coast, but you will also have the people on the South Coast and the money will spread more and more through the society.

It is very important that you make sure there is continuous growth in numbers because, make no mistake, the guy who is making a room available at U.S. $20 a night or US $15 a night on the South Coast, is also making a valuable contribution because many of those persons mix throughout the society and spend a whole lot of money in Barbados as well. If we have the numbers, the historic position is that if there is a growth in numbers then we know that there is a growth in expenditure. When I see a growth in expenditure which is out of disproportion to the growth in numbers, I have serious doubts about the validity of the claim.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, continuing, I want now to deal with the question of tourism since the Honourable Member has raised it. I am really concerned that the Minister and the Ministry have continued to,

in a sense, give false impressions about the reality of the tourism situation in this country.

Aside,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You have spoken continuously and your people have put out information into the wider Barbados, information which, if it is not misleading, is at least discomforting.

Mr. Chairman, when the Minister was appointed responsible for Tourism, she came in here and allowed people to feel that the appointment of three persons would have elevated tourism to a new plane, that a paradigm shift had been made in tourism in this country.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East in a marathon presentation in this Chamber demonstrated and predicted that the result would be chaotic. The Minister in her usual manner behaved as though all of us were stupid and that we could not understand the new approaches which were coming.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am always well advised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. The Honourable Member came in here and the Government agreed to three relatively ordinary persons and elevated them into a super status. I wish to ask the Minister if she is in a position now to tell us whether she had, in fact, checked on the credentials of some of the persons who are appointed because the releases which were put out gave the impressions that at least one of those persons had credentials which I laughed at when I saw it. I have come subsequently to think that I should have raised questions about it.

There was an output which suggested that one of the persons had some marketing degree from Queens College of the City University of New York. I went to the City University of New York. I taught at the City University of New York and the City University of New York gives no degree in Marketing. There is no one who can come and say they have any Master Degree or other degree in Marketing. 6.05 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, when people come from elsewhere and present information to people in Barbados if those people happen to be of a different race, no one bothers to check. I am saying that the Minister should really indicate to us whether in fact she has been able to ascertain that the qualifications which were presented by all of the persons were valid.

Mr. Chairman, they were some who had worked at B.W.I.A. Cleveland Mayers worked at B.W.I.A. and he became Chairman of the Board of Tourism. The other one worked at B.W.I.A. and he became Marketing Manager. The difference is that Cleveland Mayers got a pittance for his work and the other one was able to get elevated salaries which the Minister allowed people to mislead her into thinking that this somehow was going to bring some additional pot of gold into Barbados. It was total rubbish then as it is rubbish now. It is no business of mine to discuss what will follow from where those persons have gone but it was not a matter of months before we became aware that much of the rhetoric about what this distinguished gentleman would do, turn out to be nothing short of rhetoric and he left them high and dry. The Minister must get up and tell if she has been able to fill the position or if she is simply going to revert to what has been.

Statistics will show that during the interim between the demise of the then Director of Tourism, when all the people were acting, the performance of the Barbados Tourism Authority was superior to what exist since we had what my friend the Honourable Member for St. Michael East call "the Lotto Olympia high fliers". "The Lotto Olympia high fliers", one of them has gone to fly some more. I wish him well.

Sir, in the meantime, tourism has shown a lack of clear objectives. In terms of the seasonal market, in terms of the geographic markets, in terms of demographics, in terms of ethnic markets, in terms of special interest niches nor in term of research, we have seen no clear cut objectives. We need to determine the needs of those categories which I have just described. There is a lack of sufficient visitor satisfaction data. We get snippets from time to time put out into the marketplace.

I believe, Sir, and I will state that there are at least two persons in this country, who, over the last few years have demonstrated a tremendous capacity in tourism.

You mean to tell me that these persons whose qualifications may be doubtful were in a better position to determine what is going to happen to tourism than people whose performance is clear? The Minister could well go and take the present Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and put her in the B.T.A. and pay her the Lotto salary and let her run tourism for her. The Minister could do that. The Minister can find at least two or three Permanent Secretaries who can go down in the Tourism Authority and produce and who will understand and have a commitment to Barbados. One of the requirements of working in the Ministry of Tourism and working in the Tourism Authority is that the person or persons must have a commitment not only to self-development but must have a commitment to what happens in Barbados.

We go and bring "netia", "caia", "Sam Couchie and the duppy" and we put them in positions of power that they could be contemptuous of other people and you put a gulf between the workers who are in the trenches and the people who could come and benefit off the cream of Barbados and when it suits them, up and leave us as though we do not exist and tell me that they had an offer that they could not refuse.

On the topic of advertising, Sir, there is insufficient media exposure, anyone who reads the trade journals on tourism will find that Barbados has had no increase of media exposure. Put in terms of public relation, it has been abysmal. As for the slogan "The Best a Vacation can be", it is the least imaginative slogan that I have ever heard and Your Honour knows that that is not a slogan that even the people here in Barbados would have come up with. Is there any difference between Bermuda or Timbuktu, "the Best a Vacation can be", is that a slogan?

Let me tell you what has happened about here. The Minister came in here and told us soon after she was appointed that she was going to make sure that all of the activities relating to promotion of tourism for Barbados was under the same roof. So they had this DMB&B, the Advertising Agency and they had Manning, Salvage & Lee which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the DMB&B Ad. Agency. They wanted the DMB&B Ad. Agency because they wanted all of Barbados' tourism all over the world to be centred in the same place and then they had this Manning, Salvage & Lee; and wanted to consolidate everything under the same roof. They were a wholly owned subsidiary, for public relations purposes, of DMB&B.

You know what happened, Mr. Chairman? First of all Manning, Salvage & Lee, got tired of that - they had enough of that. So the young lady who was in charge of the Desk for Barbados left DMB&B and she was able to take her whole group with her to a place called Rudderfinn. Rudderfinn is now doing the public relations.

I want to ask the Minister: whatever happened to the concept of having all of our promotion under one roof? How come when Manning, Salvage & Lee decided that they were finished with Public Relations, how come Barbados did not put the Public Relations back out on the marketplace where everybody could get a chance but this lady Gail Mooney was able to move from DMB&B, Manning Salvage & Lee and carry her entourage and get the entire Barbados account? How come? Now they are working for an entirely different agency called Rudderfinn and DMB&B is still doing the advertising for Barbados.

The Honourable Minister will explain it to us. I am entitled to be ignorant about it but I know something happened and I want to know what it is, that is what I am asking.

I wish to know what happened because the Minister said that she wanted everything under the same roof. Well it is not now under the same roof. You have given the people the impression when you talk about the "country team" you included the concept and the Minister gave the people of this country the impression that they wanted the advertising and the public relations for Canada, Barbados, Washington and heaven all to be in the same vein. I am discussing the advertising for tourism. I am not confused.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, that is the nature of the beast, what is good for the goose is not good for the gander. 6.15 p.m.

I would like to know what is the special capacity that the lady has that she can go across and cany the Barbados account with her to the other place. I do not have any problem with that. I do not even know who the lady is. It is because when we come to look at the results of tourism in this country, we will find that except in one destination that from September 1996, we have had a continuous decline month after month after month. Get the facts. Get the figures. Month after month after month in all the destinations except the United Kingdom and a slight move in Canada that is what we have had and when the Honourable Member gets up, if she wishes me to, I can give her the details. Month after month, decline after decline and meanwhile the people of Barbados have been led to believe that a Daniel had come to judgement. You gave the people in this country to believe that a Daniel had come to judgement. They were going to see a new brand of tourism. Tourism was going to go on a different plane and what have we had? The same old khaki pants except that the morale in the Tourism Authority has sunken to the lowest it has ever been, because the Minister has treated the people in tourism, other than her managers, like dirt.

The Minister has not taken the trouble to go and let those people understand that they too constitute part of Barbados - the people that work in tourism, the ones that you do not know in the Tourism Authority, the people who work, the people who performed in the impasse between the chasing away of the last...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Oh, you were there in December. Well if the Minister is able to say she went in December, she was appointed two years before. I am glad if she went at all because I would be happy as would Honourable Members in here, if she went in December. I do not have any quarrel with that. I am glad that the Minister found time to go in December and I hope that it is only

a matter of time now before she puts their emoluments on par with their managers. It is improper, highly improper for the Minister to come in here and get $130 000+ a year for the managers and up to now ...

I do not think I wish to come in here and pillory any individual but if the shoe fits, you are going to have to wear it. It is improper, after all this time. The Minister gave the impression that the Government was going to be redressing this matter and at this time, two years later, we are still in a position where the people who do the actual work in the Tourism Authority, the people who have been producing before, who continue to produce now and on whom we are going to call when the birds have flown. When the birds have flown we will still have to rely on the people in the trenches and that Minister, contemptuous of people as she is, that Minister is a problem. I do not know why the Prime Minister does not save the country. The Prime Minister has it in his hands to save the country. The Minister is incapable of doing the things that he has given her to do, short of the kinds of statements that she makes and the kind of way she does it. She does that very well and I think they should make her a public relations officer for the Cabinet and whenever they have a speech to make, give it to her, especially if it is an international speech. Set her on McLaughlin, the clown in Washington who has attacked the country. Put her on television internationally. She does that well. And let her travel. And then put somebody to run tourism. The Member for St. Michael North is rearing to go. Give him some work to do.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If I am prepared to recommend that Minister you know how badly I feel about this one. So give him something to do. This Minister is too busy.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Instead of dealing with the people who have to do the work of this country she is now getting ready to play musical chairs. How can the people in position number 4 and on down, and public officers in this country, feel comfortable to see that from a performance point of view there has been no change in tourism? As a matter of fact if there has been any change it has been change downwards.

How can they feel to hear a Minister come in here justifying her position on the basis of a new study? When I come back, Sir, I am going to talk about the Tourism Investment Corporation. The Minister and the Ministry of Tourism and Foreign Affairs - I do not know if Foreign Affairs prepared the release because the Foreign Affairs people are very good at preparing releases - but the Minister took issue with the *Nation Newspaper* when the *Nation Newspaper* said that the Minister had agreed to privatise tourism in this country and recently with the hotels on the West Coast you begin to see what is going to happen as if marketing tourism, the private sector and the public sector is something new. We used to make them go into New York and the rest of North America and do some work but now the Minister has endorsed a presentation from the private sector that we should privatise tourism in this country.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Now, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is again in the area of invention. No such thing has happened. How could the Honourable Member get up and just make a statement like that?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On November 29, 1996 Sir, the media in this country published it and the media house that published what I said are not foolish media that run a 2 by 3 document, coming out 4 times a year; they run a daily newspaper, they have tentacles into the knowledge factors of the Government and they published that the Minister had endorsed a proposal to the "Think Tank" that we should privatise.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But the Minister endorsed it. All kinds of Ministers do not endorse all kinds of foolishness. They published it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member knows it does not work like that. The Minister did not endorse. The Minister cannot endorse anything. The "Think Tank" is an advisory body. People have come before it and put all kinds of recommendations as they are entitled to do and as I invite them to do. Because you simply make a recommendation does not mean you endorse it. I heard what they had to say. They were talking in public. I told them I am willing to hear you and they came before me and not me only, but the "Think Tank" and they made a presentation, now I am going to hear that I endorsed it because I listened to it. If I did not listen to it I would hear that I do not listen to people.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying that the *Nation Newspaper*, a reputable publication in this country, published in their edition of 26th of November 1996, that reliable sources had informed them that the Minister had endorsed it and based on my knowledge of the Minister, if I had to choose between the *Nation Newspaper* and the Minister, I accept the *Nation.* It is as simple as that, Sir, and that is the position I am saying. If the Minister endorsed privatising tourism in this country it is part of an attitude which has been part ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister is saying that she did not endorse it. You are quoting a newspaper and

saying a reliable source said. I am not sure how authentic your report is.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am telling you, Sir, that after synthesising all the information, the decision that I have arrived at about me in my head. I am telling you what I believe and I was saying, Sir, I accept the Minister's word if the Minister says that she did not endorse it. I have no choice in this Place but I was making the point that a reputable organisation in this country that has every reason and every facility for getting information about how the Government and "Think Tanks" and these kinds of institutions operate, published it and the Minister herself, until today, all she put out was a wishy-washy statement saying that it was not the way you are to do business. 6.25 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will make that point when I come back, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am interested to hear the comments of Members on the matter of Tourism since I have not spoken to it.

We had, in this country, several years of decline in Tourism. We went through all the dismal years of the so-called recession. We lived in this Barbados, you know Honourable Members on that side get on as though we have no memory. We live in this Barbados where a Prime Minister, no less, changed Ministers of Tourism, was it five times in two years or two and one half years, changed Boards as often as people changed clothes, where the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, himself, was changed as a Minister of Tourism even before it became fashionable to change Ministers of Tourism every five months. We lived through all of that in Barbados. I am not giving away.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The figures never went down.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we had consecutive years of decline in this country.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: When? Start at 1990 and come down.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Exactly, 1989 was a peace and everybody knows that, and we were all the way coming down after that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thought I was beyond surprise and shock, but, it is distressing that the Honourable Member would get up in here and deliberately misquote figures.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West got up in here and said just now, that we had increases in arrivals in the order of 1.1 per cent in 1996. Now the Honourable Member knew...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I never even cited the figures. I said there were declines, never mentioned a percentage figure.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It was said in here. That the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would suggest that we had a 1.1 percent increase in arrivals, well knowing that he was only making reference to long stay arrivals. He completely overlooked...

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. I very specifically said, long stay arrivals, or, those stay over tourist arrivals, increased by only 1.1 per cent. I did say "stay over."

Sir, I believe that when disputes like this arise, when a Member tries to put the veracity of another Member on the line that we should call for the record.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is a reality, Mr. Chairman, Sir. In 1996 we had long stay arrivals which were in the order of a 1.1 per cent over 1995.

Cruise, again...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West saying cruise what. Cruise has now overtaken long stay arrivals in Barbados. We had a 5.2 percent increase in cruise passengers in Barbados giving us a total of $926 777 arrivals in Barbados in 1996 which in the overall, in the totality amounted to a 3.3 per cent increase over the year before.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I have never, never seen Tourism statistics analysed in this way. The Tourism statistics are always separate from the long stay arrivals which are defined. It is defined in the statistics what a long stay arrival is. It is never done that way. It is foolishness.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Just to correct the records of the House, the Honourable Minister made some statements regarding the practice of the Democratic Labour Party to change a number of Boards over a two-year period.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister may have misled the House and I am seeking to place the record in its proper perspective so that it is not distorted in the Press.

The facts are, that during that same period that the Minister referred to where there were several changes which would be considered at the height of the crisis, a massive 31 202 additional visitors came to Barbados during that period.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. It would only be appropriate if you were correcting the statement that was being made by the Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Nobody is presenting the wrong figures to the House of Assembly. Mr. Chairman Sir, the long stay arrivals in Barbados totalled 444 107 which represented a 1.1 percent increase over the arrivals of 1995 and that cannot be disputed.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying that in its totality that is the percentage of an increase in 1994 over 1995.1 would say total arrivals. Yes, there is something called total arrivals.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is a methodology for statistical analysis in Barbados which forms part of the law. The analysis of arrivals of Tourism has been separated. We have long stay arrivals and we have cruise arrivals. I have spent a lot of time telling them that Bahamas and Jamaica add their cruise to their long stay. We have never done it. The Minister cannot get in here now and suddenly talk about adding them together and then say, percentage. You can say it but it is not valid.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have given you the disaggregated figures and I have given you the totality. If the Honourable Member does not want to hear the totality that is a matter for him.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have to get the records straight. A Minister has a duty to adhere for comparative purposes to the statistical base used by the Government of Barbados, by the Central Bank of Barbados and you cannot just lump things together like that. Suppose I were to tell this House that the forecast is now that it is 55 thousand less cruise ship passenger arrivals in Barbados in 1997. Seventy-five thousand is the present forecast because of the problems with Princess Cruises and Norwegian Cruise lines. I did not want to say that Sir, but if you want to start lumping them together like that then you are creating a problem for all of us.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, these figures represent the reality in Barbados.

In other jurisdictions they are aggregated and you get the totality, such as we have here.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is true. I am saying what is a fact. Because Members do not want to hear it, that is a matter for them. Now if I can draw to the attention of Honourable Members, it is a very interesting thing in 1996 that occurred.... 6.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, normally January and February would represent the months in the winter season when arrivals of long stay would be at their peak, but an interesting occurrence last year in terms of our long stay arrivals - July was the most productive month in 1996.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You know, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has said that he has no respect for Central Bank figures and - yesterday or day before yesterday - he is now producing his own figures. I do not know what his source is.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I am seeking to correct the Honourable Minister. In December of 1996, long stay arrivals were 44 240 which is the highest for the entire year. So you cannot make the statement you are making.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What these July figures are telling us, and it is not the first year that we have seen this, is the tremendous impact of the Crop Over Festival and all of the activities surrounding us. It tells what kind of impact this is having on the industry. If I could say a word about revenues. Revenues, 1996.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I am not trying to be mischievous but the record does suggest that in July 1996 there was an increase out of the United States by some 12.9% and there was a whopping increase out of Canada by 46% but what is very worrying is that there were declines in Germany, Europe, the Caribbean, South America, the United Kingdom...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I must be allowed to speak. Everybody is interrupting and the Chair is just letting people get up and make speeches.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I will let her speak but I am just saying I do not want her to create a false impression about the performance.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I have not even got to deal with the individual markets yet.

I wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, despite the things Honourable Members have said, estimated revenue for 1996 is looking to us as $1.4 billion. This would have been an increase over 1995 when it was $1.359 billion.

Let me deal with the individual markets, Sir. The United Kingdom continues to be turning out the best performance. The United Kingdom continues to be our best producing market and I am happy to say continues to be our fastest growing market. Out of the United Kingdom in 1996 we got 34% of our arrivals.

I think it is generally known that the average length of stay out of the United Kingdom exceeds that of all other markets. So we saw that the United Kingdom overtook for the first time in 1996 the United States market. The United States showing at 25.2% of our arrivals. It was interesting to note that these dramatic increases that we saw were coming out of the provinces of the United Kingdom. Consequently the Barbados Tourism Authority in the United Kingdom is now concentrating its focus not only on the provinces but on London and the Greater London area as well.

We are looking forward to further increases out of the United Kingdom, and this has to do with increased airlifts out of the United Kingdom as well, during the year and the winter coming.

What has now become our second major market, the United States of America, has shown some improvement but not as well as we would like to see. This market has been plagued with a number of problems. In 1995, there was major hurricane activity in the Caribbean and people had it to say that the increased arrivals that we saw in the winter of 1995 had to do with the fact that people had made alternative arrangements and that we benefited in a large way from the fact of these hurricanes in Antigua and other islands.

I do not entirely share that point of view, because we have to look now to see what happened in 1996, a good strong showing at the beginning of the year but then we saw a softening as the summer months came on.

In summer 1996, we had out of the United States a presidential election. When we look back at the figures, I am advised that it shows that traditionally Americans tend to stay home in an election year. It was also a year when we had the Olympics hosted by the United States of America. The number of Americans who would normally have travelled to the Caribbean even in the summer months tended to stay home on account of the Olympics there. In addition to which, Mr. Chairman, there were a number of quite violent storms early on in the season which tended to put people off.

The tourism arrivals are governed by the vagaries of national events, international events or weather and these do make a difference. For instance, January this year is showing that in Barbados stay over visitors for the month of January showed a 3.3% increase over January 1996 and this is the highest figure recorded in January in the last 7 years and is only exceeded by 1988 and 1989. 6.45 p.m.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Out of nowhere for February, we have the threat of the American Airlines strike and so, as we would expect, you see a little softening in the first two weeks of February but it has strengthened again and we expect that in March we are going to do exceedingly well. In March, in fact, we have so many things converging that we cannot cater to everyone. We have the Pavarotti concert, we have cycling, we have CARIFTA games, we have cricket. There is something else that is happening.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, there are a number of things that are converging in March that obviously will tell us that there is going to be a very strong showing in March.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In January of this year we continued to do well in our Bajan markets, the United Kingdom recorded a 17.6% increase. Canada, coming on after a long time out in the cold, 18.5% increase over last year's and even in CARICOM.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am talking about January this year. In January of this year we saw good increases out of markets where we have been spending money and spending effort. I am going to come back to this, Sir. I was very much interrupted and I hope that you give me some of my time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I gave you extra time.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I wish to speak rather briefly and directly to the issue of cruise tourism which this evening seem to have generated quite a bit of emotion. The Member for St. Michael South Central seems to me to have been almost quoting from a document which he has not made a document of the House, which I have not seen and he has given an impression which is extremely false. I do not know what the entire document said, but he certainly said that there is some expected projection of some 55,000 decrease in cruise tourist for this year.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have before me a document which really is prepared by the shipping agents and really therefore ought to be seen as the authentic source for the number of cruise passengers visiting Barbados. This document says that for 1996 the number of cruise passengers visiting Barbados was some 543,414, the highest number to date for any one year. The amount for December was given as 66,995 which again was the highest figure for any December ever since we started to really be engaged in the area of cruise tourism. The projection and my advice again from the Port Authority is that this year there is an anticipated increase of the magnitude of five per cent in the area again of cruise passengers visiting Barbados. I really want to put to rest some of the nonsense that goes around such as emanating from the Member for St. Michael South Central. He referred to Princess Cruises and Norwegian indicating that as a result of their pull-out I think he said, we would see a decrease in the number of passengers.

First of all, Princess Cruises is not pulling out of Barbados. I was in Miami only last week and I made it my business to visit a number of the cruise lines and one with whom I visited and chatted for quite a long time was Princess Cruises and they were indeed very annoyed to hear that any interpretation was being put to their action that can be interpreted as a "pull-out". What they made very clear is that because of market forces and market demand they are in fact going to be coming to Barbados on a fortnightly basis instead of a weekly basis but with a bigger cruise ship. They are going to be continuing service to Barbados but with a bigger capacity ship.

With respect to Norwegian, they have the Seaward and the Windward that operate into Barbados. It is a fact that the Windward will not be coming to Barbados for the winter of this year resulting in a loss of some 14,400 passengers from that ship but that is no reason whatsoever to have any fear about us experiencing any decline in the number of cruise passengers.

In 1996 we lost Costa Lines and as a result of that we lost some 2,900 passengers from that one line alone and yet we went on to make in 1996 over 3,000 passengers more than we did although we had lost Costa Lines. So you have to understand the cruise tourism industry. It is a very flexible industry. Cruise industry is moving towards less number of ships and more passengers. In fact, in 1996, we had that 5.9% increase ...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that you report progress to His Honour the Speaker, and beg leave to sit again.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that in the absence of the Speaker that the Deputy Speaker takes it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 8.00 o'clock this evening was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 6.55 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 Mr. CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House reverts to Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North, please continue.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, when we broke I was in the course of really seeking to enlighten the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who is still not in his seat and who would seek to really spread a false alarm about some alleged decrease in cruise tourist arrivals in 1997. I was making the point that although cruise ships make adjustments in itineraries, reduce frequencies and so on, that is no cause for alarm. In Barbados, as I said, last year we lost Costa Lines, losing some 30 000 cruise passengers and yet went on to increase our cruise tourist arrivals by over some 30 000 passengers. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that the cruise industry is a very dynamic industry and last year, therefore, while we lost the Costa Lines, we, in fact, improved the number of passengers in respect of Carnival Cruises which shot up by over some 40 000 passengers in respect of that one line alone.

I just want to pre-empt one thing before the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central gets hold of a piece of information, does not understand it, and runs to the Press and again, perhaps, spread some sort of alarm.

You will hear a report some time in the near future which indicates that Inspiration which was put on last year in Barbados by Carnival Cruise Lines will cease operations in Barbados, but we are not losing one single passenger. It is just being replaced by another ship from the same cruise line, Fascination, with the same capacity and everything. So just before the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central gets that piece of information and seeks to distort it and spread an alarm, I just thought I would clear with my colleagues in the Chamber and let them know that.

Now, the cruise industry, Mr. Chairman, is moving in the direction of utilising fewer ships, but bigger ships. In 1996 we saw, in fact, a decrease in the number of cruise ship calls at Barbados from 580 ship calls to 532. Despite that decrease, we were still able to increase our overall cruise tourist arrivals by some 5.9 per cent. Without giving too many details at this time, I just want to say that this year we expect some additional cruise ships to be calling at Barbados.

We expect some changes to be made in ships from particular lines, but with bigger ships. The same way the Princess Cruises will, in fact, be calling fortnightly with a bigger ship resulting with a less number of passengers, we expect some lines to change their ships and put on bigger ships. For example, the Jubilee which is going to be replacing the Tropical from the Celebrity Line will, in fact, be now bringing some 1 800 passengers instead of 1 200.

We also expect, although this will be for next year, a very massive cruise ship - I am not going to disclose the name or the line at this stage - which is eager to come to Barbados and will, in fact, be bringing to Barbados on each cruise the number of 3 500 passengers. I want to repeat it. We expect next year to have a certain cruise ship coming to Barbados that will, in fact, be bringing some 3 500 passengers on each visit.

The Honourable Member, as I said, did not make the document a document of the House because for all I know it could be a bogus document. When I hear that sort of information, first of all, it is not news to my ears because I know it already. But believe me when I say it did not cause my heart to miss a single beat because that is how cruise tourism operates, demand and supply. You lose a cruise ship today and you get one tomorrow.

With respect to Barbados -1 am not going to be long on this point. I think I will merely make this point. I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not in his place but the fact of the matter is that Barbados is a preferred cruising destination.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of those who did not hear - in the same way you hear the negative news about Princess Cruises and Norwegian Lines, which is not really that negative, but in any case, this year we expect to get some additional cruise ships as well. One, for sure, Jubilee, which is from Celebrity Line, will be replacing the Tropical. It is expected to bring to Barbados on a weekly basis some 1 800 passengers instead of the present 1 200 passengers that it brings per week. That is just one line, Celebrity.

Fantasy, a new ship all together, another ship from Celebrity Lines, is also expected to be added this year. We expect this additional cruise ship traffic. In addition, for those who might not have heard, we are expecting in 1998 to receive a cruise ship from a certain line which I would not wish to disclose at this time, that will bring some 3 500 passengers on each call.

Sir, Barbados has a lot to expect in the area of cruise tourism. I want to really let it be known that Barbados-is a preferred cruising destination. This is not

to say that Barbados sees itself as indispensable. There is a lot of goodwill among cruise lines for Barbados.

When I visited Miami last week and I met with all the cruise lines, they were looking forward to a continuing relationship with Barbados. Barbados has facilities that far exceed the facilities that obtain elsewhere, and that is a fact. Honourable Members would know that we also have plans to make those facilities even better at the Bridgetown Port over the next year or so. Barbados has nothing to fear. Our on shore facilities like Harrison's Cave, *et cetera* are things that bring cruise ships to Barbados. Once more, as I said, it is the partnership that exists between Barbados and cruise lines.

I only just wanted to intervene to enlighten the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the alarmist that he is, who read bogus figures in this Parliament earlier tonight deliberately to spread an alarm and panic in a situation where there is no need to do it because it does not exist. I really just wanted to rise to put it in its proper context and let the Members of Parliament and Barbados at large know that cruise passenger arrivals in Barbados last year rose to a record high. There was a projection of 5.9 per cent last year on 1995. This year...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister has stated just now that cruise tourism has increased by 5 per cent and he said that was a record level. That is not correct. In 1988, and I have the statistics in front of me, Sir, cruise tourism increased by 29.45 per cent and I would not deal with the 80s and 90s.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: If the Honourable Member can disprove or prove that ever in the history of Barbados that more than 543 414 cruise passengers came to Barbados, then he would be right, and I would be wrong, but I am not going to waste my time.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I just wanted to get up to allay the fears that might have been caused by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Later in the day I will come back again as points arise in relation to cruise tourism.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, while I respect the efforts of the Minister for International Transport, I wish to dismiss this view that cruise ship passengers contribute to this economy the same as long stay passengers.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I know you have not said that. By extension, if they do not contribute the same they cannot be added together.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: How you mean not necessarily? You add like things together, Mr. Chairman. Therefore I am establishing the point that since the long stay visitors are not the same as the cruise ship passengers, it does not make sense to add them together. In fact, to be able to add the cruise ship passengers to the long stay, you need to multiply the long stay passenger by the average length of stay, that is, the long stay visitor stays for six days, you multiply the tourist arrivals for long stay by six and then you add them to cruise ship passengers in order to make them alike. 8.05 p.m.

When you add long staying visitors to cruise ship passengers, you are adding apples and oranges. I am saying to you that it cannot be done that way because what you are in actual fact doing is overstating the value of a cruise ship passenger.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Do not use it for political gains, do not add the two things together and then tell me that overall arrivals to Barbados have increased.

In any event, those involved in the trade would know and can testify that less than 20% of the cruise ship passengers get off the ship anyhow.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Forty million dollars in a billion dollar industry - I am not saying it is not important — it is like icing on the cake, you add it, you are glad for it. We are glad to see increases in cruise ship passengers to give the taxi trade and the duty free sector and other ancillary services some kind of business but to add the two together is an error and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West should not encourage the Ministry of Tourism to add the two together. I am asking you not to do that because Jamaica does it or Dominica does because it is incorrect. So that is out of the way. From here on end I will not expect you to add long staying and cruise ship passengers together. Do I have your word on that.

In 1996, tourist arrivals increased by 1.1%. What happened is that between July and December, long staying tourist arrivals declined at an average rate of 4% per month. Therefore, what is important for us then is to look at the trends in tourism and unfortunately, the trend is not a very healthy one that you should be seeking to admire.

In the U.K. market - we expect the U.K. to continue to perform. The last administration put quite

a lot of emphasis on this market, to some criticism of some in the industry. It is well respected that we have quite a lot of opportunity within the United Kingdom to increase arrivals even further and there was criticism of using some very old jets from Russia during the early 1990s to get our arrivals up out of the U.K. Now we are seeing all kinds of regard and respect being given to arrivals out of the U.K. which in actual fact, Mr. Chairman, exceeded the U.S. market in 1994. Since 1994 the U.K. market has been more important to Barbados' overall tourism than the United States market. You said in your delivery that it was 1996 but it started as far back as 1994.

In the United States we are seeing quite a disturbing trend. In fact, 5 out of 9 States in the United States actually recorded a decline in arrivals in 1996 and more importantly Mid-Atlantic, the major market in the United States has not performed well at all In fact I think it declined during 1996 and this must be a worrying trend because that market comprises of the New Jersey, New York and Penn. We need to put a lot more emphasis on our marketing strategy within Mid-Atlantic.

Again, it is not a question of looking at the overall arrivals out of the U.S.A. but to do a state by state analysis to determine where we need to put the resources.

In terms of the Canadian market - the Canadian market has declined sufficiently over the last 5 to 10 years for there to be a return of growth but let us not be too hopeful in Canada and put too much hope and effort in Canada, feeling that we can cause a substantial return or turnaround in arrivals out of the Canadian market. Five out of the eleven provinces show a decline during 1996 in spite of the fact that we had an overall increase in arrivals from Canada. Again we need to look more critically at the Canadian market to determine where we would put our resources for the next two to three years.

The overall performance in tourism for 1996 can only be described as disappointing. We are seeing a point in debate only this week that in tourism the value added has shown some increase of between 3% to 4% for 1996 in spite of the fact that tourist arrivals only increased by a mere 1%. That is a little difficult to digest but because of the growth in the U.K. market and because the value added in tourism is measured by bed nights, I am hoping that the technocrats at the Central Bank which were criticised earlier this week have gotten that figure correct. It is difficult to understand how a 1% increase in tourist arrivals could translate into a 3% to 4% in value added in the tourism sector but I am not here to criticise the Central Bank of Barbados, I, however, know the underlying weaknesses.

More importantly I wish to ask those at the B.T.A. not to use conveniently expenditure from tourism on a quarterly basis. It cannot be an accurate figure, it cannot be a figure that is justified and when tourist arrivals are declining on a quarterly basis, say so, but do not open your remarks on tourism with expenditure in tourism increased in the quarter in September because at the same time there is a corresponding decline in tourist arrivals.

It is convenient for the authorities at the B.T.A. to quote expenditure from tourism on a quarterly basis when they know it is not available and cannot be accurate because no survey has been done and even the Central Bank of Barbados cannot in any way say with any degree of substantial confidence that the tourist expenditure for the year is indeed accurate. They cannot say it. It is really a concocted figure for 20 or so years.

The balance of payments survey that is done on a yearly basis at the Central Bank of Barbados does not capture adequately the proceeds from the hotel sector.

I am saying to you that even on an annual basis that tourism expenditure figure is suspect and it makes it even worse when you do it on a quarterly basis.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is known that tourism expenditure is not an accurate figure. In the context of the Central Bank there are able to gauge on a week by week basis through the commercial banking system to give expression to the final figure derived at the end of the year.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The increase reserves can be explained easily. I am glad to see the increase in reserves; in fact it started way back in 1994 and it has continued because this administration has decided to adopt the policies of the last administration with only one minor change in concession to the manufacturing sector which has declined and will continue to decline.

There have been increases in the interest rate rather than reductions, there have been increases in taxation, rather than reductions, there has been the containment of the fiscal position rather than expansion. There has been a whole range of policies that this administration has maintained since 1994 to the benefit of the economy and one would have expected, given the criticism level of the last administration that they should have reversed all the policies but the Prime Minister has not seen it fit to reverse any of those policies.

I understand the predicament that the Prime Minister found himself in. When you are in possession of a stable ship why should you decide to divert? It has been stabilised by the last administration. It is known you have

decided to adopt all the policies. You have not removed yourself from any and now the only major concern is the 8% tax, which you also have adopted because you recognised the benefit of it during the course of 1991 to 1994. 8.15 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, just let me end by saying that we have as a matter of duty to critically analyse what is happening within the tourism sector. And just let me end on this note. Those practitioners in the tourism industry must recognise that the policy adopted by this administration to impose a $7V_2$% on accommodation would result in a lost of competitiveness in this industry. Therefore it is easy to forecast that the tourism industry would be under considerable pressure during this coming year and 1998. This administration had planned to exempt the hotel accommodation and in fact had exempted the hotel accommodation. Of course it was done. This administration exempted hotel accommodation at the time that the policies were formulated and you know that only too well.

The Prime Minister was suggesting in fact that that route would have caused the industry $35 million and I am saying it will not. You know only too well that the policy you have adopted has in fact increased the cost of our tourism product in Barbados and will continue to negatively impact on the industry and its profitability. I will re-enter.

Of course you have to follow my advice, exempt the hotel accommodation, reduce the tax on food and therefore you will make the industry more competitive.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to enter this debate for a very short period of time because I have listened to many debates on tourism in this Honourable House. Sir, I well recognise that the task of providing policies to ensure that there is continuous growth in the tourist industry in Barbados is not an easy one because the tourist industry in Barbados, to a large extent, is driven by the external factors in the markets from which we get our tourists, and that lest it be thought that we on this side accept the suggestions of the Honourable Members who spoke on that side, that over the course of the last 3 years there has been a deterioration in the position of the tourist industry I would hasten to point out that even on the figures as presented to us by the other side, the situation is quite clear that both in respect of cruise tourism and in respect of the long-term stay there has not been a decline. As I see it, Sir, for cruise tourism in 1994 there were 459 502. In 1995 - 484 670. In 1996 - 509 975. In the tourism long stay arrivals, in 1994 - 425 632, in 1995 - 442 107 and in 1996 - 447 083. In each successive year there has been an increase in both cruise tourism and long stay visitors.

Now, Sir, I think that all Honourable Members will agree, given the dependence that Barbados has on the tourist industry, that the magnitude of the increase is one that we would have liked to have seen to be greater, quite obviously, but one must recognise that in truth and in fact, that in many of the markets from which we get our tourists considerable changes have been taking place. I will caution Honourable Members that an in-depth analysis of what is taking place in a market should be done. One of my criticisms of the structure of the institutional framework that we have in the tourist industry in Barbados is that we have not got enough research capability either in the Ministry or in the Board of Tourism to do this essential job.

It should not be a matter of surprise to Honourable Members that our visitors from Germany and some other parts of Europe have gone down over the last two years. Anyone who has been studying the state of the economy in the European Economic Community would recognise that Germany, in particular, has suffered and is undergoing a dramatic change in their economic fortunes. The German Chancellor, the German Minister of Finance, and many other spokesmen in Germany are pointing to the fact that the reality is that they are enjoying, at the present moment, the largest amount of unemployment since the war.

Now parallel with that position in the macro economy in Germany there is a tremendous amount of consolidation going along both among the tour operators and among the airlines in Germany. There is no question about that but I am saying that it is reaching its peak now. Last year alone there has been a tremendous amount of consolidation among the leading tour operators coming from Germany to Barbados.

The impact of the changes in the airline policy within Europe in which the national airlines are no longer able to commandeer the markets in their own country as a result of the open skies policy that is taking place as a result of the single market in Europe, have had a profound effect on the airline industry and there have been a lot of mergers. A lot of the national airlines in Europe are undergoing great structural changes so that the impact of all of that are matters that we should be in Barbados aware of and try to understand what impact they are going to have on us.

We have been fortunate in that in the United Kingdom, Barbados' reputation is at a very high level. There is no question about it. If you look at the source of increase of visitors in Barbados you will see that England and Canada are the two areas. We also have to remember...

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Not next year. Let me say this. There is great cause for opposition for

next year. Next year is cricket and there has never, ever been a period of time in which England is coming to Barbados and we have had anything other than an increase. Already there is talk of a tentative demand in March for 8 000 to 10 000 people to come here. 8.25 p.m.

Every year from 1981 when you had test matches in Barbados, you had a big increase from England. So, therefore, when I hear a *sotto voce* remark saying that not next year, I am able to say that the reality is that.

Now, Sir, I want to say, Sir, we have been pointing out also that it is necessary for us to strengthen our marketing effort in the form of the personnel and in the form of the machinery in Europe. There is no question about it and we need to do it. The human resources that are made available to the Barbados industry in Europe needs increasing. There is no question about that. They may decide that this is the wrong time to increase it because the economy in Germany is bad, but that is precisely the right time, because, now you must lay your foundation for the expansion.

Now, Sir, as far as the United States is concerned, there is no doubt that it is a matter of disappointment that we have not done better in the United States, because we had expected that with the additional resources that have been put into the United States, that we would have gotten a greater increase. A number of analysts have said that "your resources have been put in at a period of time when they had elections in the United States of America, when they had Olympics in the United States of America." So you had two factors which would, in all probability affect your performance.

There is one point at this junction that I would like to make. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West stated that the situation with respect to marketing and public relations in the United States of America, in his opinion, was bad. He said that the decision to appoint DMB&B and Manning, Salvage and Lee, to look after the totality of the public relations and marketing in the Tourist Board was a bad decision. That is what the Honourable Member said.

I just want to remind Members that those of us who were in here between 1991 and 1994 will recall that was the subject of a great debate in here. Many of us took the view, including the Honourable Member at that time, that it was a bad decision, notwithstanding the fact that it was implemented by that administration, because of the fact that it would be difficult to have one firm that would combine the experience in each of the diverse markets that we have.

I am glad to say that we have raised this matter repeatedly and it was felt that since they were recently appointed when there was a change of Government, it would be a bad thing just automatically to cut off the contract and to start a new contract.

I am told and I am sure that the Honourable Minister will speak to it. I am also told that a review has taken place or is taking place with respect to that arrangement. I have always said in my own mind that it is difficult to understand that you could have a public relations and advertising agency firm that could manage both the North American market and the European market. There is a difference and they operate in different ways. I am very glad to see that general review is taking place.

There are other points that we have, Sir. There is a question of what is happening in the United States with respect to that market too, because there is consolidation taking place there. We must get to the position where we can have available to Barbados, an adequate number of airlines seats.

All of us welcome the facts that there were great possibilities or great potential with Air Jamaica coming from the United States to provide additional capacity. They have come, and I am not sure myself, that they are going to be here in the form in which we expect it. There are some reports that they intend not to run it by direct services from various cities, for example, the City of Atlanta to Barbados, but they intend to have a hub in Montego Bay.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am not talking about New York, I am talking about coming from Atlanta. I am one of those who believe, that the solution to the airline capacity to the Eastern Caribbean is the one that was worked out and thought of as long ago as 1982 and that is very simple.

It is impossible for each of these countries in the Eastern Caribbean to be able to have an Airline on their own to run these routes. The market is just not there. The money is just not there, and if in the world today, two giants like Boeing and McDonald have found it necessary to combine for the purpose of manufacturing an aircraft, if for the purpose of carrying passengers you have arrangements with B.A. and American Airlines, why we cannot have arrangements, I ask, between the Caribbean Airlines, bankrupt as they are, to ensure that we have an increase in passengers.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. I again see, Sir, that changes are taking place also in that

area and we must sit here and anticipate it, think about it. So I am going to come back because I believe also, that in addition to this question, I feel that we should try and do more and more research to identify, in the marketplaces from which we get our tourists about the factors that affect us. We have also to ensure that when the visitors come here that we provide them with a holiday that they enjoy.

Luckily for us, Sir, I believe that on the ground here in Barbados that considerable diversification is taking place, has taken place and that the satisfaction factor is rising.

I will come back to deal with the local ones. But that is the position, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Perhaps I should make the point that when the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who just sat down and he was able to point out that during the time of our administration, positions which I took then because I believed that the decision that had been made was an incorrect decision and that is why when the Honourable Member speaks on some matters related to Tourism one be *ad idem* with him.

I do not believe that Tourism for Barbados ought to be discussed and decisions made always on the basis of partisanship. I believe that Tourism is so important to Barbados that by now, we should be leading the way in the methodology for managing Tourism.

What he has objected to all the time is that with the coming of the Barbados Labour Party's administration they have sought to negate decisions that we made during the time of the Democratic Labour Party. They sought to propose to the people of Barbados that there was a dawning of a new day in Tourism.

There can be no dawning of a new day in Tourism, and that is why we continue to make the errors. That is why we continue to have to call for a proper research division in this country every time, because, every five years or every ten years some new approach comes in which suggest that what went before does not make sense.

Now, here we are, when I last left the Ministry of Tourism we had reached a stage where we were on the verge of being able to say with certainty how many tennis players will be coming to Barbados in any given year. How many people, who like to swim would be coming to Barbados in any particular year. We should by now have a research capacity in this country that we could even sell that as an expertise.

In Tourism, we should be able by now, instead of having to stop and change, every six months, every year, we are stopping and changing. I will give you an example. 8.35 p.m.

The Honourable Member's administration has announced recently that Hugh Riley is going to become the Marketing Director for North America. Mr. Chairman, there is a quality person whom we have taken and moved about when, in fact, that was, in my view, one of the young people at the time that should have been honed and by now would be in a position to provide for Barbados a quality ability in areas that could be of benefit to us in the long term. Here we are now going to move him from Canada back to North America. He should never have been moved from New York in the first place.

We have been in New York languishing. We have had an acting manager in New York for about $2V_2$ years. A waste of time. The man is not important. We took someone from California who was familiar with the whole western area. The Government had started to develop the western part of the United States. We came in and decided it was worthwhile and we would continue that. Suddenly, we had a lurch and then we had him commuting back and forth between California and New York. That is a waste of time and a waste of resources. Barbados cannot afford the kind of personal approach to development which one sees especially in tourism. We have to be extremely careful how we deal with the development of this resource.

The Honourable Member spoke about Air Jamaica. The evidence up to now does not suggest that Air Jamaica is going to fulfil any of the dreams and the pronouncements which the coming of Air Jamaica has provoked in the media and elsewhere, because they do not have the capacity to do the advertising and the promotion that ought to come with the creation of what in essence is a Barbados airline. The fact that it is named Air Jamaica does not cause me any stress. I am glad to see that it is going to be a Caribbean airline but it is now for our purposes a Barbados airline. We have given them...

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Air Jamaica is not the national airline of Barbados. It is a designated airline of Barbados. You can be designated on the basis of nationality or as in the case of Air Jamaica the community of interest principle. I am sure you know what that is and that is really the status of Air Jamaica. It is not the national airline of Barbados and I really want to clear the air once and for all with respect to that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member knows that I know and that he knows what he has just said. The people who have read the newspapers in Barbados - the Honourable Member can put it in whatever language he wishes - as far as they are concerned, Air Jamaica

is a Barbados airline. I was not even criticising that because there is nothing inherently wrong with that. What is inherently wrong is that again we have tied the situation into believing that with the coming of Air Jamaica we have secured x number of additional seats and therefore our tourism is going to be increased. But everybody who is familiar with the industry would know that that is not necessarily so.

I think it is a good thing that we have secured an additional airline but unless we promote specifically Barbados, Air Jamaica is going to continue to function like it functioned before. It is simply going to add Barbados to its broad... The Honourable Member is saying from her seat that is what she is doing. Well, you get up and tell us what you are doing. I am asking you to tell us because there is no evidence of it.

There is no evidence in New York. There is no evidence in Miami. There is no evidence in Atlanta, Georgia where the people in Atlanta, Georgia are calling to find out when they are going to fly from Atlanta to Barbados direct. The Minister, instead of running her mouth in places where it does not matter, should be telling the people of Barbados when might we expect Air Jamaica to fly from Atlanta to Barbados with a full load.

What did you tell them last month? It is a well-kept secret but we in here do not know. The Honourable Members in here have not been given any... Maybe the Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows when they are coming but I am going to bet the Honourable Member for the City that this time next year we are going to be discussing whether Air Jamaica is flying direct from Atlanta to Barbados, while the Barbadians and other black people at Atlanta believe on the basis of what we have put out that they are going to be coming directly here with full loads.

We need to be told when. I do not want to hear any speculations. By now, the Director of Tourism in this country or the Minister or some approximation thereto should be able to tell us.

We are discussing this in March 1997 and we should know that it is coming in December or January. There should not be anymore speculation about when it will come. I have people who call me from Georgia from time to time and they want to know whether they will be able to take Air Jamaica to come to the cricket next year. When are you going to tell us that? Is this bread and fish planning? We are not running a bread and fish shop. We are talking about a serious industry. You should be able to give us details within a month or two approximation as to what we might expect in year 1, year 2, year 3 or year 4. Nothing of this kind has been projected for us.

What we have had is a lot of hype in the newspapers telling us about come and take Air Jamaica. That is fine but we need to know. We can tell anybody almost to the nearest dollar how many Concordes are going to fly into Barbados, how often there are going to be flights out of Heathrow, whether we are going to get...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, that is easy to say because Barbados is the only destination outside of New York that Concorde flies to scheduled, not chartered. The only one in the world, outside of New York.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see, now, the Honourable Member when she is making a point makes it so well in terms of language but what has she said that you understood, Sir? She makes this point that we have a good schedule with British Airways.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You did not give the impression that you had a similar situation with Air Jamaica. That is the point I am making. Only you and the man from Air Jamaica and the Director of Tourism know that. The rest of us have been given to believe that we are going to soon have Air Jamaica coming to Barbados from Atlanta. That is what we are given to believe. What I am saying to you in these Estimates now is that that kind of information should be honed by now, when you are going to have the kind of arrangement that you are discussing. We need to know. The people who are planning tourism need to know.

The coordination which we are doing now is not good enough in 1997. Within 3 years we are going to be in the new millennium. We are doing a sewage project on the south coast. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism have not met and discussed the disruption that is going to happen in relation to tourism. I challenge the Minister to get up and give us the projections, the plans, the programmes and tell us what was anticipated by way of disruptions.

Everybody believes that the tourist project is like the crop. That it is going to be over in 4 months. It is going to be over in 1998. If we are lucky, it will go into 1999, and those people who believe that...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do not interfere with the Minister of Health. Leave her resting where she is.

The kind of planning that we are doing in tourism is still the same we used to do when Peter Morgan was chairman. When you used to hit or miss. 8.45 p.m.

We have reached a level of sophistication now where we have the tools where the Honourable Member should be able to come in here and tell us within a reasonable approximation what we can expect. You have said as a Government that you are making tourism the thrust of our development and I accept that. We on this side agree with that.

We are saying that tourism is no longer a question of inviting some people to come down here for a vacation. It is a serious business and we should be able to plan it that way, and we should be training a cadre of bright young people who are going to be the giants of tourism, not only in terms of hotel ownership but in terms of the directing of tourism. We fiddle around with changing the law. We are going to bring an Act. We are going to have tourism privatised. We are going to do those kinds of things but we are not getting down to the nitty-gritty of programming for the future. The Honourable Member must know that the present director of the BTA can tell the Honourable Member to within the nearest pound how much of a certain product is going to be sold in his region over the next three years. You should be able to do the same thing for tourism.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I wish to discuss the programmes and plans which you have for the Tourism Investment Corporation. I wish to discuss the Tourism Investment Corporation because you are getting ready to do the same rubbish. When we had a Tourism Investment Corporation we made a decision that we were going to develop the Hilton properties. This is now coming to fruition.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: The decision to develop the Hilton is something which started yesterday. No problem! If you wish to believe that, that is *all* right with me, but the record is there that the decision to increase the number of rooms of the Hilton Hotel, the first phase was to spend the amount of money which we spent in the area around the Aquatic to develop it, to refurbish the Hilton in its present form.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: These are facts. They are available. If the Honourable Member used to sit down and read, if the Honourable Member would read something, if she would read anything, if she would take some advice she would discover them. The programming and the planning is there and in fact, the money to be spent to develop the area surrounding the Hilton is now available.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making, however, and if the Honourable Member wishes me tomorrow morning to bring it in and read it out I will. It does not matter who makes the original plan. What is important is that we have a long term and a medium term programme for us to act upon. You may check it and make adjustments on the implementation. In the same way, for example that the Honourable Member of St. James South, since she is in the Chair will have to make certain decisions about the sewerage project and when she makes those decisions I promise I am not going to attack her too much on that because the sewerage is not a project of one party or the other. It is a project for Barbados and therefore once we know exactly where we are going, then everybody can come on board.

The empowerment for the development of Barbados must occur because the people who now have responsibility for managing the economy, and for managing the public administration of this country begin to understand where we have to go.

I do not get that impression from the present Minister responsible for Tourism. I get the impression she is still concerned about what she is going to put on top of the ice-cream. So she is concerned with the froth, the chocolate decorations, instead of being concerned with what constitutes the ingredients of the basic feed that you are going to bf putting into the stomachs of the people. The Minister is demonstrating in these Estimates that she is incapable of running the Ministry at the level and standard that is required at this time in our development, but when I come back, Sir, I am going to give you chapter and verse on that.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to this issue of Air Jamaica. Some comments bordering perhaps on adverse have been made in relation to Air Jamaica's operations into Barbados and I played a very key role in Air Jamaica operating into Barbados today. I know that the public of Barbados perhaps is not aware of that, but I played a key role and I have no regrets whatsoever and I just think I should inform Members about the thinking at the time as to why the operations of Air Jamaica were pursued by me in the way in which they were.

Around about May-June last year a number of things were happening. In Barbados we had witnessed the cessation of the operations of Carib Express. Carib Express had applied for permission to fly into Puerto Rico, a US market and we were looking into the development of that particular market, but Carib Express then ceased operations and subsequently folded. You had BWIA

where there was a lot of uncertainty in relation to their operations generally. They had announced plans to even pull off the St. Lucia route where quite conveniently, there were some Sandals operations which of course you know, Butch Stewart has an interest in. A decision had to be made and there was a clear need to reenergise the United States market where we had lost some air lift. We had lost Pan Am. We had lost Eastern Airlines and we had been making consistent efforts over the years to attract additional US air lifts to service the Eastern Caribbean and they were all coming to nought. You cannot lay down and die in situations like that. You have to get up and fight. You have to find ways and means to get airlift and I have been put in charge of the Ministry to get airlift. My job is to get airlift and I decided in the Ministry of International Transport last year, in May-June, I picked up the phone and I called Butch Stewart myself and I spoke to him and I agreed to meet him and develop a programme to bring Air Jamaica to Barbados and I must tell you that the road to getting Air Jamaica into Barbados was not a smooth road. It took a lot of work and a lot of effort and a lot of argument. I have to go on.

I remember in September last year I left Barbados and went to Washington and had a strategic planning session with St. Lucia, Antigua, Air Jamaica. Subsequent to that meeting, the very next day I had to attend a meeting in the State Department, the Department of Transportation in the United States. I had to attend th&t meeting with my advisors and it was one of the most intense meetings that I have ever attended, because it is not easy to negotiate with the United States on an issue, especially when they have some false preconceptions about what you are trying to do. It is not easy.

We were seeking to designate Air Jamaica pursuant to what is called the Community of Interest Principle, which of course states that if there is one regional carrier, owned by one member of a regional grouping it can be designated by another member irrespective of the ownership and control requirement that normally obtains.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The United States, they were pushing the view that we wanted to operate what they were calling Seventh Freedom Rights. That is why I said it was a very intense meeting. It lasted for almost two hours and I had to spend with my advisors around two hours convincing the United States Department and the Department of Transportation that there was a valid basis for designating Air Jamaica to Barbados. It is nothing that we have not already done to BWIA. We have done that already and that is why I made the point earlier that Air Jamaica is not our national carrier. I have never liked that statement. I saw it in the newspaper and it is not correct because it has been angering people like BWIA that have given us faithful service over the years, and Caribbean Airways which is our national carrier, so I had to spend a lot of time ironing that out with the United States for Air Jamaica to come.

Now, Air Jamaica, and even then there was another hurdle that I had to jump because persuaded as I was, I was sure in my mind, that I had convinced the Department of Transportation and State Department that there was a valid basis for designating Air Jamaica, when we thought the dust had totally settled, I got a call from the US Embassy in Barbados. 8.55 p.m.

When we thought we were on the verge of getting the permit, I got a call from the U.S. Embassy who asked to meet with me and I accommodated them, obviously. They then raised the issue about a cargo airlines problem with Jamaica. They were asking me to sort it out in a subtle way. I had to let them know that any problem they had with Jamaica was a question of their bilateral arrangement with Jamaica. It had nothing to do with Barbados. Again, I had to spend about two hours letting them know I was not the man to come to. We wanted the licence granted. It was only after all of that that the permit was granted to Air Jamaica to come to Barbados and I had the honour to be on the inaugural flight.

I have no regrets about bringing Air Jamaica to Barbados because there is a need for additional U.S. airlift. My job, as I said is airlift. Once that is done, other agencies have to fill the seats. That is a fact. I have no difficulty with that but that is a basic fact. My job is to attract airlift. When I do that my job is basically done. That is Air Jamaica.

Sir, that is not the only effort I have made in the last year to attract additional airlift to and from the United States. In April last year I went to Surinam - a lot of people forget this - and I concluded air services talks with Surinam. I had the honour to sign the agreement on behalf of the Government of Barbados. It is of great sentimental value to me up to this day.

I had the honour to sign the agreement between Barbados and Surinam but a lot of people do not know that among the route schedule in that agreement was for Surinam Airways to fly from Surinam to Barbados to Miami and back. In fact, they were going to be coming from as far south as Argentina. You would have Argentina, Surinam, Barbados, Miami. I was looking forward to that. They were going to be operating a jet service from as far as Argentina right through to the United States and back, great benefit to Barbados but within days of that agreement the United States intervened and categorized Surinam. They put it in Category 3 so Surinam could not then

fly, as a result of being categorised, into the United States. That would have been the second carrier I would have managed to obtain for the benefit of Barbados in terms of airlift to the United States.

I am not going to prolong the issue anymore. I just wanted to raise the issue in relation to Air Jamaica. I will have a lot to say during the course of the day in relation to Europe and the United Kingdom. I am sure the Honourable Member wishes to speak. I am going to give way at this stage and come back.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of inaccuracies I need to respond to and a few questions have been asked. In contributions coming from the other side, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I think it was, wanted to know when these declines in arrivals to which I referred occurred. He wanted to suggest that there had not been any. Just for the record, Sir, in 1990 we saw a 6.3 per cent decline in arrivals, in 1991 it was 8.8 per cent and in 1992 it was 2.2 per cent.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Those were the years of significant decline.

Re Air Jamaica, Sir. To answer very specifically the query of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the plan is that a daily service between Montego Bay and Barbados with connections from Atlanta and six other cities would be projected to start somewhere around the middle of June. That is how it will begin.

Mr. Chairman, questions were asked about the Sales and Marketing Vice Presidency and what was being done about it. Advertisements were posted both at home and abroad. They brought 208 applications which are presently being processed and assessed by the Board of the Tourism Authority. I hope that at or before the end of this month they would be able to communicate to me and eventually to everyone.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We did no such thing. We advertised at home and abroad. I said that on this Floor.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I just wish to be sure in my mind because I think the Honourable Member said there were 208 applications for the post of Marketing Vice President. When you were employing them originally, the President and the two Vice Presidents, did you not have a search? I am asking you. Are you going to have a search and advertisement this time?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is not what I understand from the Board. All I know from the Board is that they have advertised both at home and abroad and they have received 208 applications.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the House was much misled in respect of a statement made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West about the DMB&B and Manning, Salvage and Lee. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has already made the point but it bears repeating. The Honourable Member tried to be clever to give the impression that these people were employed since September 1994. I went to the Ministry of Tourism and found DMB&B in place.

The impression he tried to give was that we employed DMB&B, we brought on Manning, Salvage & Lee and we designed this policy as he put it, that we would have everybody under the same roof. That was a policy put in place by the Democratic Labour Party. 9.05 p.m.

People must not run off with rumour, what has happened is that the tourism unit in DMB&B Manning, Salvage & Lee was lost when the person who headed it up moved from DMB&B Manning, Salvage & Lee to Rudderfinn. What the Board has done is that it is an agreement so that she and her team because these were the people who started the Barbados portfolio....

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: She is an excellent person, she is a black American, she is a most excellent person and gives the best personalised service that you could want.

DMB&B Manning, Salvage & Lee is a big firm and the world is their parish and we were lucky that we had a group of people within that firm who really would work on Barbados. What has happened is that she has gone to Rudderfinn and the entire unit that worked on Barbados has gone with her. The Board has agreed that in the interim between January and June, in the six months period they would continue for her to be working with us because it would be a terrible thing in the middle of the winter season to have her chopped off since they knew the Barbados market and have been working it. What will happen at the end of June is that the contract will go out to public tender.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, reference was also made to the fact that something appeared in the newspaper about privatisation within the industry and that I endorsed it as a result of a presentation made to the Tourism Think Tank.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Tourism Think Tank is an advisory council; advisory to me. The Tourism Development Corporation together with the Barbados Tourism and Hotel Association did a joint

presentation one morning, as indeed others have made presentations to the lurism Think Tank with a proposal that marketing arid promotion might be something that they would want to see joint ventured between the public and the private sector. My response to it, and this is how the newspapers interpreted it as endorsement, "this is all well and wonderful and good but how can you have brought this to me without having first canvassed the very people who you are saying you would be parties to in a joint venture" I said "You now have to go out there and canvass the constituencies and the marketplace and then come back to me with something more realistic. This is only a possibility". The next thing I know, like the Honourable Member is that I opened the newspaper and saw that I endorsed it. The newspaper was mistaken or misled, I do not know, but it is a common occurrence. What I do know is that apologies were subsequently offered to me by the DDC and the other body as well.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is nothing new, the days of Joe Broomes have long gone. It just shows the bias of the reporting.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, reference was made to the slowness of recouping of the market share in North America. Just let me say this, Sir, there is a direct correlation between promotion and advertising dollars spent and arrivals. Very direct co-relationship. We need to look at some comparative figures and see what our competitors in this region are spending compared to what we are spending on advertising. This is North America alone we are not talking about Europe or the U.K.

Between January and November, 1996, Barbados spent in total US$1,376,000; on magazine advertising, Sunday magazine, newspapers, spot television and cable TV. You want to know what Bahamas spent? They spent US$10 366 000. You want to know what Cayman spent? They spent US$5 369 000. In terms of resources you do not take all your money and run to TV advertising. One of the reasons why we had such a sustained decline in North America is that for several years we spent no money in TV advertising at all. In the case of Barbados, we did magazine advertising, Sunday magazines, newspapers and so forth and there are other forms of promotion and advertising that we are engaged in that you cannot stop that and then take the money and shift it to TV. Equally, you cannot do TV advertising on the basis that you do a three-week promotion today and then for three months you do not see anything and then you do a three-week promotion. It has to be sustained in the marketplace and this is what our competitors are doing.

Do not let us fool ourselves, we are saying that tourism is the major foreign exchange earner and you are going to have to put in the money because you will get your return on it. No other sector in our economy returned $1.4 billion.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there is a myth out there that we are spending, at the B.T.A. more money than we ought to do on the administrative side and less than we should be in direct marketing. That is a pure myth. In the budget before us now that is part of the Estimate that we are going to pass, 71.7% of the B.T.A. is what is proposed to be spent totally on marketing, 28% is what will go to administration, salaries, pensions and gratuities.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Is the Minister saying that the administrative cost of the Tourism Authority is going to be 28% of the budget we are giving them now. Lord have mercy!

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, I have the figures in my hand, I am not being misled. Do not tell me that is wrong, you do not want to hear it or believe it. You are now realising that the management team is working for its money.

Statutory emoluments and contributions - 18.8%; pensions and gratuities - .7%; training - .6%; staff loans - .5%; uniforms - .1%; travel - 1.4% and it goes on down the line. Direct marketing, advertising - 43.5% of the budget will be spent on this. Public relations - 6.5%; sales and promotion - 8.3%; special and sports events promotion - 3.9%.

I am quoting from my budget for the year to come. Do not say it is not reality. Next year you can come back and tell that this did not work.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Could you please tell us what is the percentage increase overall of the budget between last year and this year. What is the percentage increase. I think that will help you. 9,15 p.m.

You have a 5.6% increase and your administrative costs which correspond with the administrative cost of most of the public sector in this country, were in the vicinity of 52% and you are saying to me that while you had a 5% increase in the actual amount you get, that your administrative cost would drop to over 20%. This I have to see.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, you cannot win. You hear this is the dream team and they are not doing any work. You hear now that they are doing their work, creative budgeting and it has to be wrong. You would not know these figures are bogus until this time next year.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are a number of trends in the international marketplace which have shown us that we cannot overlook as we plan our business for the future. We had the CTC 20 Conference here in Barbados last September and there were some very excellent sessions. Barbadians, in large numbers, had the opportunity to be exposed to some of the experts in this area and we have been told that the way of the future, we begin to see it happening already, will be shorter vacations, that people will be having more frequent vacations. We have been told that there is increased interest in new experiences. In that connection we have given priority to further development of our heritage tourism component of the product and nature based as well.

We are told that increased travel by families and by single persons is going to be the way of the future and this is why it is important that we continue to diversify our offerings.

Right now Barbados has the most diversified ancillary services in the Caribbean and this is part of the value added that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West does not want to give credence to.

We have been told that a new definition of quality which will be based on the ease with which vacations can be booked is going to be a critical factor.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In other words the new technology, people are now booking their vacations by making visual choices, looking at a screen of a computer and looking at a beach, looking at an hotel, looking inside the rooms. We have some antiquated technology down at the BTA. They are still on 386. It is in this year's budget which I hope Honourable Members will pass so that we can get on the Internet. Imagine that all of our competitors are on the Internet with their product and we are not. This is factored in here.

We are advised, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and this is after intense research and it is not peculiar to Barbados. This is research that is peculiar to the industry everywhere in the world, that increased use of alternative forms of accommodation is important.

Now we are ahead of the game in Barbados in that we have a diverse accommodation component within our product as well. Much as Barbados has this reputation and it still does particularly in the United Kingdom and in continental Europe that we are up market and we have these fancy luxury hotels on the West Coast, we do have a wonderful accommodation mix. You can find guest houses in Barbados. You can find the smaller boutique type hotels on the South Coast that we are trying now to uplift with the GEMS project. We have discovered that South Americans like the small intimate atmosphere of those hotels as in fact do some people from Europe. North Americans like big hotels.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The villa market is one of the best kept secrets, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and it has grown by leaps and bounds in Barbados and the bed and breakfast is now on the up and up as well. So we now have to go on underpinning and upgrading this broad spectrum that we have in terms of alternative forms of accommodation which is going to be part of the demand of the immediate future.

We are told that visitors of the future will be more knowledgeable, more demanding, more aggressive, more selective, that is what it is going to mean so that our product has in fact, no matter how much the Honourable Member for St. Michael West boos at it, it has got to be the best that it can be. That is the reputation that Barbados has now and we have to be careful that there is no slippage now. Now is not the time.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity for entering this tourism debate at this time and I cannot confess that I am entirely happy with what is happening in the industry as a whole.

T think it is important at the outset to indicate that I am not going to dispute the information that was put on the Floor of this House by the Honourable Minister but clearly something has to be fundamentally wrong with the budget as presented this year. I am very glad if what the Minister is saying is true but I will come to that very shortly. In the past the percentage of administrative costs in relation to the budget has traditionally been around 55% of the budget and I am not aware, Sir, that there have been any layoffs at the Board of Tourism in Barbados or in any of the overseas offices. Maybe the Minister has not yet announced that they will in fact be shutting down some of the overseas offices or in fact sending off staff.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not inventing anything. I am just saying that it is an inference. You have been spending 55% on administration, you have not sent home anybody, you have increased salaries by enormous amounts, four or five times and yet you are able to still maintain that you are going to reduce administrative costs. None of the offices have been shut down. None of the rents have been reduced and yet you have employed 42 auxiliary people in the United States and yet the figures have gone

down in the United States where you have employed all of these additional people. You have spent less money on advertising than we have traditionally been spending and if you check the figures you will see that we spent more than you spent last year. In every instance you can point to the fact that some of the increases that you have had have had nothing to do with marketing efforts at the Board of Tourism. I can name several of them.

I referred to a 46% increase of visitors from Canada but that had little or nothing to do with the Tourist Board. 9.25 p.m.

That had a lot to do with the Combermere School Alumni where a large group of Barbadians who organised for two years previously, since 1993-1994, where they put together a large contingent to come down here for Crop Over.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: About one thousand, five hundred Barbadians came from Canada last year, a large contingent, some from the Modern and some from Combermere. It had nothing to do with the marketing effort at the Board of Tourism.

The arrivals will reflect a 46 per c^nt increase. It is nothing to brag about. Out of the United States is the same thing. Many of the increased visitors did not come because of any effort on behalf of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

The Barbados Tourism Authority and the persons who were brought on to wave this magic wand to suddenly turn around the industry, a lot of pressure has been placed on them. When the deputy Olympia high flyer, Mr. Hill realised that he was six months in decline, he flew away and took off, because of the pressure that was brought to bear on him all the time.

Maybe it was a good thing that he flew away, because the month after he left, suddenly it turned around again. You now have to wait and see if you only needed one high flyer, as I told you in the first place, you probably did not need three. I told you that you only needed one. Let us wait it out for a little while. Do not employ anybody yet. Wait it out a little bit and see if this one high flyer is enough.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am dealing with the actual figures. It is a fact that since he has flown the coup you have suddenly got a slight increase again. I am just asking you to wait and see. Nothing that you are doing at the Board of Tourism earns any relationship to proper marketing. Remember the money is spent in South America. You spent more than $1 million in South America. April showed a decline 16.8 per cent. May showed a decline 7.2 per cent, all kinds of declines. You went and spent money in South America to get a decline. August showed minus 22 per cent. September, when you had a conference and you brought several people from overseas free, the Board paid for them to come down here, we spent a lot of money on a fan trip and they had a decline of 60 per cent.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: These are the efforts of the high flyers, where there were increases we can clearly point to the fact that it had nothing to do with the Board. It had, in fact, to do with Barbadians who decided that they were coming back here for a specific event and they came and swelled these numbers.

In reality, a very worrying trend is happening in Barbados. Tonight, we have these Estimates. We are spending almost $40 million of the Barbados taxpayers' money to benefit who? How many Barbadians are benefiting tonight from this money that we are spending in here?

We have some small Barbadian hotels, Barbadian owners who have struggled, tried to access business in the industry and tonight they are scrambling, their hotels are raked up by the Barbados Development Bank. They are in debt, they have no marketing capability. We are spending this money for who to benefit? How many Barbadians are going to access or be beneficiary to the money we are spending here in Marketing.

When we are spending 70 or 72 per cent of the taxpayers' money to benefit who? To have workers marching up and down Bridgetown, begging for a part, or a play in the Industry?

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I agree, but we have to accept that this not a very serious matter, that we can just come in here and spend $40 million and when we look at it, the network...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It does not matter. There has been no proper assessment of the impact on the south coast hotels, as my Honourable colleague said with the South Coast Sewerage Project.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Do not worry about the GEMS project, the GEMS project will not get off the ground.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, Sir, far from the GEMS project not getting off the ground, now non-indebted hotels are walking in on the GEMS.

They understand that with small hotels they have to go for the joint marketing, the joint promotion, the joint reservations' system and a whole host of other matters, which come together to make it far more cost effective for them, to operate when you are dealing with such a small physical mass of rooms. Do not talk foolishness.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, clearly we have, as a matter of urgency, to examine the ownership of the tourism industry. The plant in Barbados, very, very, very seriously. As I said sometime in 1995, we also have to examine very carefully, the tour operator structure as it presently exists in this country. These are fundamental problems.

The Cruise Ship Industry piggy backs on the fact that the Caribbean Islands have a beautiful climate. There are friendly islands, and they are making massive amounts of profit, off of the backs of the Caribbean people.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Maybe it should be higher.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not complaining. I am trying to say that tonight, as we debate Tourism, we are spending $40 million and we are getting in here arguing about a decline, about whether figures are going to go up here, whether we employ this body, whether we are going to find a high flyer or another one. This is totally irrelevant. What is relevant is to start identifying a structure that can be beneficial to Barbadians.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Look, Barbados virtually has nothing to offer right now, in comparison to many other destinations.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is true.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. I cannot afford to let the Honourable Member mislead people like this.

I have already made the point. We have the most diverse product in the Caribbean. We have the highest repeat factor, 39 per cent in the Caribbean. There must be some reason why people are coming back here constantly. We have the most diverse ancillary services in the Region. How can you say that?

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in comparison to tourism destinations, Barbados does not offer the kind of product that many other destinations throughout the world are offering. In terms of entertainment, activities, eco-tourism, Barbados is not well. We have good seas, good sand, good sun, *etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.*

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Barbados, as my colleague said earlier, has to start focussing on product that will attract niche marketing in a meaningful way.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It depends. Barbados has to develop immediately some kind of assistance that will make sure that the Barbadian people are able to galvanise their resources, however limited they are. So that they have access to the industry in a meaningful way.

I really understand that it is not possible to do in one night.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No. I am not going to give you my idea. I am going to say in a nutshell that it is going to take a lot of effort, and a lot of encouragement and a lot of coercing.

I really believe, Mr. Chairman that we are just throwing away money, year after year. I started to indicate that we went to Brazil and threw away money. You had a Jazz Festival and you spent thousands of dollars or millions of dollars promoting a Jazz Festival that brought 14 or 25 people from overseas, very few people.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: An insignificant amount of people in relation to the requirements. The Minister said that she is spending money and she is tying the arrivals to the amount of money she is spending. There are several areas in which we have spent money, willy-nilly. 9.35 p.m.

Year after year, we are here arguing about how to spend money. In fact, the Minister this year is even in a disgraceful state because she is supposed to have a marketing plan to advise Parliament how the money is being spent and is required by law and they have not seen it fit to let Parliament have the benefit of a marketing plan.

The Tourism Authority Act demands that that plan be tabled in this House and nobody has ever seen it and we have to agree to spend $40 million.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Every time. In addition to a one-year plan we had a 3-year plan that was put in place during 1993-94.

Mr. Chairman, I will tell you what. During the period when Tony Arthur was in charge of the Tourism Authority there was an increase of some 32 000 visitors. When Brenda Edwards who was acting in the post presided over the tourism industry there was an increase of 10 000 people during that period.

Do you know that those persons worked for 3 times less than the present President and the high-flyers?

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: In all fairness, Mr. Chairman, when Tony Arthur presided over the tourism industry, during that year, despite all the criticism that you all threw at that man, humiliated him, yet he produced 32 000 additional visitors.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: All those things were said about one of the brightest products within the tourism industry. We spent a significant amount of money paying staff to improve the tourism industry and when we had the tourism high flyers in place would you believe that they only produced an additional 5 000 people. When you compare Tony Arthur's figures of 32 000 additional visitors - check the statistics. You can challenge me. I will sit down - 10 000 in Brenda Edwards[1] time and now we have a new maths formula and situation where the Minister has been able to dramatically reverse the trend in allocation by appointing the high flyers at big salaries, spending a lot, has not laid off anybody from any of the offices overseas, has not shut down any of the offices overseas, but has a budget now that is going to suggest all of a sudden now that they are doing now what is right and allocating more funds to market Barbados.

We have to ask the question, marketing Barbados for whom? It is incredible. Mr. Chairman, we are going to have to continue this debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, reference was made to plans for product development. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East says that Barbados is so "poor-raky" that we do not have anything.

Aside,

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not so. He is not talking about advertising. He is talking about diversity of product.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, product development in some people's opinion only has to do with if you build a hotel or open a restaurant. Product development has implications for what the public sector can and must do as much as it does for what the private sector can and must do.

The Government is embarked upon a project for the expansion and refurbishment of the Grantley Adams International Airport. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North, I have no doubt will speak to that. We are even as we speak extending the parking apron. It is proposed that everything that you now see at Grantley Adams will become departure and that in effect what we are doing is building a new arrival hall. That is product development, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is now talking to the House of Assembly and not to the Chair. The Honourable Member knows that the programme she is discussing, the money has not even been located. To come and give the impression that the Government has embarked on a programme to expand the airport...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Will you let me finish? The same with the Bridgetown Port. I am saying that these are examples of product development, works that have to be done on the Swing Bridge, works that have to be done shoring up the walls. All of these things go to product development. So people must recognise that this is something that you have to see in its largest...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, is the Honourable Member saying that these Estimates make provision for what she is saying? That is what I wish to find out. 9.45 p.m.

Could you tell us what page at the Estimates we can see some evidence of even a single dollar?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have spoken in this House about the Tourism Development Programme.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is in the Estimates. I do not have to tell him to look at page 90. He can read and he knows what is voted or what is proposed to be voted this year for airport expansion. It is terrible that Honourable Members can come in here without first having perused the Estimates, at least even glanced at them.

Now, the Tourism Development Programme, Mr. Chairman, Sir, has three components. It is divided into three Sub-programmes.

In Subprogramme A we are dealing with cruise tourism, boating tourism, small hotel sector, training and institutional audit which is really institutional strengthening in the Ministry of Tourism. Subprogramme B is really the Urban Renewal Subprogramme which deals with Bridgetown, Speightstown, and St. Lawrence Gap. Subprogramme C deals with heritage. We have already indicated. We have decided that this must be a special area of priority for us. It deals with nature based sites and it deals with Graeme Hall Swamp as a highly prioritised area in its own right.

Now, feasibility studies and related cost. Two days ago I think it was, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West made the statement that you cannot spend these capital funds. You know, it is all a myth. Professional service vote of $5.7 million will cover part of the financing of several feasibility studies. In Subprogramme A, there are studies going on now on cruise, boating, small hotels, training, as I said institutional audit and information system. A contract was actually signed on 7th February this year, and it is expected that those studies will be finished by June/July of ihis year 1997. The studies, we hope, will indicate to us how returns from cruise can be enhanced and how cruise ship passengers can be encouraged to convert to long stay visitors. The study is going to look at the viability of small hotel sector, the impact of all-inclusive and time-sharing. We have to look at these things and etc. and etc.

It is anticipated, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Government will be having discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank, in July and August of 1997 with regard to the implementation of recommendations coming from these studies under Subprogramme A.

Subprogramme B which is the Urban Rehabilitation or Urban Renewal Subprogramme proposals are, as we speak, Sir, being evaluated with a view to the awarding of a contract next month April, 1997.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the object of the Estimates of Expenditure is to estimate expenditure, that you are going to spend in the coming year. What is the point telling me that April has not come yet. You cannot wait until 1st April to plan for what is going to happen in April. What is the point of this whole exercise?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I have made the point two days ago, that the project funds, that the Capital Works Programme can only be financed through project funds of a magnitude of $160 million of which $78 million is expected to come from IADB funds. Now, it is well known that it takes quite long to disburse or even to access funds from the IADB, so I am saying that these figures here suggest that $78 to $80 million will come from that source and I cannot see it happening over the course of one year so I have said and I repeat that the capital expenditure programme for 1997-98 will not be realised, full stop.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if only the Honourable Member would just try to get past page five of the Estimates, and go down to the individual subheads and see what is proposed. The Caribbean Development Bank, Sir, has agreed to finance the cost of the Urban Renewal Study and the preparation of final design up to a costing of US$4.9 million by way of a loan and it is expected that additional financing or funding for the investment works to be carried out in these three areas that is, Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap will be obtained from both the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Now, Subprogramme C, heritage, nature based, Graeme Hall sites ....

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not only in the Ministry of Tourism that a lot of this capital programme applies; the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education as well. Now, Subprogramme C is dealing with heritage, nature based and Graeme Hall. A study of this Subprogramme is currently under way at a cost of US$883,000. The contract was signed last year in August, and is expected to be completed in May of this year 1997. It is hoped that the draft final report for the heritage and the nature based components will be submitted for our consideration and comments towards the end of this month, and the forward information that I am hearing coming out of it is really very encouraging indeed.

So that we are anticipating that we will have initial discussions with the IADB and the CDB May/June this year with a view to securing the financial

assistance needed to allow us to implement these various recommendations coming from these several studies. This study, Subprogramme C, along with Subprogramme A is being partly financed by the IADB out of the multisectoral pre-investment loan up to an amount of 1.9, little in excess of US$1.9 million.

In terms of further studies there is a duty free study under way, and it is very important that we look at this. Barbadians are a very copycat society. Several years ago, I was walking along Lucas Street and I saw a young man who knew me very well and he told me that he was opening a snackette on Lucas Street. I said to him that Lucas Street is not a large street. I mean it is just at the corner there by the Barbados Hardware to the Central Police Station which is the corner of James Street really, before you move into Coleridge Street. I said to him but there are already two snackettes on Lucas Street. He said "yes, and they are making money so mine is bound to make money too." That is how Barbadians operate and then they get all frustrated and disappointed and in some cases, bankrupt when they discover that there is really no market share for three shops doing the same business in virtually the same location.

It is very important that we look at duty-free because this is beginning to happen here. Duty free has just expanded by leaps and bounds in recent years. We are all selling the same product, liquor, perfumes, watches, cameras, woolens have gone out now, they do not do very well. The same thing for fine china and crystal. That does not do nearly as well. People have moved away from that to a large extent but it is really very important that the Government does a study of this because there is a quite sizeable duty free operation at the Bridgetown Port and Honourable Members on the other side would know about that well. That is yet another giveaway, in the company of Heywoods, which became Almond, which was made in their time and it is also proposed to expand the duty-free facility at the Grantley Adams International Airport, but this cannot be done without the benefit of a study.

There are infrastructural improvements which have to be undertaken, particularly with the rehabilitation of Bridgetown and Speightstown. And in this connection in December of last year the Ministry of Tourism signed two contracts with Island Engineering for a final design to Princess Alice Highway, Hincks Street to Broad Street and with Elcocks Associate infrastructural work to Baxters Road, to High Street via Swan Street and these two contracts total $484,000.

What is proposed, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that Bridgetown will undergo, as will Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap, massive urban renewal. 9.55 p.m.

Our two main cities, or two towns, however you choose to call them, Bridgetown and Speightstown, have over many years been run down. It so happens that the Government is a major property owner, particularly in Bridgetown, and to a lesser extent in Speightstown. It also happens, Mr. Chairman, that many of those properties are heritage properties. I speak of properties like the Spirit Bond on the Wharf. I speak of properties like the Town Hall down across from St. Mary's Church. I speak of properties like Arlington House in Speightstown, the Old Bridge & Harbour Police Station, the Empire Theatre.

These are heritage properties and rather than allow them to continue in dereliction, and to be an eyesore in our capital city and our second city, the Government has chosen instead to invite the Barbados Investment Corporation to begin for the first time to behave like an Investment Corporation and take these properties which they would use . . .

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I know the consultants ARA but I do not have to be giving all that information. All this is available if people would only read the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is it is proposed that the private sector would be invited and encouraged to enter into joint ventures of one kind or another with the Tourism Investment Corporation using these properties as the Government's equity in order to uplift and enhance Bridgetown. It is proposed that major renewal will happen all along Bay Street, Broad Street, Swan Street, all down Hinck's Street. We need to beautify these areas.

Tourists walking up from the Port - I have been through all of this in this Honourable Chamber more than once - I assume Honourable Members are all aware of it. There are really massive undertakings we are talking about. There is a lot of work that has to be done in St. Lawrence Gap. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is deeply concerned that nothing has started there. The problem with the St. Lawrence Gap start-up has to do with the fact that the Sewerage Project on the South Coast has to visit St. Lawrence Gap. The infrastructure work we have to do there, it is no point doing that only to have it ripped up when the Sewerage Project comes.

We tried to persuade the Sewerage Project personnel to start with St. Lawrence Gap so we could get that done and then we could move in and do all we want to do to really make St. Lawrence Gap into a very attractive tourism zone but they said it could not be done without adding tremendous cost to the project. Mind you, now that I see what is happening at Hastings and other

places where they are working, I tend to be relieved that they did not start in St. Lawrence Gap in the middle of the tourist season.

I think everybody understands that there is dissatisfaction on all sides with the performance of the contractors on that project. I do not know why it has to be like that. As Minister of Health many years ago we dug up the whole of Bridgetown with Sintra. We dug up Broad Street, Swan Street, Roebuck Street and we did not have this kind of dislocation.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We were dealing with Canadians then. Do not let us get giddy about this. It is not as though the whole workforce is Spaniards. There are not 400 Spaniards in Barbados. You have the few people who are directing the project who, in my judgement, are not doing a good job.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not frightened to criticize them. When Sintra was here sewering Bridgetown, no big set of Canadians came down here. Barbadians got the jobs and a lot of people from the City got jobs too. We did not have this kind of dislocation.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What no dig? That is the other point. With Sintra when we dug up Bridgetown, we did not have no dig then. We had to dig up everything. You could understand the whole of Broad Street was dug up and we did not have this dislocation?

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am saying that I am not afraid to criticize the contractors who are working now on the South Coast. What we know is that they are disqualified for the work that will come in the future on the West Coast.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not the Minister's fault. She is not the one out there in the trenches. She is not a technician. Believe me. If it were possible for the Minister and the Cabinet to terminate the contract without massive costs to Barbados, they would have qualified for termination in my view, and I am not frightened to say it.

This is what happens, and the Prime Minister makes this point all the time. When you have to be dealing with international organisations like the IADB and you go out for tendering in the international marketplace, we are not the only people in the Caribbean who belong to the Bank. Spain is a member of the Bank as well. We have to abide by the rules but sometimes we get a bad deal and we are getting a very bad deal on the South Coast.

I know the Minister has taken the contractors to task and you have to know that when the Minister takes you to task you are not in any doubt that you are getting taken to task. What more can she do?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, we have been discussing this Head for a while now and I observe that when the Minister of Health was discussing the arrival of the Germans to this country, she just glossed over the German situation. We have a serious problem in this country, Sir, that the Minister of Tourism is not aware that the main reason why Germans are not coming to Barbados is because there is an increase in the number of tourists coming from England and there is a personal conflict between the Germans and the English. They are still carrying on with the old Cold War days.

I want to remind this Assembly, Sir, that we cannot just ignore the fact that Germans are not coming to the Island but we must be aware of the true reasons why the Germans are not coming. We have had an increase in the number of English tourists coming to the Island. They have continued to have a personal conflict with the Germans and we must take note of that. We must work out a scheme, Sir, where we can have the English tourists coming to Barbados and also the Germans at the same time and not necessarily having that personal conflict. We have to look after the interest of the Germans and we also have to look after the interest of the English tourists.

We also have another problem, Sir. Various Ministers tonight in dealing with cruise tourism have given statistics but when one looks at the statistics given by the particular Ministers, one would have to come to the conclusion that something is wrong. 10.05 p.m.

The particular statistics given to this House, Sir, is that between November to December 144 418 cruise ship passengers came to this country. If one was to look at the Central Bank's economic and financial statistics for December 1996, one would realise that between January to October 398 996 cruise tourism tourists came to the country. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North said that for 1996, 543 414 cruise ship passengers came. By simple arithmetic....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, I will put the Honourable Member out of his misery.

There has been for years this discrepancy in respect to cruise passengers. It is believed that it has to do with a certain element of double counting in that at the Bridgetown Port they count fly cruise a second time and that matter is being addressed again even as we speak.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Honourable Minister for the intervention because when the Minister said that the total was 543 000,1 said that he was misleading the House. In the light of the new figure, I would then have to accept that the true figure is 509 975 cruise passengers. Mr. Chairman, if the correct figure is 509 975 and if one looks at the statistics, Sir, since 1992, one would observe that in 1993, cruise tourism increased by 7.23%; in 1994 it increased by 7.20%; in 1995 when the Barbados Labour Party took over, it only increased by 5.47% and in 1996 that they are bragging so much about, Sir, it only increased by 5.22%.

I am saying, Sir, the growth in cruise tourism under the Barbados Labour Party has fallen in the two years that they have taken the mandate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, the Honourable Member cannot mislead the House. Cruise has grown so much that cruise has now overtaken long stay in terms of absolute numbers. It is not true.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, people who cannot deal in mathematics should never jump up and challenge anybody who can deal with mathematics. We are talking about the growth. We are not talking about numbers, we are talking about percentage growth per year, that is what we are talking about. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that I am quoting from the Central Bank of Barbados economic and financial statistics for December 1996 and these figures are in your possession and you should use them.

I am also saying, Mr. Chairman, that we have a particular problem occurring in Barbados. I have spoken about it for many years and I am not surprised that St. James Beach Hotels have decided to buy more hotels in Barbados. There is an amount of selfishness happening in tourism in Barbados and it is a good example when you watch to see what is happening with St. James Beach Hotels. I am saying tonight that there is a connection between the purchase of hotels and the rights to beaches in this country because the more hotels you buy, the longer the stretch of beach that you can control. We must not only look at it in terms of the number of rooms that you can control and the number of rooms they are trying to acquire but the beach space they are trying to acquire at the same point in time. It is known, Sir, that this group of Hotels believe in keeping the beach to themselves. We are going to find a situation in this country, Sir, that it is Almond Beach tonight...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, he is again misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Minister might not know this but if one is to take a visit to Tamarind Cove tonight, and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture who happens to be the Parliamentary representative for St. James North would tell you, that once upon a time you could travel between Tamarind Cove and Buccaneer, but now they have purchased that hotel locals cannot pass there as they used to be able to pass before. It is clear, Sir, that when they buy hotels they amalgamate the beaches and they block the use of the locals from that hotel.

I am saying, Sir, that today it is Almond Beach and tomorrow it might be Treasure Beach so it means that when they purchase Treasure Beach you cannot pass now between Buccaneer, Tamarind Cove or Treasure Beach and next it will be Smugglers Bay. Then there will be a connection stretching from Paynes Bay right down to Sandy Lane and as you know already, Sir, you cannot even park your car on Sandy Lane anymore because people have built things that the Bajan cannot do, and block the road down there.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is not their land, it is on the five foot reserve and the law says that you cannot do that but they have money and they can do it.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that we are witnessing a scenario in Barbados that a lot of people who have invested money on the west coast will soon be beggars because there is a particular policy adopted by St. James Beach Hotels where they allow their tourists to shop within their hotel and eat within their hotel. I am saying that if we continue with this policy that is being adopted today, that a lot of so-call business people on the west coast will soon be beggars of salt.

I have said, Sir, and I have heard a report coming that certain high officials came back from overseas and they say that All-Inclusive Tourism is the way to go because people who serve Barbados overseas believe in that. I want to say on the Floor of this House - that I disagree because the people who sell Barbados overseas, sell at a percentage and previously when they sold a room for $100 and got 10% they got $10 but now when they sell a package for $8 000 they are getting $800. It is in the interest of those people to sell Barbados as All-Inclusive Tourism and not necessarily to sell rooms in Barbados. 10.15 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, there are many people who benefit from tourism as independent people who will not

be able to benefit from tourism any longer if we allow this foolish policy to be adopted in Barbados. It is regrettable that we can also get the Minister of Tourism agreeing with that policy.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir, this is a free country. I have already spoken about the mix. All-inclusive is only one component and there are hotels, for the information of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, which are offering all-inclusive and non all-inclusive all in the same plant. This is what the demand of the marketplace is. We have to be prepared to offer it. The whole of Barbados is not going all inclusive.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one is in this House of Assembly one must be able to listen well and remember well. I remember that when Heywoods had a half and half it was criticised by the Barbados Labour Party and now that same party is saying that that is the way to go, half of the hotel for all-inclusive and half to be paid. It had the proper mix and they criticised it. Now it is being adopted by the private sector they are praising it. Imagine that. Once a government does something it is wrong but if it is done by the private sector for them it is right. Imagine that

Mr. Chairman, we have a right to protect the interest of the small business people who, Sir, through difficult times remained in Barbados and who cannot pick up their investment and run from Barbados.

I heard today in here how we are getting large sums of money coming back into Barbados now and people are saying it is because of confidence in the economy. Those people do not hide their money and take it out of the country so those are the people we have to protect so that whenever there is a crisis in this country ...

Hon. D. A. C.. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member has given way. I think the logic of the Honourable Member in the last 20 minutes is like cruel and unusual punishment. I would like him to explain himself, we cannot follow him. You are making no sense.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, whatever you say to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas he would not understand, even if you put it...

Anyhow, what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, and I will continue, is that the small man in this country who has contributed to this country must be seen as someone who has a contribution to make in this country and because he does not have $200 million to buy hotels he must not be shut out and that is exactly what is happening and that is why the small man who invested in Almond had to march to the Prime Minister's Office today to let him know, and the Barbados Cabinet know, that they are investors too.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN, reported progress to His Honour, Mr. 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, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 10.30 tomorrow morning, Friday 21st March, 1997. It is believed, Sir, that in this time frame the guillotine is likely to fall around 6.30 p.m. There are other Heads that we want to do but it is a matter for Honourable Members. This particular Head will continue in discussion tomorrow morning at 10.30.

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. 10.23 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it now reverts.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, as we resume debate on the Estimates this morning the social disinterest that the Government is displaying with regards to the Estimates of Expenditure seems clear to me. We are now on the very last leg of the Estimates debate and we are now probably only on the second Head. A disgraceful display by the Government where they are obviously running away from debating issues.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. This is first of all a reflection on your management as Chairman of this debate. The Prime Minister's Heads were called first. The Prime Minister spoke maybe no more than twice or 3 times in that debate. The Opposition has been driving the debate. But they do this every single year, linger on rubbish and trivia and when Friday morning comes recognise now that

there are a whole host of issues that they want to address. So do not blame the Government for that. The Government is not running away from anything. It is a matter for you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I think it is unfortunate that the Honourable Member has referred to the Prime Minister's Heads as rubbish and trivia.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that the Honourable Member has reflected on the management of the Chair. First of all, in true tradition, no Member of the House should reflect on the management of the Chair and, secondly, I do not want to say what is being alluded to but, as far as I am aware, the Chair has followed scrupulously the Rules of this House and therefore I deem it totally unfair that any Member should reflect on the management of this august Chamber, a Chamber which has been here since the 17th century and the traditions of which are being scrupulously followed by the management of the Chair.

I would wish that Members appreciate that no matter what their feelings are they should not in true tradition of the parliamentary spirit ever reflect on the management of the Chair in this House.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I certainly would not reflect on the management of the Chair. When I referred to the fact that the Government has been dilly-dallying over the calling of Heads as it relates to the Estimates it had nothing to do with the Chair.

It is a fact that last year we were told that we could not debate a number of Heads because the Leader of the Opposition was not present for the most part of the day last year. He is here this year and yet there is this whole dilly-dallying all week and refusal to come to the public to explain how they are going to alleviate the problems of poverty etc. in this country.

I want to relate that to the tourism debate today. We have heard a lot of talk all week and there are no specific proposals that have been brought to this House speaking specifically under which section and how you are going to alleviate the problems of the poor.

Nothing has been said all week and it is my intention today. I hope the Chair will understand when I have to speak about Health, Tourism etc., because I will have to use the Tourism Head and probably have to raise a couple matters of health as it relates to tourism under this particular Head, because I am concerned that we might not get there and it is necessary for us to discuss these things as we look at the development of Barbados.

Last night, I indicated that we have been spending a lot of money in this country, year after year, promoting tourism and I asked the question: if you examine the beneficiaries of the tourism industry, ask yourself how many Barbadians have beriefitted in a meaningful way from the over half billion dollars that we would have spent over the last 10 to 20 years marketing Barbados as a tourism destination?

We have spent over a half billion dollars, and what has been the return? Today, we have not one single property or just one property that we can boast of as a people that we still own, beyond the Hilton, that the taxpayers can say we can at least be shareholders in.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am looking at Barbados Tourism today. Now, we had a lot of talk last night about the development of the cruise ship industry. I am not going to knock the cruise ship industry and say that it does not serve a useful purpose in Barbados. It does. The numbers have been increasing and all we have been talking about, the alleviation of poverty in Barbados and so forth, even though there are increases in cruise ship arrivals, no serious attempt is made to ensure that the majority of taxi operators in Barbados have access to some of the increased business coming into Barbados. There has been no serious attempt to make sure that by way of some form of affirmative action that at least the taxidrivers who have to stand or park their cars in the middle of the night, crowd one another, along the Harbour road just trying to make or to get one trip on the following day. They have to sit and watch huge coaches drive by with the lion share of the pie while they sit idly by. Yet they have been taxpayers for many years and yet they cannot become beneficiaries of the system after we have spent over half a billion dollars to market Barbados all of this time.

There needs to be a systematic programme put in place to ensure that the pie that is available is properly distributed to at least filter into the community where we can see the small taxi operators start to benefit from the increased business. It makes no sense if there are only 4 or 5 people who will be able to build up a monopoly and then there is no filtering and protection of the future of several hundreds of Barbadians who will be able to access work in the tourism industry.

There is no systematic plan and when you sit down and you seriously plan to look at people's future you are abused and ridiculed to some extent.

At the Bridgetown Port - since I am there I am going to have to raise the question of the disposal of garbage and a lot of it comes from the cruise ship passengers - there are a lot of cruise ships that call and they generate a lot of garbage. There was an incinerator at the Harbour and

it is not now functioning as it should. For some reason it is either overloading or there are some serious related problems. There are emissions coming from that incinerator that may in fact be now having a serious impact on the health of many of the workers at the Port.

I believe that it has even gone to the extent that many residents in the surrounding areas around the Bridgetown Harbour are suffering as a result of the poor functioning of the incinerator at the Port.

I am concerned and I know that the Barbados Labour Party created a song and dance about our handling of garbage and these kinds of situations, but I shudder to think that if they cannot manage a simple garbage disposal programme at the Port, how can they manage an entire garbage disposal programme for the entirety of Barbados? I am not going to deal with the Minister of Health. When we start to talk about health tourism I will deal with the Minister of Health.

That is a serious problem and we are going to have to give it some attention because we cannot allow a situation where the workers in the industry, the people who are actually working in the industry are themselves exposed to the dangers of an industry such as we have to dispose of the garbage. We have to burn it. It is not functioning properly and we have to place some degree of priority in that regard.

I hope that we would not have in a very short term to find ourselves in a situation where the workers are falling one after another and then we have to come back to the House to have an investigation as to what is going on, whether we can identify these problems up front and try to do something about it. It is a very serious matter and the workers at the Port have complained to me. I am sure that the Minister is aware and may want to address this issue sometime during the Estimates. I believe that this is the responsibility of this House to place some degree of priority on this.

Mr. Chairman, last night as I addressed the Chamber, I indicated that in Barbados itself we seem not to be doing any systematic planning. We seem to be just taking money and throwing it through the window. We pay advertising agents significant amounts of money. We pay public relations agents a lot of money. The Minister said last night that she is tying it to the return and I understand what she is trying to do but, in the final analysis, the Barbadian taxpayers are not becoming involved in the industry to the extent that they should either by way of the Government leading or by developing programmes that they can effect. I feel very strongly about it.

My understanding is that they intend to do further development in the tourism industry along the Bay Street stretch which is now a special development area. So we have to wait and see how they will develop their entire programme before we pass judgment. It is my understanding that they will continue to participate in further tourism programmes in the special development area of Bridgetown.

I was making the point to the Minister and I said that if you go to Miami there is nothing special about Miami that we do not have in Barbados. In fact, if you go off the Hilton in a fishing boat you will see in a natural environment the same dolphins that are captured in Miami and in a park. If you go short off the Hilton in a boat you will see them jumping in a beautiful display sometimes 5, 10 of them jumping just off the south coast. Right here in Barbados, a natural environment.

I went to Disney World and they put me in a boat and I was going on a safari tour and a rubber crocodile frightened me. I was in this boat and a rubber crocodile jumped out at me and I jumped. It was pure foolishness. Nothing natural!

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: ...We have real dolphins and real alligators, anything so.

You have a lot of mock foolishness in entertaining people and people come from all over the world and gravitate to it.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is true. In my family there is one of everything and the one like that has gone already because he is dead.

Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that in Barbados we have genuine products that we can develop that are natural that people can really enjoy. It is not swamp land. It is no synthetic foolishness that we build to frighten and entertain people. We can really develop a product here that is attractive and entertaining.

The artists in this country need an outlet badly. I would like to see a Barbados where there is an eco-centre where the artists are guaranteed work every day, where there are restaurants, shops and total entertainment all day in some part of Barbados. You may even want to try Four Square which is questionable in its origin but we may even take an area like Four Square which has become a failure, which has had the support of the Government and has become a failure and look at the possibility of generating activity daily and putting people to do it. These

are the kinds of things that I would like to see - 3 000 to 4 000 people every day gathering to an area where there is a hive of activity.

If we can do that, then I would start getting the feeling that the money that we are spending in here year after year, over half a billion dollars, that the taxpayers are suddenly saying that we have done something for tourism.

It does not make sense, Mr. Chairman, for us to get in here and quarrel on a backward and forward basis about the Minister spending this or doing this programme or the Jazz Festival failed, they had Gospelfest, they had Cropover. We can go backward and forward. But a significant amount of money has been spent and I am dealing with the returns on behalf of Barbadians.

We are going to have to find a mechanism if we are serious about addressing it. The theme of these Estimates is that we are trying to alleviate poverty. Then, if we are dealing with one of the fundamental sectors of the industry we have to be telling the people of Barbados how we are going to bring the tourism industry to assist in the alleviation of poverty.

We have to come up and talk about creative ideas, whether we are in Opposition or in Government, to try to redound to the benefit of the country.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I enjoy it. I have come on several occasions. I enjoy it because I like to see the interaction. Right now you have these enclaves with the visitors. They are not part of the Barbadian society in a real sense and this is the kind of fusion that I would like to see rather than to have a pow-wow about these particular issues because at the end of the day the Barbadian people are the losers. It really makes no sense.

Mr. Chairman, I will return when we start dealing with some of the other Heads.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I intervene in this debate to make a contribution which is going to be in contradiction to a number of things said by the Honourable Members from the Other Side.

Today, Barbados has 6 months' foreign reserves, around $600 million in foreign reserves. While we talk about the record amount of foreign reserves that Barbados has, we have to bear in mind that of all the economic sectors tourism is the one with the most potential to create foreign reserves in the short term to sustain the build-up of the foreign reserves arid to increase the foreign reserves more than in any other sector.

If today Barbados has a record amount of foreign reserves - 6 months reserves more than we have ever had in Barbados, then we have to ask ourselves a very serious question. Would not this achievement have been recorded largely as a result of tourism which is a sector that drives the economy? Even though in recent times sugar agriculture has been contributing and even though manufacturing contributes I am of the view...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation, Sir. The Honourable Minister of Finance when he introduced these Estimates informed the House that he has 14 weeks of liquid reserves. A member of the Cabinet has just got up and said that the country has 26 weeks, 6 months or half a year. Which is which, Mr. Chairman? Who is misleading the House?

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The reserves represent a dynamic movement...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If the Honourable Member has misled the House then he should withdraw the statement because it is very important on these crucial areas that one should not just make statements like that. You are talking about 26 weeks of reserves as opposed to 14 weeks. Every Member in here is quite clear as to what the Minister of Finance informed the nation.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I was making the point that a situation where every day there are outflows of foreign reserves to buy imports, to buy technology and such like, we have been able... 10.50 a.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: A Member of the Cabinet cannot come in here and lie to the House like that.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, there can be no lie in saying that each day we spend an enormous amount of money on imports, on buying technology and such like and in a situation where every day there are outflows of foreign reserves, I am making the point that...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member opened his statement by saying that we have six months' reserves. Now he must either correct that or the Prime Minister's statement is incorrect. I submit he is misleading the House since the Prime Minister is responsible for Finance. He is misleading the House and he must withdraw it, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I did not intend to mislead the House and I am speaking, Mr. Chairman from the point of view of information,

Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as at the nineteenth day of March in the day of Our Lord 1997, our foreign reserves stood... I am going to read it from my notes. The ratio of the external assets over the average monthly imports 6/12 months and that is consistent with the first statement that I made, Mr. Chairman, in defence of my submission that in a situation where as an open economy...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I have the right in here to be heard in silence and in peace, and I am hearing hecklers. I am hearing hecklers over there trying their utmost to deflect attention from the truth and to prevent this debate from going on. Mr. Chairman, I ask you to use your authority to silence those strangers because Honourable Members of this House who are dignified would not behave in that fashion. I am asking you, Mr. Chairman, to quell this riotous catopholous mob of hecklers who are bringing the finest example of bad manners to bear in the parliamentary process.

Mr. Chairman, I listened to that Honourable Member yesterday talk a lot of garbage.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order here, please. Honourable Member, we had the position of the Honourable Member for St. James North being questioned. The Honourable Member has been able to produce evidence which said that it is six months. He has produced a document which has shown that. So he stands by his statement. So he is not misleading. The second point I want to make here is that the Honourable Member for St. James North referred to the another Member as talking garbage. I think those remarks should be withdrawn from the record.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I promise you, Mr. Chairman. I withdraw them. It is unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that both those Honourable Members are Members who are in the corridors engaged with me in conversation from time to time, always reflect on my veracity with accuracy, on the Floor of this House are seeking to tear me down and rip me apart. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South Central applied for membership of my fan club and got it on the grounds that he said that he had a lot of admiration for me as a young man. Only this week he was asking me when am I going to come into his....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay, okay, continue.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Now the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is joining with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who wants to silence me.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have no objection to his saying that I am a member of his fan club, if he wants to believe that, but certainly, I do not wish to do such severe harm to the NDP by inviting him to join.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, as I proceed, the point I am making is this. In view of the criticism coming from Honourable Members on that side, that in recent times we have not been managing the affairs of tourism to their satisfaction, the point I was making Mr. Chairman, is that where tourism is the principal contributor to the earning of foreign exchange, we have to say that progress has been made in this sector under this administration. Now, I am not aware, Mr. Chairman, of any attempt or effort by this Government to increase the foreign reserves by way of a large, huge commercial loan of borrowing money that would build up the reserves. I am not aware of that.

So I can conclude then, Mr. Chairman, that the country has been earning its reserves and that in a situation where tourism is a faster earner of foreign reserves than agriculture or manufacturing then we must say, Mr. Chairman, we must conclude that tourism is indeed asserting itself and continuing to bring good health to this very strong economy. The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, in a moment of consummate sobriety on Monday said that this economy was strong and that he had to find other formulae by which he can derail the Government outside of economic arguments to win the next election. He said so here on Monday. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He said so to this Clerk. He said so, that the economy is so strong that the National Democratic Party will have to find strategies by which they can bring down the Government by other policies, but not the economy. He said so. He said so.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I made no such statement. I said, on the Floor of this House, that there should be a consensus among political parties that we will all seek at all times to have a vibrant economy and that there are other aspects of Barbadian life which can be focused on in terms of a change of Government. I never said anything of the kind. It is a completely different thing altogether.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. While I would not dispute the statistics being used by the Honourable Member for St. James North, I will tell you that figure is not the one which is used to measure the foreign reserves capacity of the Barbados economy:

You are using the external which includes the CMCF and a whole host of things which you do not have direct access to. In fact, just as a means of shedding some light, the net international reserves of the Central Bank are used to compute the ratio of which you speak. At the end of September 1996 liquid foreign assets and I am quoting from the Central Bank December issue.

> "Liquid foreign assets were sufficient to cover 14.8 weeks of imports compared to 10.4 weeks at September 1995."

So I am suggesting to you that while what you are saying is not incorrect, it really does not bear much relation to reality because it misleads. All we are doing is asking you to quote figures which are more appropriate.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: While it is true that that intervention on a point of order is a more dignified intervention than that made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West the question is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West raised the point of the reserves at September 1996 whereas I was talking of the reserves at the 19th of March 1997. Also, the Honourable Member did not indicate what his view of the net reserves are and what the quota is today.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am suggesting to you that nothing radical has transpired in this economy between September and March. To move only the coverage of reserves to ten weeks to six months coverage in that six months period. So all I am asking you to do is to provide the Honourable Chamber with the more appropriate measure of import coverage, and that is the net international reserves.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, much as I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West on a previous occasion this week in this debate, I heard the same Honourable Member for St. Michael North West notwithstanding the fact that he just said that there has been no radical change suggest that all the enlightened policies being pursued would be policies that his party would have pursued given the opportunity. So he is boasting that if there is success that it comes from them, but at the same time there has been no success. I do not quite understand it. Mr. Chairman, however, let us continue.

Mr. Chairman, I am submitting, contrary to all of the interruptions from the Other Side that the arguments being presented by the Honourable Members on the Other Side are arguments that do not truly negate or deny or contradict the fact that our tourism is by no means in crisis, that we are doing our best to sustain tourism, that tourism still is going to be leading the economy and that all the efforts being made by this administration are being made in the interest of Barbados and Barbadians.

Dr. R. C.HAYNES: On a point of order. I wish to draw your attention to Standing Order No. 28. The Honourable Member is being both boring, tedious, and repetitive of his own arguments.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the argument...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is indicating that we, on this side, said that tourism was in crisis. I heard no Honourable Member on this side indicate that tourism was in crisis. What we said, that some of the views that were expressed on this side were that you have set the theme for this debate with regard to the elimination of poverty and the Government needs to address the question of alleviation of poverty in reserve of $600 000 and it is not reaching the people in the street. It is a waste of time. Why keep it on the bank and it is not reaching the people? Find a way to get it to the people. That is what we are saying.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I am heartened that the words have issued forth from the Shadow Minister of Tourism that tourism is not in crisis. He just said so. He just said so and that is what I wanted him to come and say.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I have said no such thing.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Shadow Minister of the Environment who spoke with more sense on tourism than the shadow Minister of Tourism, right? Mr. Chairman, when we are considering tourism, we are considering both a dynamic situation, as well as a very complex situation.

Tourism is a multifaceted activity which is by no means capable of easy short-term solutions and which, Mr. Chairman, always deserve the closest possible attention. I am heartened that even though there has been criticism of us that there is one Caribbean country spending ten times the amount as Barbados on marketing and another Caribbean country spending fifty times the amount on marketing. That when you look at it Mr. Chairman, if the Bahamas and Jamaica, as was said, really spend ten times and fifty times more on the promotion and marketing of tourism than Barbados but yet cannot attract as many repeat visitors as Barbados, then it tells you something about Barbados, notwithstanding the argument that we do not spend as much money on marketing as others.

In the Bahamas, less than one in five tourists going to the Bahamas would ever return. In Jamaica, it is less than one in five, too. In Barbados it is close to 40% of people returning to this country. That says something for

people who are coming to a small country, a small economy, a country not as big as the Archipelago of the Bahamas, not as big and as varied as Jamaica but a country with such good stable Government and such warm and friendly people as to be in a position to attract tourists in a manner that would entice Honourable Members on this side to be able to defend the enlightened programmes as being pursued by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and the Honourable Minister of International Transport. It is a source of some comfort that even when our detractors are attempting to suggest that we are not doing our best, it is still a source of comfort that there is no indication of any slide or decline in tourism and that even when Honourable Members say that the increase in performance of this year over last year is only 1.1%, if you take the fact that for the last three years there had been increases, then even though 1.1% would not compare nicely with the figure of the previous year or the year previous to the previous year, then the situation is that we are still increasing our arrivals in a situation where the international touristic environment is highly competitive and where Barbados does not produce as varied a product as many other countries in the world.

We have been doing our best, Mr. Chairman, to enhance and increase our airlift and it is a source of enormous pleasure that we are able now to have an additional airline bringing tourists out of North America to Barbados in circumstances where the vagaries of the market being what they are, we always have to have as much carriers coming here as possible.

I am delighted, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate my friend the Honourable Member for International Transport for having been able to assist in negotiating the arrival of additional airlines and indeed additional cruise ships to Barbados. Mr. Chairman, this enlightened administration is also doing its best to improve our port management and our port handling facilities with a view to making sure that the cruise aspect of our tourism proceeds nicely and proceeds in favour of our increased economic advancement.

Mr. Chairman, the facts are such that even though the Opposition has clearly planned and has started this particular Head to go for in these Estimates, I cannot see either from what they have said before or from what the true facts are that what the Opposition on this occasion is saying is accurate.

The best speech so far made on the Opposition side was done by the Member for St. Lucy. I am not saying that he made a good speech but he made a better speech than all the Honourable Members, on that side. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: Look, gentlemen I think we might as well go outside because it seems to me that these Estimates are being discussed by the Front Bench. I do not understand this. The Estimates are for us to discuss the Heads over here and get some responses. I am not going to sit in here and listen to the Minister of Tourism, then the Minister of Agriculture, then the Minister responsible for something else. I am not going to do it. If you wish me to go outside I will go outside. I am not going to sit in here. Do not give me any rubbish. If you want us to go outside let us go outside.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not going to sit down here and have you give the whole Front Bench a chance. I will leave.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will leave.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You obviously had a discussion and decide that you are going to come in here and stonewall. I am not going to have it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Abides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order in this House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Please understand that I will not stand for any rubbish.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You think I came in here yesterday? You think I am going to sit down and let you all...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have to remind Honourable Members of the rules. This is a debate which started earlier this week and finishes today. Members have the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 15 minutes at a time. I do not see why a Member's speech should be in dispute. That is the first point.

The second point is that I would not want you to reflect on the Chair and allude to the fact that the Chair is in any collusion.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of privilege, Sir. I accept and have always accepted the ruling of the Chair and I do not challenge the ruling of the Chair. However, Sir, as a Member of this Committee, I am merely making a point that the debate in this Chamber or any Chamber of this House of Assembly must appear, to take account of the traditions of fairness which have always been present in. discussions or especially of the Estimates. I do not question Your Honour, Sir. I am merely drawing to the attention of the Committee, not Your Honour's ruling, not Your Honour's calling of anybody, but the Government.

It has nothing to do with Your Honour, Sir. Your Honour can only call whom Your Honour sees but there is a tradition that has been in existence in this Parliament from its inception that when we are discussing the refurbishing of the monies to run this country that the Government of the day would allow Backbenchers and Opposition Members to question the Ministers and not for Ministers to be coming in here filibustering and or seeking to support each other with speeches. That is the point I was making, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of privilege. I wish to reinforce the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. We can have a situation in here, Sir, where...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: These debates are all constrained by time and we have a situation where the Front Bench can effectively prevent Members of the Opposition and Members of the back bench on the Other Side from carrying out their duty under the accepted practices of parliamentary democracy. That is, to use this opportunity to scrutinize Government expenditure and get responses from the Minister who is responsible. 11.10a.m.

It is quite inappropriate for front bench Minister after Minister to be getting up just padding the debate and wasting time.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I feel such a sense of amusement that I almost cannot speak. I always thought the intention was that as points were raised the Government would respond.

I want to speak to some comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East this morning. He, in fact, in addressing the issue of cruise tourism made a statement which was inaccurate. The very first statement he made was that despite cruise ship calls last year... and he ended with something about taxis. I made a note of it.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I was quite clear. I spoke about increased arrivals.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Member said that despite cruise ships calls last year..., and that was his first inaccuracy.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to delay the House. If I, in fact, said that, that was not my intention. My intention was related specifically to the increased arrivals, if I did say that, but I do not recall saying that. I am correcting it now for the records that if I did say that, my intention was that I was referring in my mind to the increase in arrivals.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The fact is, and for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who would make his remarks, but who would hit last night and run because he did not want to hear the truth about his alarmist remarks...

A certain word used by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN:.. and untrue remarks, now that he is here today I will repeat for his benefit the fact that whatever he may have read in some concocted journal, perhaps concocted by himself, there is no reason whatsoever to be alarmed about any area in Barbados in relation to cruise tourism. Even if it were true what he said about Princess Lines pulling out which is not true, they are merely changing frequencies. They are not pulling out. They are adding a ship with greater capacity. That is not something to lose a minute's sleep over. The fact is the record will show that less cruise calls do not mean less cruise passengers.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether I should refer to the Honourable Member as a fool or a liar.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot refer to either.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I do not know which one. No person should get up in this House, accuse anyone of making scandalous remarks, and then proceed to misquote what they say. It is quite wrong. If you want to indulge in the cut and thrust in debate, look and see what people like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West or I would do. At least make sure that you are accurately quoting what the person said.

I precisely referred to an article here which I did not make a document of the House and I talked about a reduction of the number of calls to Barbados. So if a fool cannot distinguish between a reduction in the number of calls by a cruise ship line and prefers to come in here and heap abuse on another member, then I must say that if the person is genuine he can only be a...

A certain word used by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...and if they are not genuine that person would have to be...

A certain word used by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES:... one or the other.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I see you are trying your best in a House that has become a little tired because we are on the fifth day and no doubt people are tired. The language of the House, I respectfully submit, is degenerating to a level that should not reflect the standard of this House.

I really must appeal, Sir, for members to lift the standard of the debate. We can debate in the cut and thrust. The phrase and other things, the Honourable Member should take objection with good cause to those, but in taking that objection, to use the language of calling a member...

A certain expression used by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West was ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE:...must, of course be absolutely incorrect.

I do not know why we are getting hot. We have differences of interpretation in this House. Occasionally, like any human being, we might lose our cool, but I respectfully submit that the debate must now get back on track so that we can really deal with issues rather than personalities and the exchange of abuse across the Chamber.

I very much regret, Sir, that the younger members in the House would believe that is the standard that should be maintained in this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let me make a ruling on this. The Chair was cognisant of the words but I am not sure in terms of modern politics. It was a bit near to the line but I was not so sure. I should have ruled him out of order but then the other Member is apparently objecting to the use of the word.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Even the Chairman of the House Committees cannot speak in this House? I am continuing my ruling.

Secondly, I am saying the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said either or and I was working out in my mind whether he had crossed the line. I was not so sure.

Let us proceed.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central last night quoted from a document without making it a document of the House and knowing his political history, I do not believe anything he said.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I did not quote from any document here last night.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Hold a second. Let me make a ruling here, please.

The Honourable Member here is using offensive remarks. I do not think one can say in this House that he does not believe what another member says. I am asking that those expressions be withdrawn.

You can make your comment now.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I never quoted from any document here last night without making it a document of the House. The Honourable Member is again misrepresenting what took place in this Honourable House. I cannot use the word... as you have indicated, but he cannot persist in that vein.

He cannot persist and accuse me of quoting from a document and not making it a document of the House. You were sitting in that Chair, Mr. Chairman, and I deliberately did not quote from the document I had because it is a newsletter and not a book or anything like that. 11.20a.m.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I wish to speak about the issue raised by the Member for St. Michael East and for the benefit of the Member of St. Michael South Central who was not here last night after he ran from the Chamber after making a non-point, I want to speak to that. I want to say to the Member, that really and truly he should not really reflect on the Barbados Port because he is a travelled man who has seen more Ports than I have seen. He knows that the facilities obtained at the Port in Barbados are vastly superior to almost any of them that he has seen in any other Port in any other part of the region.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I accept that as a result of the Democratic Labour Party's policies he can now get up in here and say that. I do not know why he is quarrelling with me for it. It is a fact that it is one of the nicest Ports in the Caribbean and you should thank the Democratic Labour Party for making your job easy.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. The Deep Water Harbour, otherwise known as the Bridgetown Port, is all the work of the Barbados Labour Party. In the dying days of our Administration, before 1986, when we fixed up the first cruise terminal that was the work of Mr. Leroy Sisnett and he deserved the credit for it. When it was officially opened, the Democratic Labour Party boycotted the function and had a lot to say. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central too. He said that we were wasting and that we did not know what we were doing. They have no concept on what the future for cruise could be.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. I am tired of these kinds of misrepresentations. I have on the Floor of this House again and again said that Mr. Leroy Sisnett should be credited with making a significant contribution in the area of cruise tourism which had fallen to its lowest ebb before he took up that responsibility. I have said so again and again and I have always deplored the way in which he was treated by the Barbados Labour Party.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. I was in here, Mr. Chairman, Sir, when we were laughed at and we were told that it was going to be a big flop and they disassociated themselves from it and in this administration it falls for us again to expand and to refurbish the Port.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, the Members on that side are really trying to provoke this side into dealing with everything but the particular issue, to deprive them of another educational session from Members on this side.

The fact is that the Port facilities in Barbados are the best in the region. I am not going to thank any Democratic Labour Party that took $2 from every $6 per head tax from every passenger and gave it to big business in Barbados. Not only that, but they gave it to big business for an invested period of time and the only thing in any agreement that deals with that situation says that it can only be varied by mutual consent. For the Port Authority to get money back that it should be getting, that never should have been given away in the first place, we now have to get them to agree to give us back. But that is not going to continue for much longer. I can tell you that. That is all the DLP can boast about in relation to the Port Authority. They gave $2 out of every $6 and wanted it to continue indefinitely. Now we have a duty to make the Port Authority and its facilities even better.

When the Honourable Member can criticise the Port and talk about the incinerator, the fact is that again the Barbados Port Authority is the only Port Authority in the region that is complying with the Marpol Convention.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member. I am not disputing whether we are the only Port that conforms. The point is that the incinerator that is presently in place is malfunctioning and it is having an impact on the workers at the Port. That is all I am talking about. The residents are also affected by the same incinerator and they are my constituents.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any residents being affected. I am aware that the Member for St. Michael East spend so much time in the Port, that perhaps he is a resident.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I went into the Port twice last year and I had to wait for a very long time because there is so much pressure in Barbados that they had an increase of over 9000 barrels at the Port and I had to spend 3 days to get one barrel because Barbadians cannot afford to buy food in Barbados now. I go from time to time to get a barrel out.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is making that statement in his own self-interest. Barbadians cannot afford to buy the high class luxury food that he brings in. He must not apply that to other items.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am hitting some really raw nerves in here because I cannot even get to

talk. Every time I make a statement somebody jumps up over there and makes a comment. I cannot get to talk at all.

Mr. Chairman, in respect to the comment about the emission in relation to the incinerator, the fact is that there is something called "refactory" which is something like cement. This is put inside the incinerator to seal it off around the doors to seal off any emissions getting out. When the garbage is sent in from the cruise ship, during the course of burning the garbage, the incinerator exploded. When the incinerator exploded, it damaged the refactory that was lining the incinerator and that is why emissions are able to get out and this is why you are seeing smoke coming from the incinerator.

However, new refactory is soon to be received in the island and hopefully in a matter of a week it will be replaced again so there will be no more emissions coming from the incinerator.

With respect to the stench that the Member for St. Michael East was referring to, the difficulty is that at present, the garbage is normally taken out by the incinerator workers and they are not scheduled to come to work until 7.00 a.m. 11.30a.m.

When they come to work at 7.00 a.m/it is the same time as the regular dockers anu other workers in the Port. So while they are taking out the garbage from the incinerator the workers are already on site and they are the ones who are smelling the stench, not any residents.

I have not heard any complaints that residents are being affected. In any case discussions are going on with the union to ensure that the incinerator cleaners can in fact report to work at 6.00 am so that by the time the workers come on at 7.00 a.m. the garbage would be removed and there would no longer be any problem with any stench. That is the simple issue in relation to the Barbados Port Authority.

I just want also to take the opportunity to let Honourable Members know that this administration also has plans to even further upgrade the facilities at the Bridgetown Port. We are not content to remain as we are although we are just perhaps the best. We want to be even better. As members may or may not know ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I cannot develop this point in one minute so I will sit and come back at a later time. Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since it is not clear that I am going to be able to make too many interventions let me do a summary thing on tourism on this occasion. I really wish to talk about the Tourism Investment Corporation as well but first of all let us look at this Tourism Head in my final statement on it. I think that from the perspective of product, price and promotion, we can all agree that Barbados is different from its competition. The Caribbean, Mexico, the United States destination of Florida, Hawaii, South Jersey or New England, Europe, Africa Islands, we are different. Barbados is the only place where you can vacation in four different atmospheres so to speak without ever leaving this country. We have the East Coast, we have the West Coast, we have the South Coast and we have rural country in this small island of ours. So far as price is concerned Barbados offers something for everyone in terms of price range from the exclusive high expensive West Coast to the modest small hotels on all coasts. We have charming apartments, we have full kitchens, so you can experience buying, at least you used to be able to experience buying fresh food, freshly caught fish, fresh farm produce from colourful vendors in the market-place. The Honourable Member was out there this morning buying from a colourful vendor in the market-place. You can save if you come to Barbados by cooking locally.

Now, what am I saying here? These are the things that are saleable in terms of product and price to Barbados. Now let us look at the promotion. I do not see the President as I look out but let us look at promotion. Television advertising for a country like Barbados is a waste of money. Television advertising, unless you have unlimited budget the message is lost. What is desirable is a targetted approach using radio and key billboards. You cannot have enough funding to do television advertising for Barbados. You need to use radio, you need to use key billboards. We should be making heavy use of specifically placed public relations stories, emphasising all the things I mentioned a few moments ago. We can place those in important journals in North America and it does not cost a cent. That is why, over the years, when we had responsibility for tourism and when we were functioning outside of Barbados in the context of tourism we placed so much heavy stress on public relations.

There are a lot of people in Barbados and unfortunately in the business, who do not understand the difference between selling, advertising and marketing. In discussing marketing that is what we need to stress as a community. Barbados cannot get involved in competition for advertising with some of the other people who are tourism oriented but we can market our product effectively. That is what we have to do. We have to concentrate on marketing and it costs nothing to place a good story in a magazine.

There are some problems in promotion which I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister. Except in Britain or Canada it is still true that most people do not know whe*e Barbados is except in Britain and in Canada. They still get us confused with Barbuda, Bahamas, Bermuda. Only yesterday I took something out of my mailbox which had been mis-sent to Bermuda. It is constantly happening. It has nothing to do with our post office. I am talking about the inability of people outside. Because we live in Barbados we believe that once we have spoken no dog barks. But the truth is that except, as I said, in Britain or in Canada where they have had an intimate relationship with Barbados over many, many years, people still get confused as to what is Barbados. They talk about "The Barbados" because they have always heard of the Bahamas. We have intelligent, highly placed people who, when they are talking about Barbados get confused still in 1997. We need to accept that. I say it critically but not with malice that the slogan we are using now is a slogan that could be used for anybody. "Barbados just beyond your imagination" really means nothing. It is floating in a dream world with a design that could be any tropical paradise.

The Honourable Member for the City would say it is working for her. Maybe it is working for her. But I will say to you from a marketing point of view that it says nothing about Barbados. It does not identify Barbados distinctly as compared with any other destination.

The other thing I want to talk about is that we are still placing emphasis on the high end of our market. Port St. Charles, Royal Westmoreland, Sandy Lane, the Concord, that is the image which is portrayed and I know that when I was involved with tourism over the years there was a conglomeration of people, one might even say a clique, that has always wanted Barbados to be marketed in this way. They are totally disinterested. They do not care about the bulk of the tourism ownership in Barbados. The small people who control 60% of the industry, that clique does not care and when given the opportunity will always channel Barbadian dollars toward promotion of the upper scale of our product. So there are people who see our promotion in the United States and conclude that it is too expensive for them without exploring it because we have tended to shift toward the magnificent 7.

The present manager of Sandy Lane is an exponent of this kind of philosophy that we should concentrate on the higher end of tourism. That is not of as much interest and of as much benefit to this country as if we do the kind of thing which I attempted with air tours. 11.40a.m.

It fills hotel rooms on the south coast and unless you can fill hotel rooms on the south coast in Barbados, Tourism will be magical, it will be exotic but it will not be beneficial.

Sometimes when we talk about the reserves and how much money we have, we tend to forget that the trickle down does not occur merely because we say it. Tourism has to have excitement at the level of the vendor and I want to issue a word of caution to the Tourism officials.

Recently the President made a statement which was probably true. I do not know if it was true or false. I do not think he would deliberately make a false statement, but he made a statement which was published in the *Advocate* about the coconut vendor.

On the face of it there is nothing wrong with that but, you know what happened? What happened is that they had a publication to do with golf world.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not quoting from a newspaper, Sir, this is travel mail for the golfing set and written by Dee Nolan, a woman and there are some beautiful pictures and it says,

"Having a bad hair day, I did it in Barbados."

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now it is a lovely piece, but here is what turns up in the middle of it.

"It may be paradise but bad hair days, it seems, are not the only hazards."

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Listen to what she goes on to say to all the people who read this:

"Read the *Advocate,* the Island newspaper, and you will discover the local troubles. 'Stop the Bother[1], one headline commanded, revealing that unscrupulous coconut vendors were selling visitors $1 coconuts for $20."

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: So far so good, but listen.

"The visitor pays simply because he or she is afraid of the sharp weapon the vendor has in his possession", observed Earlyn Shuffler, President of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now, when the article was written in the *Advocate* by whoever writes the article, when the editor edits that, I do not believe...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Right, so since the *Advocate* circulation is so small it does not affect anybody, but when it is picked up and put into...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The problem is not a major problem for us because we would read the *Advocate* and we know that Earlyn Shuffler is not going to run down Tourism deliberately. We know that.

But when that sentence, quoted by the President of our Tourism Authority is then put into an article like this, that inadvertently....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hope that this criticism is being taken in the way in which it is given.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The sharp-edged weapon suggests that we have vendors down here with machetes going around making people buy things.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We have hoteliers on the West Coast that sell a coke for $8.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not a denizen for the hotel...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am here pushing your case for the hotels on the south coast. I am not a denizen of the night club circuit so I really do not know what prices they are charging now.

What I know is that if you want to go out in Barbados to a reasonable hotel and you take a lady with you, and you have a good meal and you have a bottle of wine, and you have a brandy afterwards it is going to cost you Bds. $500.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not overstating it. I have the bill at home I will show you, Bds. $534 and I will tell you there were four people. You should be able to take four people out and have a good dinner that is well cooked and have a bottle of wine and a brandy afterwards. You should be able to.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I cannot do it too often, it was a birthday. You see, I am not as lucky as some of the other Honourable Members who can draw their allowances and their pension and all those kinds of things. I have to live on the pittance.

Anyhow, Sir, the point I am making is that we have to be extremely careful how we speak.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The people who have their interest at heart will not necessarily be the people who have our interest at heart.

Another thing that happens that our people do not accept in this country but it is a fact, they have journalistic hit men who have time and will travel. If you pick up the Miami newspapers, every now and again, you will see an article about Barbados or about the Caribbean which is as far from the truth as you can hear on some political platforms during the high seasons.

The other destinations have hired them to run down Barbados. I do not think people understand that these are facts of life out there in the real world. They have people who go on radio programmes and talk about an incident that happened in Barbados, or that they read in the newspaper and sometimes when we raise questions about what is published in our newspapers some people believe that we are saying you should hide the facts from the people. But, if you are promoting Barbados, it is something which everybody must get involved in.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not enough for a newspaper to write an editorial attacking us for something when that same newspaper is going to turn around and publish something which is now available on the Internet.

I do not think that most people in Barbados understand that the *Advocate* and the *Nation* are now read on the Internet and therefore, if you put a gory headline on our front page which suggests that when you come to Barbados you are going to be faced with violence...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ... and that is what they have done with Jamaica, They masticated Jamaica. They drove Jamaica into the ground. When the United States was fighting Manley...

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ...the newspaper articles had Jamaica as a place that when you walk down the street you would see a machete man coming out from every other corner. That is warfare and the same thing happens to us.

I say that the newspapers in Barbados and I am not criticising them, when I want to criticise them I will do that, but they have a responsibility to bear in mind that they are part of the promotion and part of the packet and therefore we must be very careful.

Mr. Chairman, in promoting tourism there is no DLP way and BLP way to promote Barbados. There is the right way. 11.50a.m.

Sometimes when we are in the heat of discussion we do not remember that each one of us who is critical of what is happening has a commitment to get something better for Barbados. I am going to stop at this point.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few brief comments using what I have between my ears to contribute to this debate because what has emerged in this Honourable House over the past few days is two areas of consensus. One is that when it comes to the sovereignty of Barbados all political parties are united in the defence of that sovereignty.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, if I may continue, Sir, I want to deal with the issue of the small hotels in this country and ask the Minister what is she doing to help the small hotels in Barbados and whether she is aware that there are some very deep and profound new concerns relating to the south coast hotels.

Sir, many of those hotels which were earmarked for participation in the GEMS project, as a result of a previous relationship with a now defunct Barbados Development Bank, many of those owners find themselves in a very difficult situation because the proposal which has been put to them would so reduce their equity in a new entity that they would in effect lose control of the ownership of their properties. I want to make a plea here on the Floor of the House today that we should all recognise that those small hotels have made no less a contribution to employment generation, to foreign exchange earnings, than the sugar industry of this country over the years.

Whereas a formula has been arrived at for the sugar industry which would preserve the ownership of plantations in the hands of the previous owners after restructuring, I sincerely hope that the small hoteliers of Barbados, largely owned by Barbadians who made a major commitment to this industry that whatever arrangements are made under the GEMS project that there will be an assurance that those properties would revert to the ownership of the existing owners.

In fact, Sir, many of them are technically bankrupt but as a matter of public policy we have taken certain positions in relation to other industries that have been technically bankrupt and more bankrupt than those hotels and the time has come when we have to understand clearly that the localisation of as much ownership as possible of the hotel plant in Barbadian hands is our best assurance for the future of the tourism industry.

If the taxpayers have to make sacrifices on behalf of those small hoteliers they are making it in the same vein and with the same kind of assumption as those sacrifices were made for the preservation and the restructuring of the sugar industry of Barbados.

I have had many representations made to me at several levels as to what will be the future of those small hotels in the new GEMS project arrangement. I would also like to know how much has been made available to the one or two companies operating in that area. I would like to know how much money has been spent so far, and on what the money has been spent and whether or not any significant progress is being made with the marketing efforts for the small hotels on the south coast.

It is nice to come in here and use all kinds of fancy language. The Honourable Minister of Tourism is an expert on the inter-nationalisation of her fades and her tongue, her language. She can use all kinds of high flown language but when it gets down to the nitty-gritty and the reality is that there are several properties on the south coast which have been threatened by certain persons. Either you participate or the BDB is going to foreclose on you. Steps have been taken, actual foreclosure steps have been taken on one or two of those properties. The particular target has been those properties which are on the beach and certain persons in the new GEMS arrangement believe that the project will not succeed unless they can have access to those people's properties.

I sincerely urge that an effort be made to try to get to the bottom of exactly what is happening with those two companies which, as I understand, have been doing studies. One is supposed to be doing studies and one is involved in marketing and the other in ownership and the share arrangement for those hotels.

It is quite clear to me that if you take a hotel which is marginally viable and you look at the existing equity and you put that in a pool then the equity which they would enjoy in any new arrangement would be negligible and the prospect of those people ever recovering their property out of that kind of relationship would be zero.

I would urge that some kind or other relationship between the two companies that have been set up and the owners of those small hotels so that those people would have an assurance and a reassurance that at the end of the day they will not lose their properties. If they lose their properties you can be quite sure that what is going to happen over time is that all of the tourism plant of Barbados is going to pass out of Barbadian hands. 12.00 noon

I repeat all will pass out of Barbadian hands.

Now, Sir, it is important in this country that we maintain a diversified product. There are serious social implications related to tourism as a whole which we accept as the consequences of being involved in the tourism industry as there are consequences for any kind of industry. I am not one of those persons to highlight the negatives related to tourism, and I do not wish to do that, but I think it is important that Barbados be seen internationally not only as a place where only people who can afford to pay US$1000 a day or US$6000 a week for a villa, a place to come, but also a place where the ordinary man and woman in the United States or the United Kingdom or Europe can come and enjoy a holiday. By and large, the places they would have to come to would be those South Coast hotels and our aim and our object should be to do our best to make sure that the ownership of those hotels remained in the hands of the Barbadians who own them, even if we have to make an additional sacrifice.

I am quite sure that our recent experience in Barbados, the present controversy relating to Almond Beach and so on should reinforce the point that where we have local ownership that we must do our best to try to ensure that it remains local. This is something that I feel very strongly about because I understand the dynamics of what has happened on the South Coast and make no mistake, it is one thing to get up and say that those hotels are technically bankrupt. That is so in monetary terms. In economic terms their contribution to Barbados has been enormous and because of a number of economic factors operating in Barbados they have not been able to enjoy the levels of profitability which one would expect. But certainly in terms of job creation and in terms, Mr. Chairman of the certainty, the certainty of every foreign dollar earned would find its way into the Barbados economy I can guarantee you that the small hotels in Barbados are more likely to guarantee that to the people of Barbados than any large hotel. They need every single dollar that they earn in order to survive and therefore the money has to be kept in Barbados. It has to go to repay the banks, the interest, the capital repayments and to keep their projects going.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. I think that the release is even more disgusting because it demonstrates to me a level of callousness, contempt, not only for the workers at Heywoods, not only for Barbadians, but total contempt for this Parliament, that they can issue a statement like that. No wonder this Parliament has questioned their legal rights, if they have the legal rights. We do not know what the legality of the situation is in terms of share ownership and so on or the involvement of minority shareholders.

No one has questioned that it is a kind of commercial venture that people would get involved in. No one has questioned that. We have questioned the moral basis of their action and I am very pleased to see that the Deputy Prime Minister had clearly abandoned and taken flight from her romance. She has abandoned and taken flight from her romance with those people because in every single previous presentation she has made in this Honourable House she has been in here singing the tune of the private sector, how the private sector is going to project tourism into the 21st century. This wonderful relationship that she has with them.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. Get out of the relationship. Run fast. You have been hurt. Run fast. Put an end to the romance.

Let me tell you something, Sir. There is one good thing about the Honourable Member for the City. When she decides to put and end to a romance, it is done and Sir, blows begin.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They would never get a penny from me either, okay. So let us get that straight. My plea today, Sir, is for the small hotels. I think that we have good reason now and I am going to be urging upon the Minister of Finance that a review be taken on the entire approach to the GEMS Project so that there would

be some assurance that those hoteliers who have suffered over the years like anybody else in helping the tourism industry to develop, that they retain ownership of their hotels.

The second point I want to make, Sir, is this. I heard a boast earlier in this House that we have a 40% return visitor component of our tourism industry - 40%.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is good but it also highlights the inadequacy and the inefficiency of our promotional effort in that we have failed to build on that base in order to have a higher rate of tourism development in Barbados with more visitors. If 40% are coming without the help of the Barbados Tourism Authority or without the help of anybody and they are coming here because the people of Barbados as a whole, have created a climate that would want them want to come back - 40%. You are going to tell me that they cannot achieve more than 1.1% growth in the number of arrivals?

The only way you can achieve more than 1.1% is to lump cruise ship arrivals with long-stay arrivals and invent a new statistic for Barbados?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order. We really need to pay attention to what we are doing. The Honourable Member chose not to come back to debate last night. We went through all of this. What about the years like 1990 when we had 8% and 6% declines and 3% declines and all this kind of thing? We should be glad that we are now on a growth path.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Now what is interesting you see... I could have a debate with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South on this matter. He knows this. He knows that there are danger signs because if you look back over the past twenty years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up. You can come back.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sure, let me finish this statement. Just one point, Sir. If you look back over the past twenty years you will see what happens to tourism. Tourism expands for three or four years and then it drops and then it goes up and then it comes down and it goes up and then it comes down.

It has been cyclical since the 1970s and the danger is that if you get a rapid expansion in '94, '95, '96, '97 and in '96 you come down to 1.1%, Sir, I would say this that this is the time now when you should begin to sense danger. When you see that cycle in the tourism industry, when you are on the down side of that curve, and not to come in here and ignore what we are saying about what happened in tourism last year because what I am saying here is a repetition...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...a repetition of a cyclical pattern in tourism that has existed over the past 20-25 years. Thank you very much.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: A small contribution in reply to a speech made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, Sir. The point that he made of the importance of small businessmen in Barbados, taxi drivers, and vendors, small producers feeling that opportunities will be given to them to participate in any increase in the foreign exchange and economic activity in the tourist industry, is a point that this Party certainly in the last 20 years has taken seriously. This Party has taken very seriously that point. It was this political Party, Sir, that originated the idea that it was necessary to have well-designed and well-planned vendors outlets on every major beach in Barbados. 12.10 p.m.

Regrettably, despite the start at Dover, Paynes Bay, the then Marriotts, Sam Lord's, Pelican Village and all those areas, there had been a slowdown in that activity. It may have been the recession that caused the slowdown or a difference in policy, but the fact remains that the Labour Party's record in that direction bears no comparison.

Sir, I am pleased to see since 1984 that efforts in this direction are continuing. We have started with Oistins. I hope to see that Dover next to the Convention Centre where the prototype of that activity was started, that a complete refurbishment takes place there. I have already been in touch with the National Conservation Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that that area is well designed and the facilities enhanced.

We also, Sir, were the political party that originated the scheme to provide tax concessions for small taxi operators so they could keep their equipment in first-class condition with respect, at that particular period of time, to the request which was for that equipment because the differential in price between gas and diesel was great. The world has moved now towards the position in which there is little distinction in taxation policies between diesel as a fuel and gasolene. The fact that most of the equipment used was diesel powered does not detract from the

fundamental principle that the Government took the decision that taxi owners were able to replace their vehicles free of the burdens of taxation of vehicles.

We went further. This is the point I want to make in reply to the issues raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Cooperative Societies and companies which consisted of small taxi owners in which there was a wide diverse shareholding were granted concessior for coaches.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Peter Morgan? I am going to tell you what he did. He gave "Chicken" a monopoly at the Airport and we had to break it. He had a select group of canvassers who were deeply loyal to him and they were given a monopoly at the Airport. It caused more trouble because there was discrimination among the small businessmen and it was felt a few had political favours. We opened it. You will remember, United Taxi-owners Association - I can call their names - the Gibson Group.

The point is, Sir, that concessions were given. What I want to say is this. Sometimes these people are their own enemies because they will not cooperate. I defy anybody to tell me that you could sit down and devise a scheme which could be satisfactory to all the various factions of the taxi business to operate at the Port or the Airport. Although we opened the Airport, there were 100 for the existing people, the Peter Morgan people, 100 for Quintec. The name Quintec is five organisations.

In addition to that, you had the original owners, the Johnson Stables, the Niblocks and all of them. They also had 50 vehicles. You cannot sit down around a table with them and expect to get any kind of agreement at all. If there are 10 of them in there you will get 10 different points of view, and they could hold steadfast to their point of view.

Sir, the question of the division of the work at the Airport and at the Port has been a bone of contention for many years. All a government can do is to ensure that some of that work flows in the direction of the small taxi owners. You do that by ensuring that their equipment is as good as anybody else's. You would do that by advising them that they have to market like anybody else. You do that by trying to have, not a monopoly with any one group, but a reasonable distribution of the work insofar as it is possible to do it having regard to the fact that in the tourist industry there are a tremendous amount of monopolies, semi-monopolies, marketing and interlocking arrangements.

The tour operators abroad, Honourable Members might not know this, like to deal with certain groups here because some groups here will give them a bigger percentage of the commission earned than others. That is a fact. There are some select people whose responsibility is to make these arrangements on those grounds. They are past masters at trying to extract from the competing Barbadian interest the biggest set of cut-back commissions out. Therefore, Sir, these are real problems we have to deal with.

I want to insist, Sir, that the record of the Labour Party in this direction bears no comparison with anybody else's. We have also been very strong on the redevelopment of Pelican Village and Cheapside Market. I regard the Cheapside Market as potentially one of the best show cases we can have for small businessmen in Barbados. It is situated on the main road within walking distance of the Harbour. It is next to a bus stand so you can have a collection of vendors there to cater to the needs, not only of locals, but of the tourists.

I do not know about Honourable Members. When I go abroad one of the first places one likes to go to is to go in a market, if you have ever been to places like Turkey or any of those other places. The big large markets are areas that have a great variety of goods. Even in the United Kingdom, go down by Coventry Gardens and see what they have done. Therefore, Sir, I was very disappointed, exceedingly disappointed, when we left office and we had a $6 million plan at that time drawn by Design Collaborative for the rehabilitation of Cheapside Market, to find that after nine years in office the Honourable Members on that side could not motivate the powers that be to implement that. We now have to do it. That is a positive fact, Sir,

You can criticize Vic Johnson as you like. Vic Johnson started a brand new trend for the economic advancement for small people in Barbados by building the Terminal. The intention was that by now Fairchild Street Market would have been knocked down and redeveloped and it would have been linked by a bridge the other side. All these things are possible but you had your nine years and you wasted them in this direction.

Sir, I am not going to sit in here and allow any criticism to be made, or any suggestion to be made that the Government is not acutely conscious of the need to ensure that participation in economic activity at that level has to take place in Barbados, and it will take place. It is taking place.

You go up to Oistins Town. They tell me that some of the turnover there is very good. I am not going to say it, because I am going to be accused of blowing the trumpet of people to attract the attention of the VAT man or anybody. 12.20 p.m.

It requires an investment in public health. It requires an investment to ensure that the conditions are such that from the highest to the lowest can go. It requires an investment in security. The Honourable Members do not know how much security we constantly have to have to ensure that the conditions under which the trade takes place are the optimum. It requires patience, you have to educate people because you get accused of all kinds of things. Greed is a funny thing when you come to that kind of thing. People change their character once they start to make money. I now understand what they mean when you kick down the ladder by which you climb up.

Therefore, Sir, these are very difficult things and it is not good for us constantly to allow ourselves to make these statements when in truth and in fact the record is different. I am very happy, and I look forward to an expansion in that area, Sir.

Now, on the south coast, Sir. It is a fact that the situation with respect to the tourist industry there is one that needs very careful analysis because the differential between the South Coast, the middle of the island and North Coast is very great and we have to ensure that there are public institutions who can help with the marketing. I believe that the key to this matter is to have an elaborate marketing mechanism whereby you can ensure that the plant, for which there is a demand but in the overseas market where the source of your visitors come from, it is not well known, and we have to find a mechanism with modern information technology to ensure that that plant can be matched with the demand abroad. Now, that is a very important area and I feel that the Government has a very important role to play in that, Sir.

My last point is that I am very glad that somebody made the point in here that we have to be careful in the allocation of our money and in the spending of that money and that the institutions who are responsible for it are not captured by the west coast. It is a fact, and as a Minister for Tourism, I was acutely conscious of it, that here is a group who feel that if the Government vote $10 million that $9 million should go to the promotion of Barbados. That is nothing new. From the time we had a Tourist Board that was the view. So we constantly have to be sure that we have a diversified marketing approach to deal with our diversified product.

My last point, Sir, is that I am hoping that greater emphasis will be placed in the coming year on the development cf the asset of the South Coast. I want to make it clear that the South Coast has good beaches, it has diversed hotel accommodation, it has some of the best sporting facilities, it has swimming, it has hockey and it has horse racing. I hope that we will have golf soon. It has Bubbas Sports. It has all of these things. The South Coast - can be marketed as a package. It also has cricket fields and parks at Silver Sands as the Honourable Chairman knows. The park at Silver Sands is a bi-partisan project, that is a fact. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East participated in that and we will continue it. It even has windsurfing. So I am hoping that we can bring all of this together in a special marketing plan to help those hotels in addition to the other help.

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

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, a number of points were raised last night in particular in this debate to which I would wish to respond today. The Member for St. Lucy raised some point, although I use the word point advisedly, but he made some point in relation to airlift for traffic out of Germany and something about the Cold War and the Member for Christ Church South made some comment in relation to regional carriers. I wish to comment very briefly on what the Ministry has been doing in relation to aviation airlift, in relation to the United Kingdom and Europe in particular.

The responsibility of the Ministry of International Transport is vast. One thing on which we will all agree is that any policies taken by the Ministry of International Transport must obviously be geared towards facilitating the expansion of airlifts to support the expansion of the tourism industry and trade. That is clear. What I did last year was to take a number of initiatives with a view to doing exactly that.

What the Ministry concentrated on last year very heavily was seeking to establish a very broad network of air services agreements to facilitate the expansion of services by foreign companies, and also to make it attractive to local or regional carriers to get involved in flying on the routes that we require. That is important and we must remember that the eminent airlines in this world, especially European carriers do not like to work on undeveloped routes unless there is an air services agreement in place between the countries. Especially in Germany. Condor in particular. Condor was pressuring the Government of Germany to conclude an agreement with Barbados because Condor did not want to develop a route unless there was an air services agreement in place that they could feel sure there was some measure of security to work on the route.

I decided last year that the Ministry had to conclude, as far as possible, a number of air services agreements. The culmination of the agreement in relation to Suriname was after some 17 years of negotiation. Now, mark you, I believe that if talks are going on for 17 years they must be some pussy-footing in there. You must agree that air services agreements are not things that are easily

concluded and they call for a lot of work to conclude. I decided that this had to come to a head and I was able to conclude that one in relation to Suriname. As I said last night, had the Americans not categorised Suriname it would have been a beautiful route coming straight from Argentina, through Suriname, Barbados and into the United States and return. It would have been a beautiful route, but they got categorised.

I decided that I would go after the United States and Europe.

In Germany, Germans are hard nosed negotiators, we were able in Germany, it was the second round of talks to get very attractive routes for any carrier that we may be able to designate on that route. We got right through two Caricom points and into all points in Germany and beyond into Switzerland. There is nothing more attractive than for a German airline to fly to Barbados and go beyond Barbados. We got that after two days of talks. That was one achievement of which I feel very proud.

In relation to Switzerland - Switzerland is one area of which you can feel especially proud. Because, for 20 years, they have been trying to get Switzerland to come to the table and when Switzerland did come to the table once in those twenty years, it was just to say "We have nothing to discuss". We got Switzerland to come to the table, in the dead of winter, I left Barbados to go to Europe to do air services talks. The man from St. Thomas asked if I am crazy going into 5o and 10o to do air services talks, but country must come first So we left Barbados and went to Germany and Switzerland. After Switzerland came to the table last year in December, Barbados was able to get route rights for carriers. 12.30 p.m.

We were able to get route rights for Barbadian airlines to fly through any 3 CARICOM points into any 3 points in Switzerland and beyond Switzerland into any 3 points in Europe. All those points are traffic points, meaning that you can pick up and put down traffic, a revolutionary achievement by the Ministry of International Transport within the last year.

I was at the table, I led the talks and Switzerland got in return the right to come from Switzerland to Barbados and on to any 3 South American points that they may wish. So it is now very attractive for them to think about working that market. That is what we were able to achieve in terms of route rights in relation to Germany and Switzerland.

This thing, Sir, is unbelievable. It might sound simple but the effort was vast. In relation to the United Kingdom as well we had an agreement in place from 1971 giving any Barbadian carrier the right only into London. And even in London you are restricted to just Gatwick, one point, and a further restriction, Gatwick, not even Heathrow or any other one. That is what we had since 1971. No right to even pick up traffic between Barbados and London. They had in the agreement, Antigua but then they refused to allow you to use it and we had to argue again for that.

In January this year we were able to have a new agreement with the United Kingdom after only four rounds of talks. This gives us the right to pick a Barbadian carrier. It is .not attractive to any Barbadian carrier, whether national or designated to fly that route, and able to go to either Antigua or St. Lucia or both and to all points in the United Kingdom. From one point Gatwick we have now got the right to go to all points in the United Kingdom and then go beyond to about four or five points in Europe. Never before have these rights been had by Barbados in relation to air services agreements.

When I was in Europe I had proposals from LPU and other carriers. The first thing you have to do is get routes for airlines to fly on. If you do not have routes you cannot fly. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East could educate you and tell you that. You cannot have scheduled service on no routes. That is a basic. If you would listen you would be educated and learn something. That was our emphasis last year and we now have, in relation to Europe, the most elaborate network of group rights ever before in Barbados. Never before has Barbados been able to boast of that sort of network of route rights under air services agreements.

This year, hopefully within a month, we should be having talks with the United States of America in relation to updating the 1982 Air Services Agreements that exist between Barbados and the United States. That Agreement in 1982 was negotiated by the Member for Christ Church South Central, who, as far as I am concerned is the aviation guru in the region. I have no doubt that at the time it was the best agreement that could have been negotiated but now it has to be updated. We only have 4 points in the United States right now so we can only designate BWIA or Air Jamaica in relation to 4 points. Of the 4 points only two are roving points the others you have to choose two out of a set 4 and stick to it. We have to widen that and talks are scheduled to be held hopefully next month with the United States to upgrade that agreement.

I just want Members to know the kind of work that is going on in the area of air services agreements and the acquisition of route rights by Barbados to facilitate the expansion of the tourism industry and the trade industry as well because trade is also very dependent on international transport.

I want to make one other point.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: This table is so full of information I do not even know where to find some of the things.

Now, I want to speak to the issue raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South Central about this question of...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member keeps misleading this House. There is no Honourable Member from Christ Church South Central in this House.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I am sorry, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I have already dismissed the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Now the Member raised the point about some merger between regional carriers. They did not feel the region was strong enough to carry a number of individual carriers.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I have to speak on it because there is a history. Now, I agree in principle with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. It would be ideal if the carriers could come together but I well remember the Carib Express. Carib Express when I became Minister was occupying my time almost on a daily basis.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Yes, Minister of State. Everybody knows that, but it is still Minister. It was occupying my time every single day. Meetings were being held trying to keep the carrier alive. I am not going to change my view that Carib Express took off without any proper plan. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West would never agree with me on this. He has disagreed already but Carib Express was formed and took to the skies without any proper business plan or any proper plan at all. It was led down the garden path at toe time by British Airways and had some fanciful idea that once it took off LIAT would have folded up and it would have ruled the roost. No properly thought out plan. The last administration allowed that to happen and then I was saddled with the responsibility every day of trying to keep Carib Express alive but it did not work.

What I learned in the last days of Carib Express was that Carib Express was extremely determined to pursue the same notion the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has that the airlines in the region, LIAT, Carib Express and BWIA should have gotten together and really structured themselves in a way that all 3 could work together and serve the market. Carib Express was pushing very hard for that but it did not work. LIAT and BWIA had their own theories and a number of efforts were made and I saw it clearly by the other carriers to frustrate that effort by Carib Express. That is a fact.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Carib Express collapsed somewhat because of that refusal to cooperate. So while therefore the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has that view, it is a very nice view, having the day-to-day responsibility I cannot always remain in that realm of romanticism. I am now proud to announce that within approximately a month or so the region will see the advent of another carrier, Air Caribbean, flying from Trinidad and Tobago through Barbados onwards to Grenada from Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia. 12.40 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I am proud to announce that, twice daily. This is a carrier that used to work the bridge between Trinidad and Tobago. Its efforts are being frustrated because the last administration had done a lot of damage in the region.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The last administration, in Trinidad and Tobago when BWIA was being privatised, gave certain assurances to BWIA that it would have no competition for a period of 15 years. A privatised BWIA. That was the assurance given.

Barbados, since August last year gave Air Caribbean the right to operate in Barbados.

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

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: But it could not get out of Trinidad, it could not get the permission from Trinidad, but after negotiations they have now gotten the okay from Trinidad and Tobago and BWIA has consented that they will now be able to fly the route, Trinidad, Barbados and onward to St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada.

They are going to be operating 58-seated aircraft on the routes, twice daily frequencies and on Tuesdays and Fridays, thrice (three times) daily frequencies, and onto the same beyond points.

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

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: At Barbados, the Airline has already indicated an interest and we are now actively looking for a place for them to set up a hangar, which will provide not only jobs for construction, but maintenance facilities, servicing not only its own aircraft but also third party aircraft. So we expect to see some job creation as a result of this operation.

It has also given the Ramp Handling Contract to the Aircraft Handling Company, which is more business again for a Barbadian company and all in all it is going to be, in my view, of tremendous assistance to the region.

Mr. Chairman, I am told that I have to wind up but I really could not stop before I had made that particular announcement. So, I will have to come back after lunch to continue with other points.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, the Member for St. Michael North reminds me of a student who studies his notes and regardless of the question asked, regurgitates. He is very well prepared for anything that happens in this debate.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: In relation to tourism there is no doubt that the Government just made a grave error in its tax policy for the small hotels. I have been saying it for the last couple of months, but I must confess that I have really grown tired of the VAT debate. It no longer takes on a tone of understanding but one of merely political posturing.

There is no doubt that those who understand the hotel sector would know that the imposition of seven and one half percent on accommodation is going to affect seriously the small hotel sector.

The reason why, and this is the simple reason why, the lower hotels, the actual labour component of overall costs is higher than in the luxury class hotels. Given that the sense of a VAT really means that you are entitled to tax credits, imposing a tax on the final output accommodation without the hotelier's capacity to get tax credit really means an unnecessary imposition on the tourist. Because where the hotelier is incapable of getting back refunds, the imposition of seven and one half percent constitutes an increase cost of the tourism product. Because the lower, smaller hotels do not have the non-labour cost like the sprawling properties, electricity, utilities, *et cetera,* the imposition of seven and one half percent is .going to mean a reduction in the competitiveness of the smaller hotels. So that there was insufficient thought going into this policy to impose seven and one half percent on small properties.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, the previous administration exempted or would have exempted hotel accommodation. It does not make a difference. This debate on VAT is taking on too much of a political dimension and it is going to cause severe hardship to this economy in some areas. And unless we decide to remove the political aspect from this VAT, we are going to eventually have to confront the negative impact that it will have.

The same thing applies to the food and no one wants to admit to the imposition of 15 percent on food and what it will cost. It will cause an increase cost of food. There will be substantial benefits from VAT, and we have already started to see it in the economy in relation to appliances and clothing and tiles and other such things.

But, I am suggesting that as we look to the future, small hotels will be in for a severe difficult period and especially when we are seeing declines out of the German market.

Along the south coast, we all know the properties there attract visitors from the German market and to a large extent, the lower end of the UK market and unless we are going to put measures in place to make sure that successful marketing arrangements return to the German market, and that we are going to cater to certain areas within CARICOM, where for the Gospelfest and the Jazzfest, rather than trying to attract North American visitors, we should be seeking to put increasing emphasis on the Caribbean market in order to get Caribbean people to come to our Gospelfest or to come to the Jazzfest.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course, and sufficient attention has not been placed in those markets, so that Gospelfest and Jazzfest should be seen as a product to attract visitors out of the CARICOM area.

Now, there is no doubt that the product needs to be upgraded in Barbados and especially greater returns need to be had from cruise ship passengers.

Yesterday, I did say that not sufficient cruise ship passengers actually come off the ships in the Port and we are not making sufficient effort to attract their attention either. 12.50 p.m.

Let me just say that the proposal to develop the area next to Brandons which is supposed to be a major

proposal in my manifesto for the last bye-election needs to be looked at from the point of view of offering benefits to the surrounding area.

That area between Spring Garden and Brandons can, in fact, be utilised as suggested to attract cruise ship passengers on a daily basis to get greater benefit from them. The idea actually coincided very well with the creation of a project at the Farm Pasture to be funded or has been funded by UNDP and the Government of Barbados. It is intended that that project will develop a number of skills in the area, in such a way as to allow many people who previously were disadvantaged to take advantage of any offering, by way of developing crafts and other such expertise, to be able to sell to potential cruise ship passengers as suggested in the proposal which was put forward in the bye-election.

I am saying that the area presently is occupied by a football field which can be converted into hard courts. I also suggested that there is a need for an overpass to bring the cruise ship passengers from the other side over...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: An underpass was just to make things convenient. It really is an overpass which will make it convenient for the cruise ship passengers to cross the highway. I also suggested that the area of Brandons Beach can be very well utilised by the cruise ship passengers on a daily basis and that we can attract substantial benefits to small business people by ensuring that the area closer to Brandons is very well developed for community based tourism.

I wish to encourage the Government of Barbados to put funding towards this venture and not to see it as something that will enhance the political life of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

It is known that we are on a path of alleviating poverty. It is within that same constituency that the Prime Minister identified poverty as an issue and, it is, in fact, out of that same war on poverty speech that we are now seeing these Estimates pretending to focus on poverty as a major issue within Barbados and the Estimates are so designed to alleviate poverty.

The best way that we can do that is to ensure that people within the poverty stricken area of St. Michael North West are given the opportunity to earn their own keep. From that standpoint, I am saying that because of the proximity of the constituency to the Port that the people who should first benefit from any such effort should be the very good constituents of St. Michael North West.

In addition, it is known that the project in the Farm is seeking to be fairly widespread in terms of the kind of skills that will be taught at the project and more importantly that the Paradise Hotel which is supposed to be converted to Sandals and, hopefully, will still be on stream will serve as an outlet for the skills which will be developed in that immediate area.

By almost necessity, the area of Spring Garden bounded by Brandons and the Farm is ideal for presenting it as an example of community based tourism. The location is appropriate. The corresponding exercise of developing skills at the UNDP Project at the Farm Pasture is already in place. Paradise is to be developed into Sandals and expanded to a 300-room hotel. So I am saying and I am appealing to the Government of Barbados to put resources towards the development of that area for commercial and sporting uses.

In addition, we have been told in the Estimates this year that any project that is conceived and conceptualised and appears that it has good economic return can in fact attract funding from the Government of Barbados under the Urban Renewal Project. I am going to repeat that that area has for a long time been crying out for development in the Brandons area. In the spirit of tourism, in the spirit of alleviating poverty and in the spirit of developing these communities which were identified by this Government I am asking for consideration to be given to that project as a first step towards community based tourism in Barbados.

There are several areas that can be addressed in this debate on tourism. But let me just end by saying that we cannot be satisfied with the performance of tourism in the last half of 1996 and measures have to be put in place in order to ensure that 1997 is a much better year for tourism than 1996.

Let me also end by saying that it is not the performance of tourism that is responsible for the growth in international reserves at the Central Bank. The Central Bank of Barbados has already identified the fairly substantial inflows of capital both for private and Government projects. The Central Bank of Barbados identified some increase in exports for food and processing and manufacturing. The Central Bank of Barbados has identified the slow-down of imports as a result of the introduction of VAT. The Central Bank has also identified some increase in sugar receipts which will not really be realised until a little later into the quarter as the sources of improvement for the net international reserves.

While we are respecting the importance that tourism plays within this economy let it not be said and let us not fool ourselves that tourism has performed to a level that we can be satisfied at this stage. Tourism can do much more for the Barbados economy but there are several

problems that we need to address, and especially, at the lower end of the tourism plan. Unless we put measures in place to do so we are going to sacrifice the efforts that were made way back, not just under a Democratic Labour Party administration, to improve the overall standard of living in Barbados and especially among smaller business people.

We ought now to treat the GEMS project with a little more seriousness because it is also well known that that project was conceptualised to bring a whole host of hotels, which have now not come, into the programme and only 4 hotels are in this programme at this point in time.

That again is something which we cannot be satisfied with because while we respect that perhaps a pilot project is necessary to ensure that we are on course in terms of where we want to go with the GEMS project, unless we bring the total collection of small hotels affected by the financial slump or lack of profitability or the lack of proper management or accounting skills, unless we bring the entire set, we are not going to do what is necessary for improving the overall tourism project in Barbados.

On that score, there is a lot to be done. We cannot be satisfied and I invite the Minister of Tourism to respect the fact that there is a long way to go. A lot of things need to be done to put us where we want to be. Thank you.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER 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 2.15 o'clock in the 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. 1.00p.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. Mr. CHAIRMAN took the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am obliged to all members for contributions made to this debate. I do not know that there is any significant divide on the basic recognition that we do have a very superior tourism policy in Barbados. Members will have differences of opinion on certain things but there are a few queries I have to address.

One has to do with references made to crime and the importance of our not despoiling our own policy. I have in my hand, Sir, the crimes committed against visitors in 1996 and I am happy to say that there has been a decline. In 1992 we had 690 crimes against visitors. In 1993, 611, in 1994, 564, in 1995, 523, and last year 1996, 439. So you see there is a steady decline and this is to be applauded and I think that some credit must go to the Royal Barbados Police Force and those elements within the tourism industry which go out of their way to educate the public and create more public awareness. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that the Special Constables are to be lauded too for the role they play in this record. This is one area where we are pleased to see decline.

Just to give a very brief breakdown of it. Honourable Members might be interested to know that the majority of last year's 439 crimes occurred mainly on the south coast - 219. On the west coast - 179 and for me, surprisingly, a total of 41 on the East Coast. More crimes against men than women, the most frequent type of crime committed against visitors was burglary representing more than half of the total crimes. There were 60 robberies, other thefts - 60, crimes on the beach - 49. These were the major types.

I am not in a position to say how many were hotels, but most crimes committed against visitors from the United Kingdom have the highest number - 193, and crimes against visitors from Europe followed that with 103, followed by the United States of America - 68, and Canada 55 and I am hoping Mr. Chairman, Sir, that trend will continue in 1997 and that perhaps by the year 2000 crime against visitors in Barbados would be the subject of minimal activity.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in one of his several contributions opined that in his view there was no need for us to do television advertising. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am afraid I cannot agree with this. All of the other kinds of advertising of which he speaks and even more, certainly, we do our fair share of that, but the reality is that television advertising does make a difference.

As I said last night, there is a direct co-relationship between the dollars that we spend on television

advertising and arrivals. There are no two ways about it. Our major competitors here in the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Cayman, Jamaica and Puerto Rico, they get over 65% of their business from the United States. But then I called the figures last night as to what they were spending in promotion and advertising compared to what we were spending. We are only getting 25% now. In fact, the US market has been overtaken by the UK market and we are only going to get out accordingly as we put in. So I am afraid I do not subscribe to that.

Experience has shown that television advertising does pay off and when we can afford to do it we must do it. In fact, we are at a place in our judgement where it is not a choice. We have to be able to afford to do more television advertising.

Reference was made to the GEMS Project. I spoke of this already last night and made particularly the point that it pleases me that I see that now non-indebted small hotels on the south coast, they begin to appreciate the importance of the joint promotion and the other pluses that will come to them out of the GEMS Project. I have said it before in here and I say it again. I am very supportive of it in principle.

We need those rooms. There are too many rooms on the south coast which are still not properly available to us, are not suitably available to us. We do need to uplift beyond a minimum criteria for decent accommodation. There must be a minimum below which our accommodation cannot fall and it is important that we pull the south coast up to this.

I am happy to say that the process is well on the way. We have seen the Accra Beach. The three and four star category is where the aim of some of the refurbished rooms on the south coast are aiming for. Accra, I think, has done a magnificent job. Even as we speak there is refurbishment and expansion going on at the Bougainvillea. Half Moon is just about to embark on refurbishment and expansion as well. All of this will help to lift the quality of accommodation and eventually, of course, service which is available to the south coast.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I particularly want to say a word about taxis. I forget which Honourable Member on that side made reference to taxis. I think it was the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and how difficult it was and he made the point that sometimes those Barbadians who work in the ancillary tourism service, can be their own worse enemies.

Some several months ago, I at my own invitation invited myself so to speak, to talk to the taxi operators at the Bridgetown Port. In due course I will meet and talk with the ones at the Grantley Adams Airport and others as well. I am afraid to say that after all of these years you still have two separate operations down there at the Bridgetown Port and it seems that never the two shall meet. They bellyached and they complained. I walked the walk, I talked the talk with them. We have agreed with the Barbados Port Authority to upgrade the facilities available to them so that they have nicer meeting room space, better recreational facilities and rest facilities and so on. I do not think there is any quarrel about that.

They have what they view as a legitimate complaint - that the tour operators at the Bridgetown Port are carrying the business away from them and did I understand how hard it was, they having queued up at the Port gate since midnight and six o'clock the evening before to see coaches driving off with all of the cruise passengers. I pointed out to them.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, no. Do not speak before you get the facts. I have checked the facts.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, no. That is not true. It is not true that people do not get a job because the coaches are taking the cruise passengers away. Do not tell me what I am getting wrong, because they admitted that it was so. Less than 70% of over 500 000 cruise passengers in Barbados are the ones who go off on the coach tours. In excess of 30% of cruise passengers do not want to go on a tour, but you have taxi people who are approaching them in a crude fashion, ill-dressed, and do not want to adhere to the rules and regulations that they themselves laid down in the Port. I said "Gentlemen, you have to bring discipline within your own association."

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is only giving off. I am speaking of facts, Mr. Chairman, and the taxi-drivers agreed with me. The people at the cruise terminal pointed out that they tried to be helpful in this connection. They even dreamed up a slogan for them. You cannot offer cruise passengers what they do not want. People who want to go on a tour will go on a tour. You cannot stop them. They buy those tours when they are on the cruise liners. That is not only true in Barbados. It is true everywhere in the world where you find cruise. I asked them what is 40% of 500,000. You have a captive market because nobody who is not registered with the Port taxi operation can come from outside the Port and get a pick in there. They would tear him and his taxi apart in two minutes. So they have a captive market.

It was suggested to them if in fact, as the cruise tour operators are saying we will show you the

best of Barbados, what about the rest of Barbados. You have to come together. Put a nice brochure and get it on the ships. They were even offered assistance to do that. It is very difficult when you cannot get two sides to agree. The point has been made in here and I am supporting it but I am not giving up on it. I have to go on struggling with them. You have two separate organisations operating down there.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister is misleading the House. Whenever you ask the Board of Tourism to highlight the interest of small people, they tell you that is not their job, that their job is to promote total tourism.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Who at the Board of Tourism told you that? The Honourable Member for St. Lucy you are carrying it too far, you know! This judge thing is going to your head. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is so out of touch. This is a man who seriously believes that he can get an airport in St. Lucy above north of the Judge Gap.

I went down to the Port and spoke with these people myself, large representations of large groups at the Port and I have said to them, "you are going to have to sit down together and reap what the benefits are." You think that somebody who is operating a taxi other than at the Bridgetown Port could dare to think that you can pass by down there to get a short drop? That is another thing. Cannot get in, cannot get in, and that is as it should be! I am supporting them on that but I am saying you have a captive market but you are not exploiting it. We are willing to help you to exploit it, but then they cannot agree.

Now, you have to supply the demand. If people are asking for coaches, you give them coaches, but people are asking for taxis too. Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a short drop between the Port gate and the centre of Bridgetown. The Port organised a shuttle. Some tourists want to walk but some do not want to walk, so they are organising a shuttle. They offered it to the taximen and because they cannot agree between themselves, somebody else took it up. And after somebody else took it up, now they come to tell me, "we think we can really handle it." I said, "well sit down and talk to them again." I am willing to suggest that they should open and review this. I am only down there in my capacity as Minister of Tourism. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North is the Minister of State with responsibility for International Transport. You are doing everything to help people who do not want to help themselves.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there was one other... I am trying to respond as much as I can to queries coming from Honourable Members. I think I have covered it, Sir. I do not want to delay the debate any further and I would beg to move that Head 35 stand part.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: There is a form to this debate. Members on the other side quarrel. They are saying that we will not get onto the other Heads. I spoke to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who agreed that they want to move onto the other Heads. I came up, I spoke to members on the Other Side. The Honourable Member of St. Michael East really wants to speak to a health matter which he hopes that he can debate under tourism. I got up here and I said that I was summing up.

Mr. J. O.TUDOR: I just want to get this matter clear. My understanding of the rules, Mr. Chairman, is that members are able to speak as many times as they want at fifteen minute intervals, and I am seeking one of those intervals.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am just trying to get the co-operation of the whole House. I am hearing from the Honourable Member for the City that there was some gentleman's agreement that we were bringing this Head to a close and that she was giving her wind up presentation.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No, Mr. Chairman, I did not know anything about any wind up and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West cannot speak for me, neither can the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. They cannot speak for me. I am the duly elected Member for St. Michael East.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I said I was winding up. I thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and I wound up and I have asked for the Head to stand part and it has been seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I rose to my feet before the matter was seconded and indicated that I wanted to intervene befofe the matter was settled and I would like to do so.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I just want to get this clear because I was not exactly sure that a wind up was taking place.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: But there is not going to be any agreement, Mr. Chairman. I rose to my feet and

indicated that I wanted to speak. It is as simple a matter as that.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right, I am reminded that the Honourable Member did say that she was going to wind up and I got no objections voiced at that time. In view of the fact that she said there was an agreement between the sides involved, I am therefore asking that Head 35 stand part.

The question that Head 35 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 2.35 p.m.

HEAD 42 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT & HOUSING (as amended) $119830008

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 stand part. In dealing with this Head which encompasses a really large area of public works and housing, it also includes the National Housing Corporation, the Transport Board and the Water Authority.

In this segment of the debate, Mr. Chairman, I will be dealing with housing matters. The various acquisitions which we have brought to Parliament over the period of time have given us the opportunity to deal with a number of housing issues and I will not actually go too deeply into certain matters which we have already dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, in dealing with housing, one has to understand that when this administration came into office on September 6, there was no programme in the area of housing. As a result we have had to start, not necessarily from scratch, but I am not saying that the members on that side did not have any focus on housing. In terms of the programmes which we had set out in our Manifesto, and certainly in terms of the demand for housing at the time, we had to begin a programme which saw us conceptualising a White Paper on Housing.

Mr. Chairman, the White Paper on Housing is now in its infant stage and even Jiough we are not in a position to have it brought before Parliament, we have put out a Green Paper on Housing. I believe by now that has been made available to all Members of Parliament. If that has not been done, I would like to assure members on that side that very shortly the Green Paper on Housing will be made available to all Members.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: No. It has been made available to all Members of Parliament. It should have been available during the week. If you have not yet received it, you could rest assured that you will receive it within the next week or so. We also intend, Mr. Chairman, to make available the Green Paper on Housing to the print media. We intend to have this Green Paper on Housing widely circulated.

In the preparation of our White Paper on Housing we did consult the various sectors in the housing industry, the architects, engineers, builders, banks and the lawyers. It is hoped that after the final dissemination of the Green Paper that we will be able to have a large scale debate on Housing.

There are a number of interventions which have been made by this administration in the area of housing which are also included in the Green Paper on Housing. It is the intention of this administration during this administrative year to ensure that notwithstanding the fact that we have not been able to put out the White Paper in its final form, that most of the matters requiring urgent attention will be dealt with. Principally among the areas of intervention will be included the sites and services programmes.

When we came into office there were a number of demands by various individuals within the country for house spots, mostly in the low income category. We realised the need for a sites and services programme, indeed, as set out in our Manifesto. We did indicate we would be very aggressive in our approach to ensuring that Barbadians are not denied the right of having a house spot, a piece of land, either for rent or for purchase on which to put his house.

During the past year, we have been able to aggressively deal with this part of our Manifesto in ensuring that adequate house lots are made available to a number of deprived sectors in our community. Principally among these were persons who were disenfranchised as a result of the amendments made to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. By these amendments persons who were tenants on land where there were less than five tenants no longer enjoyed the right to purchase as the definition of "qualified tenant" was changed to accommodate a tenantry in cases where there were more than five tenants.

As a result of this amendment it meant that a number of persons were disenfranchised. Even though the amendment gave the tenants the right to be compensated at the expense of Government, the corresponding situation whereby Government should have made available the necessary land for these tenants was not attended to. We have been able during the year to satisfy most of the needs of those persons who have made requests to us. At the moment there are still about 75 persons who have lost their right to purchase and for whom we must find house spots.

In addition to that, there were a number of persons who were affected by natural diasters. We had a situation of finding house spots for persons who were affected by the floods in Weston. Most of the work which was to be done in order to effect a speedy relocation was done in this administrative year.

We also have a situation where during the year there were a number of persons who were affected by land slippage in the Scotland District area. This is a continuing problem. There are a number of persons who have been affected in St. John, St. Joseph and St. Andrew. We had massive land slippage in the White Hill area and as a result of the problems encountered in White Hill, it means that Government, in accordance with what we pledged in our Manifesto, would have to find suitable house spots for such persons in order to make the transition of relocation a smooth one.

We will continue the relocation process with respect to these persons in this next administrative year. Provision has been made for the relocation of approximately 100 houses in the White Hill area which is the area most affected by land slippage in this island.

It must not be assumed that we will have, as I have said already, a whole-scale evacuation of the residents of Y/hite Hill, but those persons who have been affected by the land slippage will be given the opportunity to relocate to safer ground. Farmers is the preferred spot. We had originally intended to make available over 100 house spots in that area but there is only enough space available in that particular area for about 47 persons. Those persons who cannot be accommodated in the Farmers[1] area will be accommodated in Apes Hill.

In Apes Hill we also hope to make available about 100 lots for such persons together with other persons who have been affected by the dislocation as a result of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. It is very important that these house spots are made available seeing that most of the persons who go to the Ministry of Housing, or seek assistance from the National Housing Corporation, or persons within the low income group, and you were dealing with persons who are not able to pay the type of price that is asked for on the open market, between $5 - $9 per square foot, it is hoped that we would be able, at least, to effect a transfer in these areas of somewhere between $2.50 to $4.50 at the most per square foot.

It is also hoped, Mr. Chairman, that we would be able to create what we call in the Ministry a land bank for all of these purposes. We have an ambitious project which we spoke about last year, the Deane Town Project. As I had indicated at the time, the Deane Town Project is not necessarily a project which would come to fruition in Deane Town in St. James. It is a project which envisages making available about 1 000 lots on the borders of an existing village with its own recreational facilities.

At the moment, there are a number of persons, both inside and outside of Barbados who have expressed an interest in this type of development. There is ample need because of the amount of demands which have been placed on the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing for this type of development, but we do not have the land. It would mean we would have to acquire during the next year the necessary land to satisfy this need. We have already started the process of the acquisition. Very shortly I will be bringing to Parliament a resolution for the acquisition of land at Deane Town and the Lancaster/Waterhall area. 2.45 p.m.

It is hoped that we will be able to acquire enough land so that when this project starts we will be in a position to at least make the project a successful one. As I said, there are a number of persons who are interested in this project, it is strictly a low income project. A number of local construction companies have expressed an interest, as well as overseas construction companies. It will not be the prefabricated type of construction but at the same time there are other construction companies doing business, in Barbados who have indicated that it is not possible to have a project like that and for them to make a profit at the same time.

It is hoped that with the various acquisitions in Tin Town, Lancaster, Orange Hill and Waterhall, we will be able to have enough land so that very shortly, provided that the lands are approved, that the model houses will be put and be viewed by those persons who are interested during this financial year.

Mr. Chairman, in our manifesto we did indicate that we would make more terrace units available for rent. During this financial year we were unable to carry out the ambitious type of programme that we had in mind, principally because of the fact that there were a number of factors which hindered us in doing so. The land acquisition process we have found to be a [r]ery lengthy one. In addition to that the process of the Town & Country Planning approval and also the availability of the services, in particular the problem faced with delivery of water in certain areas. As a result of this, we have had some difficulty in carrying out our programme in a number of areas that we had earmarked for the financial year.

We have, however, been able to complete the Maynards Project which is a project which a previous Barbados Labour Party dmimstration had

conceptualised between 1976 and 1986 and which was not attended to by the last administration. Those units have already been completed.

It is hoped in this financial year that we will be able to deal with the serious problem facing persons who are requesting this type of facility. The long delayed Pondside Project is being hindered because of the fact that, as indicated earlier, a number of squatters on the site had to be relocated. But we are close to a start-up of this project and I believe that very shortly we will be able to begin this project at Pondside.

We also intend to build some units at Flat Rock. The problem with this type of construction is that it is not as popular as it has been in the past, notwithstanding the demand. We have embarked on a policy whereby we have been enquiring of Parliamentarians what is needed for this type of facility in their constituency. I have indicated to Members on the Floor of the House to give me the preference as to the various locations. I have only received 19 requests out of 28 which means that there are 9 Members, and I presume that there are 9 Members on that side, who have not indicated their preferences with respect to both house spots and terrace units.

With respect to the terrace units, we are finding that the terrace units are not as popular with Members of Parliament and with residents as they used to be in the past. A number of areas that we had identified for the construction of terrace units, Parliamentarians then came back and said that having spoken to the residents of the area, they would prefer no terrace units in their particular area. We are still pleased that Flat Rock in St. George and Pondside areas will be accommodated in this financial year. I am however, appealing to members on that side, I assume that the 9 Members who did not indicate the area, to give me specific areas as to where they....

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. I have received no communication from the Minister or anybody else indicating that I should send anything to him about anything connected with what he is speaking about. I just wish him to know that I have not received any communication.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I said that on the Floor of the House and I saw the Honourable Member feigning sleep. So it is obvious that the Honourable Member did not hear what I said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would like the record to show that I was not sleeping. I heard him say something about on the Floor of this House. But I do not think that one of Her Majesty's Ministers would believe that his method of communicating with an Honourable Member on such an important issue, would be to say that on the Floor of the House, he had said something. It is clear that his other 19 Members had better communication than we had on this side.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Notwithstanding what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West said, I would like to give the Members on that side the assurance that as soon as I get an indication from them as to where they would like the terrace units in their constituency, it would be dealt with speedily by the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I do not know what it is about waiting for Members on this side, Sir. They went in my constituency in Passage Garden and started cutting roads to put down houses in a swamp that we have in Passage Gardens, and he did not ask me any questions. So if he means besides that, I will be happy to find an area in Deacons Road.

I can tell him now, Sir, the area is Deacons Road, Watkins Pasture, you can acquire the whole property and pay for it.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I assume that the officials in the Ministry of Housing have heard you.

In our manifesto, we also spoke to the question of providing hostel accommodation. This we have done at St. Thomas Primary and at Lancaster. We had intended that this facility would be made available in keeping with our manifesto promises to fire victims and persons who are homeless. There are a few logistical problems that we have to sort out before we make this available to such persons.

The National Housing Corporation will also be looking at expanding this to include a facility for battered women. We would not want to include the battered women with this type of accommodation, and it is planned that when we do another facility like the one we have at St. Thomas Primary and Lancaster, it will be handed over to one of the NGOs for their operation, and the Government will give a reasonable subvention for the maintenance for this type of facility. 2.55 p.m.

Our manifesto spoke to the issue of allowing tenants to purchase. I believe the National Democratic Party's Manifesto as well addressed the issue of allowing tenants to purchase their units.

We are now in a position, Mr. Chairman, during the next financial year, to allow 130 such tenants on house lots to purchase their house lots, also 391 persons in the terrace units. We ran into a problem though with the

terrace units. The problem is that the terrace units are so heavily subsidized, that if we convey the terrace units, we have to do the transfer under the condominium type legislation which would involve a management company taking over certain basic services, that are presently provided by the National Housing Corporation. Notwithstanding the fact that the tenants would now become the owners of these units the management fees are in excess of the rent which is currently paid by the tenants. So it would take a massive public relations exercise and a lot of persuasion, to encourage someone who is presently paying a low rent, to purchase a property and pay management fees even after they had purchased, in excess of the price.

At least the offer is there and those tenants in those areas which have been earmarked for disposition in this way, will be allowed to do so. Of course if there are 10...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I suggest that the Government over the first 5 years would deal with that problem by becoming co-managers for a 5-year period to get things going. We thought through all these tilings before we put them in our Manifesto and we thought of that problem too - the Government as a co-manager for a 5-year period.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I do not think that you quite said what you wanted to say. I do not think it is a question of Government being co-manager. I think you mean that Government should actually pay the management fees for 5 years. Because if Government is co-manager, Government will still have to pay part to the extent of their ownership in the unit. The difference between this side and that side is that we are always willing to take advice. It is a suggestion that we will consider.

This year we will also be vesting a number of residential properties which are presently owned by the Crown. The Manifesto spoke to them and this is one of the recommendations in the White Paper for which there has already been an intervention by this Government. There are a number of residential properties which are presently owned by the Government for which a number of persons pay rent.

You would have noticed over the past year we have come to Parliament with a number of acquisitions and the thought that it would make for a smoother transition to have all of these residential properties vested in the National Housing Corporation and then for onward transfer to the various tenants, especially seeing that it is in keeping with Government's policy, not only to allow the tenants of these properties to purchase the lots but also to make the proceeds of sale available to the National Housing Corporation.

We have had the joint venture approach where Government and the private sector have come together in order to increase the housing stock in Barbados. A successful project was done previously by a previous Barbados Labour Party administration and we have had problems associated with the Cane Garden project. Fifty percent of the houses which were left at the time when the contract was determined have now been completed by this approach and most of the contractors have been working to ensure, that the houses are completed within a reasonable time. I must say though that there are one or two problems with a few of the contractors and it is hoped that during this financial year we would be able to complete those houses that have not been completed.

I did mention earlier the problems associated with the relocation of persons from White Hill tenantries freehold, and persons who were dislocated as a result of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase (Amendment) Act. We will be continuing the policy which we started last year of giving a cash grant of $15 000 to those persons who have been disenfranchised as a result of the amendment to the Act.

We are also making $1.5 million available to the residents of White Hill who will be similarly dislocated as a result of the land slippage. We will also be making available certain loan funds to persons who are unable to purchase their house spots.

There are also a number of amendments which we will be making to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. The White Paper on Housing will address that issue. It is hoped that we will be able to come with the long promised urban renewal programme in this financial year. Funds were made available in th^ *ast financial year which allowed us to do the relevant "vrtveys.

I sympathised with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West when he spoke to the various problems in his constituency. Certainly in placing that particular issue in our Manifesto, I think a lot of us did not realise the extent of poverty in a number of these urban areas. I am not saying that the problems pertaining to urban poverty are not also present in the rural areas.

The problems which similarly affect those persons in the rural areas we are hoping that those problems can be addressed by the Rural Development Commission. The Rural Development Commission, in addition to dealing with the problems pertaining to poverty, will also deal with problems associated with the inadvertent division, particularly during the 8 years preceding this administration of Barbados into two distinct societies. 3.05 p.m.

It is hoped that we will be able to address the problems pertaining to urban Barbados in this

financial year. I certainly was not aware of the fact until the completion of the study on urban renewal at the level of poverty in these areas and I am speaking for myself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: There are a number of people who know that we had about five thousand households with pit toilets in the St. Michael area, and who knew that there was over 100 acres of land on which there were abandoned buildings in the St. Michael area.

These are matters which we have to address. There are also over one thousand spots in the St. Michael area where the housing conditions leave a lot to be desired.

I cannot really deal with these matters in the one minute remaining to me and I would come back to the question of the legislative programme planned by this administration in order to alleviate the problems in urban Barbados.

I would just like to say here that the problems in urban Barbados will be addressed not only by the amendment to the legislation, there are problems pertaining to security of tenure which would involve certain constitutional changes in the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. We are hoping that we will have one hundred percent cooperation by Members on that side, because, as you know, the changes to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act would involve an amendment to the Constitution, which would involve a two-thirds majority, notwithstanding the fact that we can do it.

We know that we can do it on our own. We will still hope that Members on that side will agree.

Just briefly, if you can bear with me, Mr. Chairman. We are looking at having a redefinition of a tenantry to include urban tenantries.

The Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act spoke to a plantation tenantry as being a tenantry which is scheduled in the Act. All of the tenantries which are scheduled in the Act are in the rural areas, and they speak to a price of ten cents per square foot.

The urban tenantries are in a different category in that, even though they belonged to the plantations originally, there are tenantries which are occupied by poor tenants in the St. Michael area. And even though the landlords in the urban tenantries would not have to go to the Town Planning and they benefit by the provisions of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, in that, they will be able to convey their lots without having to go to Town Planning. The tenants are at the mercy of the landlords, in that we have a number of unscrupulous, I cannot think of any other word to describe them by, unscrupulous landlords who are asking for as much as $7 per square foot for these various house spots.

It is hoped with the amendment that we could fix a price of $2.50 as the maximum that the tenants would be asked to pay, so that we would not in any way affect the position of the landlords. Notwithstanding the fact that it is a constitutional amendment, the landlord would still be entitled to have his full price, but the Government will pay the difference between the two dollars and fifty cents and the market value.

This is a proposal that we have had two years now but as I said, the Urban Renewal Programme has only just been finalised and that is one of the amendments that we hope to include, in addition to the redefinition of the urban tenantries, as I have discussed.

If the Chairman would bear with me. Among the other amendments, we are also hoping to give security of tenure to tenants who have been living in houses, and I am not just referring to house spots, I mean tenants of houses. There are tenants in houses on house spots where their landlord is also a tenant and we will be giving these tenants the same security of tenure as is given to normal tenants under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act.

Those are just a few of the amendments that we will be dealing with under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. When I come back, I will speak to the other amendments.

Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is rather interesting to listen to the Honourable Minister of Housing. But if one were to have listened to the Honourable Minister two Saturdays ago, Sir, in Apes Hill, in the parish of St. James, one would not believe that land owners have rights when there are poor people, Sir.

There was a statement coming from the Minister, Sir, and I heard it live, that if you purchase a piece of land from the National Housing Corporation and you do not use that piece of land by a certain time, that the National Housing Corporation will be compulsory acquiring that piece of land.

When one considers, Sir, the type of people buying land from the National Housing Corporation, one would have to ask, Sir, how come rich people could come in here, through the process of land acquisitions, get large parcels of land from Government, do not do anything with

it and still retain that land, but if a poor man purchases land from Government he has a stipulated time to build on that piece of land.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, seeing that I might not have the opportunity in the time available if the guillotine falls, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am not suggesting that poor people will be in any way disadvantaged.

I was speaking to specific problems that are faced by the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing by persons who come to the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation with all sorts of stories.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West who has been a Minister of Government, I believe the Honourable Member for St. John, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will know what I am talking about. I could give you two examples, Mr. Chairman, in order to help the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

There is one case where a former General Manager of the National Housing Corporation purchased a large area of land, I believe it is about five acres of land. Land which was purchased by the Government for housing purposes for low income persons, and this individual took it upon himself, because of his position, to purchase that land for himself when there are a number of low income persons in the constituencies which we represent, >Vho needed that same type of land.

I am speaking about those type of persons, Sir. I cannot think of any other Minister or any other person in this House who would not take action in such circumstances. That land has been lying idle for more than ten years. As a matter of fact, it matters not now how long it was lying idle.

The purpose of the acquisition in the first place was for the resiting of persons who had moved from Spring Head, for low income persons and persons who needed reciting as a result of land slippage.

Under the Land Acquisition Act and you acquire land for a particular purpose and Government then wants to use it for another purpose, they have to come back to Parliament. If you use that analogy, it means that it was unfair then for the land to be bought for one type of individual and then to be given to other persons.

Asides.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The other example, Mr, Chairman, if you would bear with me, just briefly. I had one situation since I was a Minister of Government whereby a tenant and his wife came to the Ministry, they actually cried before me. The Permanent Secretary could bear me out on that, cried before me, "they have no where to live. They were put out.[v] 3.15 p.m.

They got a house spot, parked their chattel next to the land, bought land elsewhere. The house spot is there with a few bricks on it and we have a number of persons in St. John who have been affected by land slippage who would need that house spot. The Honourable Member for St. John can bear me out on that because he is pressing me for house spots in St. John.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when we were discussing the sale of Government properties in this Assembly there were large portions of land that poor people could have placed their houses on. They could have been subdivided. A road could have been placed in them and poor people could have been living in parts of St. George. There was a piece of land in St. George, acres of land, that was sold to people who did not need land and I did not hear a statement like that. But now because there are certain poor people in this country who have purchased land from National Housing and not using them now, we are going to hear a "human cry" about taking back.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Since I was Minister there are no lots in St. George that were sold. There is one property in St. George and I refer to Buttals that was sold. It was advertised on 4 occasions over the past 15 years and it was sold to the highest available bidder. So I do not know what the Honourable Member is talking about.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I must admit these non-points must stop. The gentleman is interrupting me to say something completely different from what I am speaking about. I am saying that the land was the property of Government, and it should have been subdivided instead of putting it on the market for the highest bidder, which I had bitterly complained about. I have complained to this Government over and over that they have adopted the IADB policy where they have taken land that poor people could use and sold it to the highest bidder. If the Minister wants to dispute that, let him dispute it but it is a fact of life and we have to deal with those matters every Tuesday in this House of Assembly.

Now we hear that there are poor people out there who want land and cannot get land when they are selling off Government property to rich people. I want to pause here.

I have a warning for the Press. The last time I was dealing with a matter like this I said that we are

in here again selling land to rich people. And somebody interpreted it to say, that I said, that we were selling land again to a Michael Cozier, when it was clear that we were dealing with one issue and something else was printed in the newspaper. And a man who could not even write minutes at board meetings played he was putting a paid advertisement in the newspaper criticising me, forgetting that I know well about him.

Mr. Chairman, I will get back. I do not pay any lawyers to write any letters criticising anybody. If any lawyers over there want to write on behalf of people whom they are selling land to or supporting let them do it. I want to know why is it that Government is selling off large parcels of land to people who do not have land and that could sell Government land. The same people that they are selling land to they are turning around and compulsorily acquiring land from. I challenge them to disown that.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: At least you are right about black. When one looks at the number of house spots to be placed on the map of Barbados all you can hear is Apes Hill, Waterhall. I am wondering why we cannot hear about house spots in St...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is saying that when you hear about acquisitions you are only dealing with Waterhall and Apes Hill. While I am glad to hear him mention those particular areas we are also acquiring land in many areas throughout Barbados - Husbands Heights, Bournes Land, Bakers, St. Peter, Mount Brevitor, Rock Hall, Farmers, Parish Land and in St. Michael, Lower Burney.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I also want to know how come the Minister is coming to this House of Assembly with a White Paper on Housing and the Manager of National Housing will be going on a 2-year leave. A document as important as a White Paper on Housing and the manager is going on leave.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. I really do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member but the Honourable Member is making a number of accusations which reflect on the Minister of Housing. The General Manager of the National Housing Corporation could not go on leave unless I know about it. I am not aware of the Manager of the National Housing Corporation going on leave. The Manager of the National Housing Corporation has applied for certain leave to which he is entitled. He is attending a conference. As a matter of fact, he was supposed to go overseas to represent Barbados in a few weeks time in connection with a conference pertaining to housing and that conference also clashes with a course which he is also attending in Ireland. He has also applied to the National Housing Corporation to do an MBA course.

I would like to say this because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was a former member of the National Housing Corporation when the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation applied for study leave to do an MBA and he was refused. He has subsequently applied to do this course and we have approved. It is a 2-year course that he has applied for.

I would like to say that the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation is free if at any time he decides when he goes on his course, to abandon the course to come back as General Manager. He is entitled because he has applied for the leave. The Honourable Member has been set up to make that point because I heard it from other members on that side.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, let me say this. No member on this side can advise me on housing or anything at all. He rightly said that I was a member of the Board. Where he misled the House is that the General Manager applied for leave to do an MBA. He was given leave only to find out that he could not get on the course. Check your facts and come back to me!

There is evidence that he has been forced into a course so that the boys could get a pick. In a matter of weeks, Sir, we will see who are the boys getting a pick.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard a lot of foolishness in this House of Assembly today. The reason why we cannot allow the housing units to have condominiums is because there is some management cost.

If the Minister had a good brief he would have realised that there are a lot of workers working at NHC whom you could afford to have do the work on those housing estates without charging the tenants one cent, because on many days they have nothing to do anyhow. So the cost of management fees and the cost of labour is a non-point.

You have the workers at NHC already at their disposal and whether they send them to the particular site or not you still have to cost.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying he does not provide the necessary sites to create work for them. I will never blame the workers.

Sir, I am saying that the Minister if he feels within himself that that is the reason why he cannot sell

the units to the poor people, he could go ahead and &ell them, and allow NHC free of cost to look after the maintenance. Because the major cost at NHC, 75% of the cost at NHC, is paid out in wages. So if you have to absorb 24% it is no big thing.

On house lots I want to remind the Minister again that up to 1994 Mount Poyer in the parish of St. Lucy was acquired for house spots and today as you know well not one soul has benefited from that land acquisition. I also want him to know that there are still many lots at Hope Road to be allocated. If you want me to tell you about more lots in my constituency...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You want me to criticise Vic Johnson? I am not in that. If you want to curse Vic Johnson, do it yourself. That is my constituent. I do not curse my constituents. That is for you all to do.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that at Hope Road if you go into any development that was completed since 1995 you would see street lights in every single development, but just because Hope Road is in the constituency of St. Lucy, not one single street light is in that development.

The Minister has a right to make sure that the necessary funds be submitted to Light and Power. Do not tell me anything about Light and Power not being prepared to put in street lights because I have written them. They have done the survey and replied to me letting me know that they are waiting on the Minister since 1995. If he wants to challenge that, let him challenge this.

When we were speaking about selling or leasing land to a lady in Spring Garden, St. Lucy I reminded the Minister that he needed to give Water Authority enough money to make sure that they have enough money to put water mains in Spring Garden. I said that when we were dealing with the relocation of the lady from Harrison's Cave to Spring Garden in St. Lucy. Up to today the lady is constructing a home off a half-inch main.

I gave the Minister enough months to put the necessary funds in place to correct that matter. When someone is using a tap the other person cannot use it. I am warning you and now I have to deal with it. I have told you on many occasions if your problem is money let me know and I will know who to criticise. You have not told me, so I have to criticise you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, we have a situation in this country where it is very easy for anybody who has money to wait until Government advertises land and they can acquire it, the highest bidder policy - IADB. The small man has to go down to NHC every Thursday to hear somebody tell him to come back next week. You go back next week to hear come back the next week. It is time that we stop playing politics with the poor people. We are being unfair to these people.

The Honourable Ministers on that side who have the authority to do something to correct the problem at this point in time are doing nothing. But yet every Thursday they are prepared to go to Cabinet and bring Bills before this House to sell land to rich people, but they cannot bring a simple policy in here asking for permission to subdivide that land and sell it to poor people.

Let me tell you something. If you bring that I will support it now. So draft it and I will support it, once it is on behalf of poor people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, sometime ago an Honourable Member of this House wondered whether it would not be desirable for the people of St. Andrew to close off the last remaining road and declare itself independent of Barbados and a republic. It seems to me that that concept has been widened somewhat and that the St. Andrew, St. James North, St. Peter with a little bit of St. Thomas has become a zone of public works development in Barbados which is being treated very different from the rest of Barbados.

However, Sir, at this moment I am not about to do too much about that verbally. I really want to ask the Minister responsible for Public Works in Barbados to ensure that during this year my solitary request of him year after year just to repave the roads in Bannister Land and Delamere Land. That is all I am asking. Roads that were dug up to put down gas mains several years ago and I have been asking to have it done.

The people there are poor people. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew knows them very well. He knows the area not as well as I know it but he knows a lot of people in the area from his professional relationships with the area over many years. I sincerely hope that he will do something about it.

I do not want to deal with that aspect of the Ministry any further. What I want to talk about a bit is Housing. The Minister has promised a White Paper. Believe me, Mr. Chairman, the only White Paper that he needs for housing development in Barbados for low income people are the 2 manifestoes of the National Democratic Party.

If the principles in those 2 manifestoes are followed as some of the principles are being followed

at the moment, then I think that the housing problems of Barbados would be solved in due course. What is important to understand and I am a little concerned about is this question of tinkering with the Constitution again. 3.35 p.m.

Because each time we tinker with the Constitution dealing with areas of property rights and property transfers and public acquisition and so on, I have a problem with that.

Now, my view of St. Michael, the tenantries of St. Michael, my view all along has been and it has been for years now, for the Government to go in and acquire by public acquisition wherever that is possible those tenantries, put in the roads, sell off the lots to those who can buy them, one at a time. At the same time you establish a fund to help people to purchase them. And over the years we would have built up a fund of over $200 million or $300 million and when you link that now to a programme where you would be selling off your existing assets in other Government estates, and you have the appropriate financial institution in place, then it would be a self-peipetuating exercise after a number of years.

I have no doubt about that. That could probably be the biggest mortgage company in Barbados based on that kind of approach to the whole process. So that down the years these efforts will be financed, not from the treasury, but from the profits being made out of such a major financial institution. I have no doubt about that. 1 have never had any doubt about it. It is going to be difficult to begin with and the Government may have to support it for a year or two. But after a while it becomes very rapidly self-financing because you would have the largest mortgage company in Barbados capable of providing the financing down the road. In fact, you would be getting a core financing between the institution and the people who wish the house spots or the houses or whatever.

Sir, that can. only be achieved if there is a co-ordinated policy between the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Communications and Works.

I say this for this reason. We have to stop going all about Barbados acquiring land to put down six houses, or sell off six house spots. We have to stop this foolishness of putting in a road that is two miles long to meet the needs of four or five houses in a tenantry. We have done it in the past and we do it again and again. You go around the corner and you buy four lots in Eagle Hall, a piece of land for four houses, another for six houses, Sir, all this kind of thing.

We need a comprehensive development programme. If you are going to put down two miles of road in a tenantry and put in the infrastructure then you have a coordinate housing development plan to make sure that capital works would serve a large number of house spots.

Now over and above that, Sir it has happened in St. Thomas. It has happened in St. George. It has happened in a lot of the rural areas where you put in long stretches of road and you do nothing to support or to maximize the capital investment that you have put down there when people need house spots.

Now, Sir, why I mentioned agriculture, why I mentioned the Ministry of Finance is this. There is a thing called the Barbados National Bank. There is a thing called marginal lands in Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, no, no, no. Formerly the National Bank but now another public institution. What I am saying, Sir, is that part of getting money back into agriculture is to get this kind of programme in place and link the three together. If we do this, Sir, in a matter of five to ten years under an NDP programme we would solve all the housing problems of Barbados. All!

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You have to reap agriculture and you have to reap housing, MTW, take the whole lot together. It is all possible and you do not need any big lot of money to do it. It takes the will and it takes the conceptualisation of a different approach to housing and start thinking of things on a big scale, not on a small scale. That is the only way you are going to solve it.

You have a big problem and that problem is not going to be solved by acquiring little bits of land here and then picking six people to give it to or going up into St. George North and taking off part of a playing field for a few houses at one corner near Belair and that kind of thing.

That does not solve the problem. That may solve an immediate political problem but it does not deal with the problem of housing. I say it has to be comprehensive. Those are the four Ministries that are involved and the great thing about it is that in a short period of time, maximum ten years, you would have one of the strongest financial institutions in this country. If it is done the right way and be self-perpetuating, the problems of housing as far as Government is concerned after that, would be only with the very, very poor because all the others would have been taken care of or can take care of themselves.

The tragedy, Mr. Chairman, is that we have all the infrastructure. We have the access to the land through the changes in agriculture. We have the access to the land through the fact that there are many landlords in St. Michael. Right now in St. Michael there are many landlords who would probably if Government bought the whole lot one time would probably sell at $1.50 a square foot or something like that $1.50 in some areas, if you bought the whole lot one time, but if you are going to start pussyfooting by buying 3,000 sq.ft., and 1,000 sq. ft and so on, obviously you are going to pay a higher price.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You know I am not going to say this on the Floor of the House but the point is this. The larger tenantries. Look for example, you take Valerie. Valerie was bought by the Government for a few cents a square foot, a few cents a square foot. Never mind. What I am saying is that by strategic intervention in the larger tenantries.

Take the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I am sure that if he owned a tenantry, I did not say he owns one in St. Michael. But if he owned a tenantry anywhere and if he had to sell it and if he knew that it was going to be acquired, he would rather sell it one time and get the money and move on and invest and move on down the road, rather than go through a process of hoping that over 20, 30, 40 years the tenants will be able to pay him $2.50 a square foot. That is the point. The whole thing is accelerated. The final objective is achieved and it is done in a way which avoids messing around with the Constitution, using only existing laws in Barbados and the individual tenants are not put in confrontation with the landlords.

It is the Government that deals with the landlord through the Land Acquisition Act and thereafter the Government or its agencies deal with the tenants in the area. It is much simpler. It is a much cleaner way to do business and it avoids any suspicion that we may be weakening the entrenched clauses in the Constitution which deal specifically with the rights to property ownership by individuals in Barbados. Each time we tamper with that we are weakening a very fundamental asset of Barbados, the confidence they have in home ownership.

Mr. Chairman, there is a reason why I feel very strongly about the policies of the NDP, the very progressive policies of the NDP, 100% mortgages. The whole question of allowing individuals in public housing to be able to buy the properties they are in and even helping them to do it, I am satisfied that democracy in this country would be more secure and more secure for the future if we always focused before us that we are building a property-owning democracy in Barbados.

To build a property-owning democracy we have to help those people who, in fact, would be able over a period of a lifetime to become part of that great dream. 3.45 p.m.

There are many problems that surround them at the moment that stop them and the Government has the opportunity to do it. We have the opportunity to make a big difference to these thousands of poor people rather than come in here year after year talking about shortages of house spots. There should be no shortages of house spots in Barbados. You just need a clever and imaginative approach for using the existing infrastructure in Barbados and the problem could be solved in a short number of years.

You should bring a White Paper and say we are going to produce 10 000 or 20 000 house spots, whatever is necessary, to meet the needs of Barbadians over the next 20 years. Then you should link that to the kind of principles that I have just enunciated and are clearly enunciated in this document. These Manifestos will serve Barbados for the next 100 years.

I do not complain, Sir, when the Government puts in place the policies of the National Democratic Party. All I say from time to time is that it would be nice if they said: "Thank you."

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I would not go on a political platform and say they said "Thank you" because that would be ungracious, Sir, and I am not known for that kind of conduct.

Mr. Chairman, this is an exciting area and I hope the Minister of Housing and the Minister of State for Housing begin to get some kind of creativity around them so they can recognise the wider scope of housing. Housing goes beyond just a piece of land and a house. It relates in a very fundamental way to the whole issue of social sector development. It is almost the point at which social policies link to economic policies in one of the most fundamental ways because, as you get that linkage with housing, you will be surprised to see the number of people that you would draw into participation in the economic life of Barbados at a higher level.

Finally, Sir, I say this because I have seen what has happened in London and in the Greater London area over the past 30 or 40 years. It is only by progressive policies that have brought the masses of people in and around London into ownership and today you will see a completely different level of participation in the total economy by those people.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to get back to this issue at a more fundamental level later on but this is the White Paper. I can photocopy it and I will send it to you. It is 1991.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely thankfti for the opportunity to make my contribution to this deb here today in this Honourable Assembly.

Sit elieve you would be aware of the fact that I have al j been very vocal on this whole issue of housing vdopment in this country. Primarily so because I spent i -ist of my entire life in a housing area, having been rais in the housing area in the Pinelands.

Sir, represent in St. Michael South East an area that has three ousing districts, namely, Pinelands, Wildey and Parkinsoi Field. I am talking about building closer relations!: :>s between the tenants in the Government housing states and the National Housing Corporation because I elieve if we could build these relationships more closely ft n a lot of the problems that are currently being experienc d within the National Housing units will be eliminate When I talk about building closer relationships, I am talk] g about the tenants in the housing areas and the administr ive authorities at the National Housing Corporati n working a lot closer together on a number of programn is.

It i: the topic of programmes, Sir, that I want to spend so e time on. Within Pinelands and the Wildey housing *i* e.as we were able over the Christmas period to develop ? painting project. Because if you remember the history o Pinelands which was formulated in 1948 after the flood a lot of people from different areas all over Barbados particularly Martindale's Road and Carrington's Village, \ ;re pushed up into that housing area. For a long time, beca ise of the closeness of the people, what I call the juxtaposir ; of these people, it created a lot of problems within the housing areas.

I am saying, Sir, that over the Christmas period what I saw w s very encouraging in Pinelands where the residents :>t together and decided to implement a painting project ^ :zh the assistance of the National Housing Corporati n. The programme was very simple. The tenants themselvt would make a contribution in terms of a donation wards the paint and also they themselves would get invoh d in the painting.

I w* very happy to see that when the idea was put forward < the National Housing Corporation they too joined in md assisted, particularly the Minister that is responsib. for the National Housing Corporation. I want to convey at this time my heartfelt thanks to that Ministry and the other people employed in that Ministry for helping the tenants of Pinelands and Wildey in that programme.

I am talking about building bridges. I am talking about building associations. I am talking about joint partnerships because when we talk about joint partnerships and building bridges, normally it is mainly, in my mind, political propaganda in that sense but here I am talking about tangible evidence and a project that is ongoing.

Now, many people in Barbados thought the project was a Christmas project. It is not. It is an ongoing project. I am saying up to this point in time the National Housing Corporation is still assisting with the project.

Sir, I said earlier that I spent most of my life in a housing area. It hurts me deeply when I see officers from the National Housing Corporation stick up notices on persons' houses for eviction. I always believe we should take a more humanitarian outlook into these matters.

Some people who have been living in these housing estates would have been living there for over 30 years. If we carried out a survey within Pinelands you would find that most of the residents have been living in this housing area for well over 20 years. I am again asking the Honourable Minister of Housing to look into the possibility of waiving the arrears on those persons[1] houses who would have been affected by the structural adjustment programme. And now we even have the VAT system in place which is creating more hardship.

I am saying we have to develop a humanitarian aspect to this whole issue. Those persons who have been living in these housing estates for over 25 years, I am asking that you waive the arrears and let them start paying the rent as normal.

My rationale behind that is because having lived in *he units so long they would have paid for the units, in my mind, twice over already. I will continue to make that point until it happens because I feel that as we go into the 21st century we have to start doing revolutionary things in this island because the poor people living in these housing units, I know, they are the ones that are really feeling it.

Sir, in addition to that, I have had a number of complaints from senior citizens and particularly children in relation to the asbestos roof on these units. It is not a problem that is happening only in St. Michael South East. This is a problem throughout Barbados. 3.55 p.m.

I know it will be an expensive exercise and if it cannot happen, I am asking that all these units be sealed with hard board sheets to keep the particles of

dust from the asbestos roof from falling into the bed and affecting particularly those children that are asthmatic.

In addition to that Sir, I want to thank the maintenance staff that are currently working at the units in Wildey and Pinelands for working so hard. Within the last year I have seen a tremendous improvement in terms of the maintenance of houses in Pinelands and Wildey. I believe that after I have seriously agitated on the radio and television and through talks with the Minister of Housing, and other high ranking officials, at the Ministry of Housing that there has been a marked improvement even though there are problems still existing with the maintenance of these units. We have to allocate more funds to these subsidiaries of the National Housing Corporation so that the units in the housing estates throughout Barbados can be properly maintained.

I want to go off housing and I want to ask the Minister to look at the distinct possibility at this time of providing a bus shed in Mapp Hill. The residents of Lower Burney, Cutting Road and Haggatt Hall are sharing the road with the traffic and I am asking that a bus shed be placed in Mapp Hill. The most accidents in Barbados occur at the junction at the bottom of the Pine East West Boulevard and if we could get stop lights down at the bottom of this junction, I would be very, very happy.

I see that the Ministry is making an effort to repair the roads in Parkinson Field but I would also like to see those roads Barber Green because at present we have got a number of accidents on those roads.

I believe that we are talking about developing communities and we are in the process now of preparing a proposal to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and we are hoping that the Ministry would be receptive to our proposal of erecting a mini stadium. If my curiosity serves me right, I believe I saw it as a programme within the Barbados Labour Party manifesto and I am hoping that before the end of the next two years that this mini stadium project will be implemented and St. Michael South East will be one of the first constituencies to have a mini stadium.

In addition to that Sir, I am very happy to hear that the Minister is trying to acquire land in Lower Burney and I hope that preference would be given to those good constituents from St. Michael South East to have some of these spots. I know that many of them have been faced with notices of eviction and I am hoping that when these spots become available that the 25 members from the constituency will be given consideration.

In addition, I remember when I first entered this Chamber, Sir, that we asked for lights in Salters Tenantry Road and I remembered speaking to the Honourable Member for St. George South about having these lights. We are hoping that this will come on stream as soon as possible. Cutting Road is another one of my concerns - the new housing development - a number of persons have moved and currently those persons are without light and without a telephone system. I am asking that the Ministry look into this very swiftly and erect the lights in this area.

Sir, I always like to prepare the fact based on the problems within my constituency. I have said in this Chamber that the development of this country should not be measured in dollars and cents. That is why I want again to compliment Mr. Anthony Wiggins for his work in trying to implement a Tenants Association. I believe that every single housing area should have a Tenants Committee. It would serve to bridge the gap between the problems that the tenants are experiencing and what management believe that the problems are.

Sir, as we go into the 21st century, the whole process of collective responsibility and nation building cannot just be lip service. Every single Parliamentarian in this Honourable Chamber has a responsibility to every Barbadian and hence if we are going to practise the system of collective responsibility, all of us together, working in harmony and putting the political differences and the partisanship aside, I believe that we would come close to guiding this ship called "SS Barbados" into the 21st century.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am indeed please to enter this debate at this time. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has made a valuable contribution to this debate and I believe his comments are always refreshing seeing that it comes at a time when this Government is really concentrating on community oriented programmes.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. George North were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The point, Mr. Chairman, is that at St. Helens, St. George we have 1.2 acres of land which is considered superfluous land. This land is adjoining a playing field, it does not impact at all on the playing area. In fact there is a border of about 33 feet from the playing area and the Town Planner, the Chief Sports Officer and all those persons who are involved in planning, pointed out that this is an ideal location for house spots. The Honourable Member knows and therefore he must not try to mislead this House nor Barbadians. He knows the area, he was born only a couple of yards away from St. Helens. 4.05 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I am happy to join with all the residents of Belair,

Market Hill, Bridge Cot, Old Post Office, and be deemed a liar along with them. Because they were the people who invited me to come to their help and I met with them on a Sunday morning on the spot and saw with my own eyes the land being cut off from the playing field.

Mr. Chairman, I brought the plans to this Honourable House and demonstrated to this Honourable House that the whole area was previously designated as a playing field. Anyone who was born and brought up in St. George would know that that entire area was served only by the St. Augustine playing field where all the people around Barbados made fun at the people of St. George. Because when a man was fielding at gully or in slips you could not see his head on St. Augustine playing field and the only other area they had to play was a small area in Belair yard. To deprive these people after 100 years of looking forward to open spaces to play and for a St. George man to do it, I think, is thoroughly unacceptable. They are the people who told me so. I went there. If you call me a liar you are calling the people of Bridge Cot, Market Hill, Belair and they invited you to come too and you ran away and you did not come.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am surprised that the Honourable Member really knows Belair, St. George. He was born there but he ran away years ago. He was severely thrashed in 1976 and he ran away to the City. I am surprised that the loving people of St. George would have invited the member back to St. George to look at land.

I must say to the Honourable House that the 9 lots at St. Helens, St. George have been sold to the people in the area so I do not understand.

Aside.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: But you have just said that the people of the area invited you. More to the point, Mr. Chairman, because I believe ...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is exactly what I say is wrong. Because what you should have done and I would have had no objection if you had gone right through towards Moonshine in that area and done a housing development, right across there and accommodated 200 or 300 houses. But leave the playing field alone which would accommodate for the future more and more sports activities in the area. I would not be complaining and I would have no problem with that. It is just this small approach to the problem of housing.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I think I have to go on because this Government has from its inception made the point that we will be concentrating our efforts on marginal lands which exist outside of small communities and we have done just that. In all the areas which exist in communities and the Honourable Member has made the point that it is in his Manifesto, we have not stolen the idea, we have implemented the idea because it is found in our manifesto. We have implemented the community approach. Over at Groves, St. George we have taken 18 acres of land to put into house spots. We have done the same thing at Parish Land, St. George. We have done the same thing at Farmers, St. Thomas. We have done the same thing at Simmons Land, in Christ Church. Wherever there exists marginal lands we have taken that decision. Therefore I would want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we have implemented the programme that we have been elected on and we will continue to do so.

I am happy to report that for the very first time since Independence, Mr. Chairman, we now have a land bank with land to provide adequate house spots for the low income earners and the poor of this country. We have more than 1200 house spots in the planning. Already sites and services have been put in for over 200 house spots and another 1000 house spots will be available at the end of this year. So adequate house spots are being provided for the poor and those persons who are in the lower income bracket.

Every time the Honourable Member for St. Lucy gets up in this House he pretends to speak on behalf of the poor black people. But one has to ask the Honourable Member a question. How would you sell Government land? Would you sell it to the lowest bidder? All Government land has to be tendered, so I do not understand the point that the member has been making over and over again.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. George North who happens to oversee the funds of the National Housing Corporation should know better than to mislead the House to give the impression that the only way Government could sell land is by the process of tendering. He knows full well that all Government has to do is pass the land to National Housing Corporation and they do not have to tender, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The National Housing Corporation, Mr. Chairman, is a statutory body and it sells its land mainly to low income earners. It does not go out to tender. Persons who already own land, as far as I understand, are not supposed to buy land from the National Housing.

The point that has to be made is that this administration has indeed put life into housing again. We have commissioned a report to look at the urban area and for the very first time we understand. Members out there have been talking about poverty and so on. For the very first time we now know the number of households within the urban area that are considered poor. We now

know the majority of households who do not have running water. We now know the number of persons who are considered to be below the poverty line. We now know for the first time that things have to be done in a systematic way and that is why this administration has set up the Urban Renewal Commission which would try to redress some of the problems that we spoke of today.

The Minister spoke about the Urban Commission. This Commission has not yet been established so we do not want to speak too much on this. We understand that there is a problem which needs to be addressed and this administration has been doing its best to address these problems. 4.15 p.m.

The Rural Commission which is under the Ministry of Agriculture is doing a similar programme within urban and rural Barbados, and therefore we must compliment the staff and the Ministry of Housing for working assiduously to implement the programmes of Government.

I also want to look at another department within the Ministry of Housing. I want to look at the Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, for the very first time we have money allocated to the Transport Board to buy fifty buses, which will help to address the problems that we face within Barbados.

We must understand that these are social issues which affect not only public works but housirig as well. I am happy that we are able to see within the near future, a revolution within the Transport System which would help to alleviate the problems that we face in rural Barbados of transporting people from St. George to the City and across Barbados, so I am happy about that.

I am also happy, Mr. Chairman, that for the very first time we have over $8 million within Public Works to fix tenantry roads. The very first time.

Our manifesto speaks about helping to develop and improve tenantry roads. Our manifesto speaks about improving tenantry roads and roads within rural Barbados and urban Barbados, and 1 am sure, Mr. Chairman, that over the next two or so years the number of Barbadians and those persons who now walk with their shoes in their hands, would find that this would have been a thing of the past. That those persons who now walk with their shoes in their hands to go to church, to go to work or who have to walk with slippers, I hope that this would be a thing of the past within the next year.

All we need to do is to aspire to great heights and I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that this programme will help to alleviate poverty within rural and urban Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the Minister responsible for Housing, the Parliamentary Secretary and the officers who work so diligently, in this Ministry to help to alleviate some of the problems that presently exist in housing and land problems in this country.

As a representative of one of the constituencies of St. Michael, I have knowledge of a lot of the problems that all of us in St. Michael are experiencing where housing for people and land for people is concerned.

There is a scarcity of land available for people, especially in St. Michael. If one goes from St. Michael into the rural areas, one can see the large number of open spots in the area where people can have access for housing. We said, Sir, in the St. Michael area there has been a scarcity of land over the years.

Aside.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has mentioned to me that if we go as far up as Christ Church South, there is also some scarcity of land for housing in that area and in the entire country.

In St. Michael West Central, Sir, that is the area I represent, we have the St. Stephen's area, the Belfield area, the Clevedale area, the Crab Land area, also the Deacons Road area and, the Grazettes area. These have been long standing landing scheme areas, Sir, for people. Over the years we have been seeing people in the area, having the opportunity to own these lots that they were living on over the years. We also have a situation where there are lots in the area, abandoned over the years, Sir, with no one living on or claiming these lots.

On approaching the Corporation, I have been able to find out that some of these lots are owned by people who are overseas. Some of the lots, Sir, were being rented by people, and in some cases some of these people owe the Corporation, three and four thousand dollars over the years and nothing has been done to the lot, or no house has been replaced on the lot.

I understand that there is a process, Sir, where the Government can repossess these lots after a period of time by applying to the Court, so that these lots can be sold to new tenants. I have been able, Sir, to get some of those lots for some of my people.

Mr. Chairman, we in St. Michael, can be proud that the Minister has recently come up with a scheme

under the Urban Renewal Programme where this Party, a Party that from its inception has cared about the lives and a better living for the people of this country,...

Asides.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, we have decided, that we will look after these people. And in the St. Michael area, under this Urban Development Programme, the Barbados Labour Party is out there, trying hard to find house spots for people, Sir. If we look at the Alleyne's Land and the Bush Hall project, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East represents, recently we have started a private project in the area, where we have gone in, we have looked at an area which is a run down area, and we have decided that we will spend some money. The exact figure is one million dollars that we would be putting into this project, Sir.

We would be putting roads in there. We would be looking at the housing stock in there, Sir. The old people in the area who cannot afford to do anything for themselves, the ones who do not have the indoor facilities, that is, the indoor private toilet facilities and so on, Sir, in their houses, we will be helping these old people. That is what the Barbados Labour Party will be doing for the people in that area, Sir.

We would be putting water mains in there, because in some areas, you find that the pipes run on the surface for years, Sir, and when vehicles and so on go into the area, these pipes are all damaged, and the people have to be sending money to replace the pipes.

In this programme, we would be running water mains in the area. We would be putting natural gas in the area, Sir. So, what we are doing, Sir, we said, "we are creating a better life for the people."

In my years here in Black Rock I have earmarked an area in the Wavell Avenue area that the Minister has promised to put a similar project.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member, but he is my representative, or the representative for at least my family. Now he is saying that there is an area in Black Rock in which they are going to implement a project similar to the one which he described in Bush Hall.

My recollection is, Sir, Black Rock begins at Eagle Hall and goes to Walmer Lodge. There is no land from Eagle Hall to Walmer Lodge where a project like that can be implemented. I think, the Honourable Member, unless he identifies the place, he is misleading this House.

I would like the Honourable Member to tell me exactly were in Black Rock, he is putting this project.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, in the constituency that is represented by the Speaker, we have recently looked at an area in there for him, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Sir, I continue to tell you that the Honourable Member is misleading the House and unless the Honourable Member gives chapter and verse he has to withdraw what he said about Black Rock. 4.25 p.m.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: As I said, in the Bush Hall area we have looked at the Park Road areas where we will be looking at some 390 units in that area.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I made a statement to Your Honour that the Honourable Member is misleading this House. There is nowhere on Black Rock from Eagle Hall to Walmer Lodge that can withstand a project similar to what the Honourable Member has just described.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, in the Waterford area which is the same area of the Speaker, there are some 15 lots that the Speaker is finding hard to find out if there is any provision, where the same land if it is not being used, can be repossessed by...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Honourable Member are you saying that the Honourable Member is misleading the House?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, as I said, the Barbados Labour Party under this urban development programme will be doing work in all the St. Michael constituencies.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He said in Black Rock, Sir. I heard Black Rock. I live in Black Rock. I have a duty to this Committee. Sir, the Honourable Member cannot just make wild statements saying that we are doing the same in Black Rock. It is misleading the House and the public.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I was thinking about inviting the Minister to a part of Fairfield to show him some land we had up there, but I understand that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West bought all the land in that area when they were in government and he decided that he was going to build some houses for himself and rent them out. So he is doing very well in that area. So we do not use that land, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is further misleading the House. I have done no such thing.

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

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I took the Minister to the area and showed the Minister that area that is going to be worked on and when the Minister gets up to answer he will probably take care of that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He took the Minister to an area but he said Black Rock. I know Black Rock and you know Black Rock and the Honourable Member knows Black Rock and for him to have said Black Rock I know it is not true. I wish him to tell me where.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. When a member on the other side gets up and gives the impression that he is a spokesman for the Government in respect of expenditures that would be incurred during this fiscal year, which relate to these Estimates and when he is asked to give further information and refuses to give it, I am saying this is in total contempt of this Honourable House. It is contemptuous of the House and a disregard for the normal practices of Estimates debates.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, under this urban renewal programme the Barbados Labour Party will be continuing to carry out the promises of its manifesto. As I said, Sir, one private scheme has started and we are going through all the constituencies of St. Michael and we will be implementing these plans in the constituencies. We will get to St. Michael South Central at some time but as the member said already that he has so many things done in St. Michael South Central already that he does not need anything else.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. What I said is that over the years most of the infrastructural works in St. Michael South Central have been done except for the roads in Delamere and Bannister Land. There are obviously matters relating to human development in the constituency that we should concern ourselves about. I understand that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central since I have known him when he was a member of the NDP has a difficulty in grasping these things in detail; but he has to control his mouth and not misrepresent people.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was never a member of the NDP.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will provide the appropriate information to the House in due course because fortunately, it is all computerised.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, to get back to housing. I want to mention the housing estates.

A lot of young people are going on their own at an early age and this has put great demand on the Government for housing. In these areas these units are 1 and 2-storey units but I believe that since the demand is so great and there is this scarcity of land in the country that we should be thinking about building 3 and 4-storey structures. We will have to go that way and I believe that is the way the Corporation should be going - terrace units. 4.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the other thing I want to touch on, Sir, is the Corporation, and tenants and so on. I believe, Sir, that in these same areas, there are a lot of these units, that are in need of repairs. Sir, I believe that the Corporation is having some money this year, that they would be able to use in this area. But at the same time, if the tenants that are in arrears can come forward, Sir, and pay some rent, the Corporation will be able to do some more in lines of repairs to the housing, and to plumbing and so on. Mr. Chairman, I will come back later and expound on some more issues. Sir, I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the Estimates under page 49 under Rural Development, Sir, one would realise that the rural budget this year for 97-98 is $5 200 000 Sir. In 1996 it was $4 million, and in 1995-96, Sir, it was only $1 500 000. Mr. Chairman, when one looks at page 149 of the Estimates again under Urban Development, one would see that urban, in one year is $5 million. When one looks at Structures, Sir, under Public Works again, one would realise that structures for road development for tenantry roads, Sir, has increased by $6.5 million in one year.

Mr. Chairman, if I take a serious analysis of this, one can only come to the conclusion that the Barbados Labour Party is preparing for an election. I am going to tell you why. There is no way that Urban Development in one year could get a vote for $5 million and when they were dealing with Rural Development they could only give the $150 000. The excuse at the time, Sir, was that Rural Development was only setting up the office. I would like to know, Sir, if to set up the office in Urban Development would take $5 million. I am saying, Sir, it is clear to me Mr. Chairman, that the $5 million for Urban Development and the $5.2 million, along with the increase of $6.5 million under Structures on page 140 is enough money to start the campaign process. It has nothing to do with the amount of money that they are voting for the

alleviation of poverty and it has nothing to do with the amount of money that they have increased this year as grants to individuals. I have also stated, Sir, that the revenue has been understated and I know that the VAT would give them more revenue and you can look forward for them to do their usual job in bringing many supplementaries to this House.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order.

Mr. D. St. E, KELLMAN: You cannot rise there, man. Mr Chairman...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order, Sir. Mr.

D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, he is not a Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A point of order is being made here.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He is not a Minister. He cannot speak to me from there.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He cannot speak to me. He is not a Minister.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Acting Minister now, continue.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member is not totally correct. You must understand that the very first year $1.2 million was given to the Urban Development Commission last year for a pilot project. This year now the Prime Minister has given us $5 million to implement the programme for a full year. So there is nothing about elections. I do not understand where the Member gets his information from.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, in light of the statement made by the Honourable Member for St. George North I am saying now I cannot trust these estimates because if one looks at page 149, Sir, under "Grants to Urban Development," I cannot see the amount of money that was paid to urban last year. I am saying, Sir, that if his statement is correct, these estimates are wrong. So we need to get these estimates corrected before we can proceed on these estimates. I want to know under which Head*.Sir,.that Urban Development received $1.2 million last year. If he cannot tell me which Head, Sir, then I can come to the conclusion that...

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. If the Honourable Member would look at page 149 Item 716 Urban Renewal Programme, Structures, Professional Services total vote $1 200 000.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful, as usual, to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, but I was dealing with the Urban Development Commission, two different projects, Sir, and if you doubt me Sir, look on page 149 and you will see that Urban Renewal Programme comes before Urban Development Commission, so two different projects. I am saying, Sir, that in one year's time that the vote has been increased from zero to $5 million whereas, the Rural Commission had to wait for three years to get to $5 million.

Am I to believe, Sir, then if this is not vote catching, Sir, that the Urban Development Commission is more important than Rural? Am I to believe that, Sir? Am I now to believe that this is a policy put in place because of the number of seats in the urban area? Mr. Chairman, the figures are there for everyone to see and it is clear, Sir, that I will be correct again. The same way, Sir, I was correct about VAT, because if one was to look at yesterday's newspaper one would see that I was right and the person who opposed me was wrong.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, I would never do that.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, this is a very serious debate because I am of the view that the most important economic area in Barbados in the next couple of years will be that of housing. It is really going to require a lot more innovation than we are seeing in these Estimates to do something about the housing problem in Barbados. It is well known and I can understand the Minister of Housing putting some initiatives in places like St. Andrew because according to the last census, St. Andrew is the poorest parish in Barbados when you look at the aggregate of income. It has the poorest parliamentarian as well.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I happen to represent a constituency that has about four housing estates - the Farm, Rosemount, Ferniehurst and Golden Acre which is in St. Stephen's, Sir. And in fact, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I had the privilege of being in a by-election that occasioned the Government to paint each and every house in the Farm. So I did not have

to put a plan in place in order for that to be achieved. But there are several other concerns which we have in those housing estates.

According to my estimate, provided by a member of the Farm community, it will require about $800 per unit to ceil a housing unit in the Farm. That will come in the form of $550 for material and $250 for labour for each unit. I wish to propose that this project which I am proposing here will cost about $280 000 for the Farm Housing Area alone, 350 units at $800 per unit. That the project which is now coming to fruition or quite close to its end, the UNDP funded and Government funded project, that the project to ceil the Farm units could in fact be used as a means of creating or generating employment within the area.

Those who have already visited the project would recognise that there are quite a few young men in the area already employed by the major carpenter or overseer at that site, a young man called Ana or Adrian Williams and that there are quite a few. There are quite a few other skilled persons in the area. That project, I will repeat, that project was funded by the UNDP and the Government of Barbados and there is a move afoot to remove the UNDP's name so as to politicise the issue. 4.45 p.m.

I am asking those in charge to respect and recognise that the project was conceptualised as far back as 1992 and this is no time to play politics with that,project. I am warning those who are part of the project that the persons in the Farm who are responsible for that project will not take kindly to any efforts to dismiss them as those who conceptualised the project. You will be in for a very rough ride.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It was done. The sign which was recently painted by a member of the Farm community...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is true, and you need to visit the project. The sign which was recently painted - an individual came to the project and caused the UNDP's name to be taken off the sign. That is not a good thing. There are those who pretend to be politicians and are not in politics. You have a lot of them. There are a lot of young men who are playing they are more politicians than people who are actually involved in politics. They came down there and asked individuals to remove UNDP from the sign, and it is not fair. They are more political than the 28 members in here. I can call names. You want me to call names?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No names in here, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am asking though that consideration be given to allow members of the community itself to do the ceiling of the Farm housing units. The skill is there. The ability is there. When you go and visit the project you will recognise that all manner of skills resides in the area. All we are asking for is the Government to put aside a sum to allow that project to be done.

We are also asking for signs within the Farm community where people would know if you are going through Block 1 housing, whatever. That is required within the Farm community as a matter of urgency.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You have an urban development project now. I am young and exuberant and I intend to represent the people within the constituency.

In Fernihurst and Rosemount we are also asking for ceilings to be put in.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: There was also a move in the by-election to take the asbestos off the roofs of the units in Golden Acre and it was done. The Prime Minister made a big thing about it that this had no right happening. He said it could never be happening here under my leadership and it was done immediately where the asbestos was removed from the project in Golden Acre. Thank God, I still managed to pull through.

I am saying there is need for more creative thinking and I intend to reveal what I am talking about. We need to be more creative and I am going to say it publicly. One of the reasons why I thought it was unfair to have a housing policy in place which allowed all manner of people to claim mortgages and repairs who really did not deserve it was because a whole set of people did not deserve it, and I am serious about it.

I am saying the limited resources we have ought to be targeted to the least privileged in the society and to have a policy in place which only permits an individual to benefit from housing once he has access to mortgage is unfair. It has to be unfair in principle. How could you tell me you are seeking to do something about housing and the only way in which you can manage or give benefits to individuals is, in fact, to allow mortgage interest reduction of any magnitude.

In principle, I am saying there are greater needs among the low income people in Barbados. You must listen in silence because I understand the political implications of what I am saying. I am also saying that in a

limited resource Government, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart, it should make sure that greater measures should be put in place to cater to the low income people of Barbados. While I respect that once the resources allow, you can put mortgage interest deductions in place, that is very good.

I am saying a Government that is so concerned about poverty alleviation that even such a policy should first of all cater to the needs of the poor. That is all I am saying to you. You could have gotten that reduction only if you had access to mortgage. How many poor people can do that? You can walk about and ask the question.

Aside.

Mr. C A. MASCOLL: The people hardly got any. You know that too. Two hundred and eighty people who owned chattel houses in Barbados were able to get claims while over 2 000 were able to do so for ...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am asking the Government to consider a different strategy, that is, a place like the Farm which has been going since the 1960s which you now have three generations living in one unit, it is time to move on. It is time to give people the opportunity to live in a separate unit. Therefore, I am saying to you that rather than talk about merely taking the rent paid before to purchase a unit in the Farm, it is shortsighted. That is not the policy you really want, contrary to what others think.

The policy you really want is for that rent paid already to go towards the purchase of some lot, somewhere identified by Government in the country or the urban area so that that individual now has a start. That individual can then take that land and use it as collateral so you have social mobility.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is part payment thereof. I am not saying that the rent paid already is going to buy the entire lot. I am saying that you can use that rent paid as a form of subsidizing any new lot which you can find somewhere in the countryside in order to allow these people to have access to a single unit and allow the process of social mobility to occur.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You are not giving away anything. You can give SDAs, special development units, and give people all forms of concessions, all forms of interest deductions and also give people subsidized loans where you allow them to borrow from commercial banks and then take the interest payment and use it as a deduction. You do not pay withholding tax. You have concession on land and property. You have concession on VAT even before you come to Barbados and you are telling me that the same way the Treasury of Barbados can afford those millions that you cannot give expression to a housing policy in Barbados which can give relief to low income people in Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course it makes sense. It just needs to be thought through and to be conceptualised in a way that makes it legal. Do not tell me it does not make sense. It makes absolute sense to take the rent paid and use it as a form of subsidy for the purchase of some other lot. That is all I am saying.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am not asking for rent free. I am saying to you that may be a way to encourage those who now owe arrears to pay rent because you are going to use the rent paid as a form of subsidy towards the purchase of Government land. That is all I am saying. This is no time to think about 1960 policies to getting somebody to purchase the units. Why would I want to purchase a unit that I would not have access to for the rest of my life anyhow?

I am thinking about giving poor people an opportunity to move forward, not to stay within the confines of the Farm. When you speak to the people in the Farm and the surrounding areas, you recognise that is the greatest need in Barbados at this point in time among the poor. People want to own their own homes and Governments must find a way of being creative and innovative to allow it to happen. But to come with these bold thrashed-out formulae and to come with these old-timish things about housing is no longer vision. Vision has to be fresh. It has to be renewed for the 21st century.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am being told now that I back-raised Government. Having gone into Straker's Tenantry, I indicated to the tenants of that area that they should not be purchasing any lots at that kind of price. Because there is no way you can continue to discriminate the way you did before, allowing plantation tenantries to pay 100 per square foot while an urban tenant does not know what price he will confront. I simply made a proposal to them. 4.55 p.m.

All I am saying is that I talk about it and I made it public. I simply asked people in those areas not

to purchase any land because a policy should be put in place to allow them to know the precise value. And you had a sneaky individual coming in the Press known as Elaine Jones - it is not a real name, somebody wrote some article, a person called Elaine Jones - writing an article saying that I back-raised the Government.

Let me say in conclusion that this area of housing is in fact, to my mind, going to be the major area of contention between competing parties for the next election. Because the people of Barbados need something that is creative and something that they can cling to and I can think of no better area in Barbados at this point in our political and economic development than....

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is time to look ahead, it is time to get creative and I can tell you now that if you say that you have been back-raised now, you can look forward to being back-raised for the next election. Because it is time to put innovation and creativity on the front burner as a means of enhancing the opportunities of individuals in Barbados, especially the poor, to have access to proper housing into the 21st century.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this be sitting suspended until 5.30 p.m.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. 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: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

Mr. D. CARTER: I would like first to congratulate the Minister of Transport & Works on the work he has done so speedily in this country in relation to the purchasing of plots and also the sale of plots. In my own constituency, I am happy to say that when he came to office, one lady in St. Patricks who was waiting a long time, the Government made it possible to sell the lady the land and then enhanced her property.

Quite recently the Prime Minister was saying that we should be innovative and I am happy to say that in Gall Hill which is considered the hub of Christ Church, the Minister was able to purchase the land at Club Randall. And in the very near future we shall do something there which we will then show the people of Barbados what a small area can do. This project is a project where at the base of the building we will have spaces for ten young business people and the top will be used for recreational purposes.

There was some deviant behaviour in Gall Hill but over the past month there was a lady who went to the area and preached the gospel and it would appear that the people in that area are coming around and really keeping close to God.

In another there were some young people doing some business; one chap was selling fruit at the corner and when he allowed his friends to be with him too often the police had to ask him to leave because it was said that something was going on. There was also a young lady in the area who did her hairdressing under a tree. All in all what I am trying to say is that this administration is trying to help young business people and the ordinary people of Gall Hill, Water Street and the surrounding area will be able to start a business in that area and I will certainly get help and assistance from the relevant authorities.

I know that the Prime Minister has allocated $1 million for the small business people and I hope that we can use expertise from that area where they can teach the young people from these areas how to run a business efficiently.

It is said in this country that black people have certain failings, whereby once the business takes off the first thing we do is go and buy a Honda car. But certainly I hope that we can do the right thing and keep those people in place.

Mr. Chairman, there is something that is close to my heart and I will refer once again to the Member for Christ Church South. At the two Water Street schools in Christ Church, there are over 1 200 children at those two schools. Over two weeks ago, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing to accompany me because the Headmaster and Headmistress and the people in

the area were asking for at least a playing field at the back of the school where the children could have recreational facilities. On this occasion, I am happy to report that the land at the back of the school actually belongs to the Ministry of Housing. The Parliamentary Secretary told me that all he has got to do is to bring in the surveyors and cut off a suitable amount of land at the back so that the children can have some space to play their games.

One of the things that is important in that area, because of the deviant behaviour, is to stop the children from mixing extensively with the people who are not affiliated to the school because it is known that people use school children to push dope and we are trying hard in that area to keep the children by themselves. 5.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to report and you will know this because when we assumed office $2V_2$ years ago we had a petition from the people of the St. Patricks area for the development of a road. It is a known fact that the road which runs from Rising Sun to Six Cross Roads is probably the worst road in the Christ Church area. Those of us who have cars will tell you that when you are driving on that road it really upsets the suspension. It smashed my old car.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER: The Minister made it possible in last year's estimates to make sure that that road would be done. For the longest while, 8 months ago, I and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East were saying to the people that the road would be done. Last year, I heard that the crop season had started and that was the reason why it was delayed.

I would just like the Minister in his summing up to let us know once and for all when that road would be done because it is important to me, the people in Christ Church, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and the people of St. Philip South, because they use that road all the time.

Mr. Chairman, in the last few months the Drainage Unit spent some time in the area and I am happy to report that there was a well in the Cave Hill area which was open for a long period of time and quite recently the Minister and certainly the Ministry found it possible to make sure that that problem was rectified.

I was able to take them all over my constituency and certainly a report is there and *I* hope that when the rainy season comes in - because it is a known fact that with the drainage system it is basic common sense that work should be done in the dry period, cleaning wells and those sorts of things so that when the rainy season comes in - the water will be able to drain away easily. This is one unit that I must compliment the Minister for. In Barbados it is said because of the amount of concrete around the new buildings that water seems to be always there but as I said I believe the Drainage Unit will help the drainage problem and certainly Barbados and my constituency.

Quite recently, MPs in here were talking about the possibility of getting lights for respective constituencies. And it has happened to me that I have had to do the normal things like going on the poles and looking for numbers and then send a report to the Minister.

All the people of Cox Road, Edey Village and St. Davids go to St. David's Anglican Church and the majority of people are over 40. Because transportation is not the best in that area the people normally walk. I hope that the Ministry will find it possible to put lights in that area so that my people of Edey Village and Cox Road can walk with no fear.

It is an area where agriculture is prominent and of course, with the surrounding canes we have to look after our young ladies and the old people too. Although I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would say that crime is coming down rapidly we must still be alert and make sure that...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will say that the criminal statistics show that the total recorded crimes in Barbados for 1992 was 13 000. The total recorded crime at the end of 1996 \Vas 10 000.

Mr. D. CARTER: Thank you. Lastly, I would like to say to the Minister that we in Christ Church are very happy at how he has worked for Barbados and certainly my constituency and I hope that he will continue to work with the same vigour.

I would just like to finish by saying that 2 or 3 days ago I asked the other Ministries to help wherever possible to assist me and yesterday an old lady said she read the newspapers and noticed that I asked the other Ministries to assist me but what will happen to the other Christ Church people. It is a known fact that we in Christ Church move together in fives. So all I would like to say now is that I will ask the Minister when he is moving, to help the Christ Church people firstly, and then the others because it is important.

I know a statement was made in this country which touched me whereby the Honourable Member for St. John said that we up there are only warming our seats. I want him to know when I get Club Randall finished,

the roads finished and when I get the gas implemented which will soon be done he will see who is warming a seat. Thank you.

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to commend the Honourable Member for St. Andrew for a job well done. However, I know that he has to work within the context of the sources available to him and obviously there are limitations in what he can do.

There is a very big problem which I consider major facing my constituency of Christ Church West Central and that relates to the asbestos on the roofs of the houses, especially in the Silver Hill/Gall Hill area. These houses were built over 25 years ago and as you know after about 20 years you start to get fibre emanating from the asbestos and as a result of this you get what you call asbestosis which is a respiratory disease.

After the fibre has been inhaled over a long period of time this could result in an even more serious problem and that problem is one called fibrosis which is a stiffening or hardening of the lungs. If there is a stiffening or hardening of the lungs one becomes very susceptible to secondary heart attacks. So one can easily say that the fibre emanating from the asbestos is really in itself a killer. So I consider this as being a very important area for the Minister of Housing to work on during the next financial year.

I have been getting many complaints from people in Silver Hill and I have also been able to witness a lot of this dust floating around the houses in Silver Hill and it is really a great problem which can result in death especially over a 30-year period.

Another area I would like addressed is that of the maintenance of the houses in Silver Hill district. A lot of people have been complaining about the length of time it takes to get even a toilet bowl replaced. There are many people who have been complaining about the doors being in very bad condition. Sometimes it is clearly easy for outside people to get into these houses.

There is also another major problem with the houses' electricity. I can remember going into a house recently and the young lady turned on the light and it took about 10 minutes before the light came on. This in itself could cause a problem for many people. As a matter of fact, this sort of thing could cause fires in the district as well as security problems.

I also could remember an incident whereby there were 4 people in one house and they said that they had asked the National Housing Corporation depot in Gall Hill to come and fix the pipes and it took almost 2 months before the pipe was fixed and during that time I am sure thousands of gallons of water were wasted.

I think it is very important for the National Housing Corporation to look at all these problems. They may appear to be minor problems but when you add them together they become major problems as well as being human problems.

I have a little disappointment with the Minister in that over the last 2 years I submitted a list of 8 roads totalling just 2 kilometres and so far not one yard or one metre has been repaired. My constituency is very small and compact. To some extent, it is about a mile in length and maybe a half mile in width. I personally think that 8 roads which would come to 2 kilometres should have been fixed by now.

However, during this year's Estimates I am asking the Minister to let me get one mile of road which I understand will cost about $300 000. If you look at what has been allocated for tenantry roads I think it is something like $8 million being allocated to tenantry roads. If I could get one mile which may be able to fix about 4 roads I would feel fairly comfortable with that.

Here again I am begging the Minister to look after Christ Church West Central and I am looking forward to at least 4 roads being fixed.

Something that I have talked about on a number of occasions I can remember coming to 2 Ministers and asking them about the position with the land at Applegrove or Briar Hall which I asked to be vested. The land belongs to the Ministry and I asked that it be vested into the Ministry of Housing. So far I have heard nothing about it and I have been inundated with something like 300 applications from people within the Christ Church West Central constituency as well as 30 or 40 from Christ Church East Central.

I think that as a result of this great need for house spots I would like to see something being done, some roads being put in this land which is about 8 acres and which can accommodate about 75 or 80 house spots.

I also talked about some land near to that land I spoke of. It is in the vicinity of $3V_2$ acres and it is right now used by a small farmer who has over 100 heads of cows. I personally would like to see this small farmer being removed from the area and accommodated at a much bigger location. And this land which is $3V_2$ acres should be put into about 30 spots which would be very important to a lot of the young people who need land in the Christ Church area.

I think the real reason for so many people wanting land in my constituency is the fact that in the housing districts which were built say 20-25 years ago most of these people were just small children at that

time and now a lot of these people have reached the age of 25-30-35 and they want to be on their own. They want some sense of being on their own, being independent. Where possible, I think we will have to provide these people with certain facilities.

There is also a problem with lighting facilities, inadequate lighting in my constituency, especially in places like Vauxhall, Sargeants Village and to the back of Silver Hill. Lighting is so inadequate that sometimes people in those districts do not like to venture out after 6.30 or 7.00 in the evening.

I would like to ask that something be done especially in the Vauxhall area. I would like Vauxhall to be used as a priority area. The fact is that it is a relatively new area consisting of about 80 families and there is not a single light within that area.

These are more or less some of the major difficulties I would like to be addressed in the Christ Church West Central constituency during the course of the next financial year.

What I would also like to talk about pertains to the maintenance of existing roads. I would like to get the Kendall Hill area as well as the road in Valley Ridge paved. These roads have not been paved I understand for about 14 years and are really in a very terrible state of disrepair. I am asking the relevant Minister to look after the paving of these roads so that the damage to cars and to ankles of persons will be minimised. At this stage I would like to thank you very much. 5.55 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it might be very difficult to follow such an erudite and clear exposition by the Honourable Member who has just spoken but I will try my best.

In the time available I have to go very swiftly but the first thing I want to draw to the Minister's attention is something which I tried to draw to the attention of another Minister responsible for Housing some time ago and I would like to put it on the record. It seems to me that under the Health Services Act the Minister of Health has provision for the demolition of derelict houses. It seems to me that my constituents have tremendous difficulty getting connections with the National Housing Corporation for the provision of houses because literally we do not have enough houses being constructed by the National Housing Corporation, we never have had. It seems to me that we are having a terrible waste in this country. I walk every morning, 5 miles, and I cover an area in which there is a lot of housing of the old time kind.

I have never understood and I have put it forward and I will put it forward again how one can see a house that is empty and if one observes that house over a period of time one will see it go from a position of being an empty house until eventually it is a derelict house. It then becomes a candidate for destruction by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Health has provision to sell the property and recover the cost of the demolition. Now, it seems to me that the Government...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I was Minister of Health and as Minister of Health I put it forward to the Minister of Housing. I put it in writing to the Ministry of Housing because I feel strongly about it. It seems to me that the housing stock in Barbados can be enhanced if the Government, instead of demolishing a house when it becomes derelict and having the capacity to recover the cost, that prior to its becoming derelict, when it is at the point where it is obvious that it has been abandoned, that they cannot find the owner, the owner is in Panama or in New York or London or somewhere, what we should do is acquire that property, vest it in the National Housing Corporation, give them the resources to repair that house and make it available as part of our housing stock. After it is acquired and it is sold, get a fair price and put the difference between what you have paid for it and what expenses you had into escrow until the owner is found, whenever the owner is found. That seems straightforward and simple and it somehow eludes the people who have to implement it.

I implore the Minister to consider the project, to get it going, and he would be surprised that instead of having to say to people who go for housing at the National Housing Corporation that they have to wait and as they say, turn them around, we shall be able to get housing increased. That is number one.

Number 2-1 promised the people in the Registry in Barbados, having gone there one day. Somebody left me to be the executor of a will and I had to go to the Registry. I went into what was the Registry and I was upset when I went into the Registry as a visitor to do something. I was amazed at where the Registrar who is at the same level as a Judge, was functioning from. I want the Attorney General and the Minister responsible for this Head who is the Minister responsible for repairs to Government buildings and accommodation, so it is the Attorney General's portfolio at the level of policy but it is this Minister's responsibility. I was surprised at where the Registrar was housed, I then looked at the people who have to work in the Registry. Mr. Chairman, I can only say that I do not understand how it is possible for anybody to do any work in there. I promised the people that at the next Estimates I

would get up in here and say that they have to do something about the Registry. So, Sir, I am saying to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that if he has never been into the Registry in Barbados he should go, so that he can help his Ministers to come to the conclusion that something must be done. You cannot put the people to work in there anymorec

I am surprised that they get any work done. I am surprised that they are not ill on a continual basis.

Aside,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If I keep calling for things you tell me it is already done. If you cannot put air-conditioning in that place, a simple matter. Why is it that with 3 years to go we are so reluctant to give public officers air-conditioning?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, I am going to reply fully to the Honourable Member but I am just drawing his attention to this. Look at Head 30 under sub-program Registration Department. You will see $200 000 in the appropriate column and the note on the other side says to renovate, instal air-conditioning and provide for computerisation of the Registry. It is in the Estimates.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not my business to read the Estimates in relation to the Attorney General. I read the Estimates in relation to my shadow portfolio and I listen to my colleagues on the others and to the Attorney General who has been hiding his head otherwise we would have heard of the magnificent works which he is doing. But he obviously has told his colleagues not to call the Head because he knows there are some areas in which he has been derelict.

Anyhow, I will now be able to go and announce to the officers in the Registry that I have discharged my responsibility which I committed myself to.

The second thing I want to talk about is road construction. At page 140 road construction formed a substantial part of this Ministry's Head.

Now there is a road called Bridge Gap. It runs from Black Rock to Deacons Road. It is very far from the Judge Gap but it is a serious road. It is used by everybody who is travelling from North to South, from South to North. The Minister goes into Bridge Gap. The Minister of Agriculture spends a substantial amount of time in Bridge Gap. I do not understand how it is possible for me to be asking constantly for the Bridge Gap to be fixed. They sent me a big letter from this Ministry signed by the Chief Technical Director. I did not put in a lot of roads. I put in for two roads. They said to put it in order of priority and I put Bridge Gap, Bridge Gap, Bridge Gap, Bridge Gap, Bridge Gap, so my first five priorities is Bridge Gap. I think it is a travesty for us to have a road like that that is so important in the transportation of Barbados without its being fixed. It is in a bad condition.

Aside.

Mr, B. M. TAITT: So you think that when you are in the Government that because you are in the Government that you can prevail on that Ministry you are in charge of to do anything? You feel that being in the Government helps? I do not know where you have been. You think that the Ministry you have responsibility for pays any attention to whether you are in Opposition or in Government? I am appealing to you now because I have a better chance. So, handle Bridge Gap for me. Listen, you are in a position to say that my Government did not do it because I am in a position to say that also. My Government did not fix Bridge Gap so I am giving you an opportunity on behalf of my colleague from North West who is next door, for you to say I will go and tell them myself, when the Dems were in we did not fix Bridge Gap, I had to appeal to the Bees to fix Bridge Gap. I would give you the credit, but fix the Gap,

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They love me. It has nothing to do with the Gap but I feel I have a duty.

I want to go further, Sir. There is an area called Manning Land, it is a tenantry and it is in Bank Hall within the radius of one mile from Bridgetown. Manning Land should not suffer as it does. There is a road in Manning Land where there is a light pole in the middle of the road. I think you should pay some attention to that.

I want to turn to page 147.
6.05 p.m.

The Barbados Water Authority has embarked on a policy of cutting off water. It seems that it is popular to be big and strong and muscular and macho and if you do not pay we are going to cut off the water. That is fine.

The Minister of Health is not in her place now, but I wish the Minister to bear in mind that this Water Authority bears the policy of cutting off water.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do not make me laugh. These are serious matters. The Prime Minister was out of here all day and as soon as he comes in he is saying things to make me laugh.

Cutting off water is fine. It makes you look big and strong but it is dangerous.

Cholera is a very serious possibility if there is no water especially in the areas of poor water users. We are discussing the alleviation of poverty. I am not going to stand up and say that people should not pay their water bills, etc., but I wish the Water Authority and the Ministry of Health to work in tandem when they are doing this cutting off of water.

Because, cholera does not depend on which authority is in office. It depends on how much water is available for sanitation and sanitary purposes. It is all right to cut the odd one here and there but if you get into the business of cutting whole blocks of the Pine, or whole blocks of Licorish Village, or whole blocks of other places, you are also creating the environment within which cholera can thrive.

Barbados has managed successfully to be free from these kinds of difficulties and I am merely drawing it to your attention because I think it is my duty to draw it to your attention, since the Minister of Health does not seem to be exercising this particular responsibility in any different way from which she has exercised any of the others. I think it is necessary for me from this side, to draw to the attention of the Water Authority that cutting off water has implications beyond the question of whether somebody has paid or not.

I also want to talk about bridges. I notice that there is no money in here for the repair of bridges.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is a bridge in St. Andrew, the constituency of the Minister, which is in danger after having been fixed of being destroyed because the Ministry of Health, before the bridge has been properly constructed, has started sending the sanitation trucks over the bridge into the new landfill. It is being done secretly and both the Minister and the Government should let the people of Barbados know that the people in St. Andrew are in danger of being cut off, because, they send the heavy trucks over that bridge and when it breaks, then people cannot get to them and only God knows what is going to follow.

They have started using the landfill in St. Andrew without it having been commissioned because they have run out of land space in Mangrove. I believe the Government has a responsibility to speak to that, and, I wish to hear the Minister on that especially since she represents St. Andrew. It is a very dangerous thing that has been happening. I do not know why they would think that we would not know about it or hear about it. The people in St. Andrew telephone us as well and they are complaining about it. I am surprised that the Minister responsible for transportation would have allowed that to pass without merely a word. I expect to hear from him when he gets up.

Finally, the Prime Minister flittered in and slipped back out, but I wanted to ask him about the Transport Board. It was the Prime Minister who gave the instruction that the workshop should be closed down. That is my information. The Prime Minister in his capacity of Minister of Finance and Prime Minister gave instructions that the workshop should be closed down.

There have been all kinds of dipsy doodling and the Trade Union has been trying to give all kinds of statements and the Transport Board is doing all kinds of tatty tooes, but the fact is that it is the Government. They sent one of their emissaries down to see that it was properly done, the closing down of the workshop of the Transport Board was not a decision by the Board, it was a decision of the Cabinet of Barbados and if you wish to read from the Cabinet Paper I shall be happy to do so.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You wish me now to break the rules. I would like to know in that respect if the Minister is aware, having myself been a victim of vicious utterances concerning contracts, if David Shorey's contract for $200 000 to do a study of the Transport Board was the result of a bidding situation that had gone out to tender. I wish the Minister to get up in here and tell us when the Transport Board gave $200 000 to David Shorey for the study whether it went out to tender, how many tenders were received, what was the status of the tender and what was the result.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have a few more questions for the Transport Board but my time is running out.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Honourable Member for introducing the point about the Courts and the Registry. But first, Sir, let me congratulate the Minister on Transport and Works and Housing for the work that he has put in over the last two and a half years and more particularly, his two Ministries.

I have, certainly to one of the PSs conveyed my personal pleasure at the efficiency and the speed, productivity and the service, being provided at the level of both divisions. The amount of work that was

churned out by those two divisions, Sir, is quite fantastic. I do not know how they are able to do it. They are obviously very well organised, but I think that the public of Barbados should be grateful.

The public in Barbados in general does not know and do not appreciate what is involved in getting projects started, getting acquisitions done and so on. I think that on occasions like these we ought to inform the public by paying requisite tribute to those public officers in those two divisions who obviously laboured very hard and long to ensure a constant flow of work and we see the results in here, Sir.

I must compliment the Minister for the way his Ministries have been functioning, Sir, and for the high productivity.

Having said that, Sir, I will remind MTW that two years ago they did do some work in Highland Tenantry but they stopped short. They ran out of funds, Sir. I think it is agreed that another $100,000 is needed to complete the work. It was regrettable that they did start the work in the area where the people live and where there are quite a number of houses, but they chose to pave that part of Highland Tenantry where there are few houses. I hope that in the coming financial year they will remedy that deficiency in the work, Sir.

Earlier today, Sir, some complaint was made not very strenuous, but a complaint nevertheless, that there seems to be a thrust of work in rural Barbados and I think it should be so. I make no apologies for that.

Rural Barbados has been for too long been neglected. One of the reasons for the establishment of the Rural Development Commission was to ensure that necessary works were done more efficiently and more speedily to bring relief to rural Barbados.

Everybody forgets that in 1988-89 with a view to the pending elections that was announced in December 1990, virtually all of the roads in St. Michael were paved and rehabilitated by the then Minister of Transport and Works. 6.15 p.m.

Everybody forgets that and people in rural Barbados have had to see that disparity in the distribution of resources and live with it. I think it is but time for the balance to be redressed.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You forget all up in St. Michael East? He could never ask for a road. All up there was beautiful, barber green.

Aside.

Mr, J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member accused me, Sir, of not being able to ask for a road in St. Michael East. Two years ago the new Minister of Public Works sent and asked all Members of Parliament to identify the roads in their constituencies and I identified seven roads in St. Michael East.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Minister is now saying from his seat that he deliberately denied my constituents having access to new roads. The Member is misleading the House because I received the request from the Minister. I submitted the names of all the roads in St. Michael East. I can name them in St. Barnabas, Blenheim, Haggatt Hall.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I do not think the Government has any apologies to make for any emphasis being placed on rural Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West made a very important point about the position at the Registry and the Courts. All year I have been speaking about what has been happening, but just to bring members up-to-date. The three Magistrates[1] Courts in District "A" are being refurbished. The more you do the more you find has to be done.

Yesterday before coming to the House I went into District "A", for example. The Criminal Court and the Domestic Court, the two of them are refurbished. We are only waiting for TMR to install the lighting. It does not seem that in the public sector we can get the kind of coordination of trades one would see were that a private contract. The work started in February deliberately because the contract for the builder's works was awarded and over the Christmas period there was a delay. It was agreed that the electrical works and the builder's works would proceed together.

The builder has finished two courts and painted them. The day before yesterday he was able to show me where one of the electrical contractors had come back and had him cut out the wall to connect to the airconditioning units. So he had to plaster and he has to paint again. That is not coordinated planning.

More disastrously was when we went into Magistrate Greaves' Court. On the four walls there are large wooden beams which underpin the roof. Those beams are as strong as this paper. They are completely worm eaten, termite ridden. We have to take down the whole roof of

Magistrate Greaves' Court and put in new beams and replace them. That is going to delay the works by another $2V_2$ to 3 weeks. Most of District "A" is finished. Two courts out of three are finished.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We just have to do it now.

Now, over in the Registry, we plan this year to install the airconditioning. The plans were drawn since last year. We had hoped to start last year. It was not possible but I see the Government Electrical Engineering Department represented around the precincts today. I want them clearly to understand.

The Registry is closed as from today. This is for the lawyers in the House too. The Registry will move as from next week temporarily in the first instance for six months to a building on Roebuck Street just west of the Nation Complex there. It is a newish building. It has no name or number but I do not think you can miss it. It is almost next door to the Ecaf building.

Cabinet agreed today by round robin that we would move out the Ministry and put them in that building temporarily. You know why? We have wanted to not only computerize and aircondition the Registry, but we have to create a little more space for the Registry even though in the Estimates there is money for us to go full steam ahead with a new Supreme Court Complex at the old Central Foundry building if Cabinet agrees.

A recommendation is going to be made for acquisition of the old Central Foundry building and the construction of the new Supreme Court there. Even pending that, we have to find space for the cabinets at the Registry. Honourable Members who practise will know that on top of cabinets you have files which are not good for security or confidentiality so we have to create a little more space at the Registry, even though we have to move in due course.

Now, in the six months we are going to be away from Coleridge Street, apart from putting in the cabling for computerization and, hopefully, getting the computers installed and airconditioning, we will take the opportunity to completely renovate and refurbish inside the Registry.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, the Supreme Court is again completely overrun by termites. We have to close that next week. The Court of Appeal Courts Nos. 2, 5, 6 and 7 will be closed from Monday.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I think we have the pigeons under control.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You just have under one minute.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I am only replying to the concerns. This is a matter of public importance.

I am dealing with Government Buildings Subprogramme. Courts Nos. 3 and 4 over by themselves will remain open next week in the hope that they can be used. The problem is that starting this evening the termite people are going in to inject the chemical into the walls. The holes have been punched already.

Now it is possible that even though they are doing no work on No. 3 and No. 4, there can be infiltration and contamination of the air quality in No. 3 and No. 4. If they are in that state on Monday next week, we will not be able to do it but we intend to close completely, have injection of the chemicals by Monday, open the buildings as much as possible, the next weekend turn on the airconditions to pull out any foul air and contaminated air with a hope that the whole place will be ready for re-use on the Tuesday after Easter.

I have spoken to the Press today and the radio stations to let the public and members of the profession know that the Chief Justice has approved this temporary situation in the hope that shortly conditions will improve. The problem is that we are dealing with buildings perhaps 60 or 100 years old and we are coming across more and more problems all the time.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

6.25 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise in this debate to speak and to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Transport & Works for bringing to a state of readiness the Urban Development Programme in this country. Sir, you will notice that the Estimates this year has in a figure of $5 million for an Urban Development Commission. I believe the legislation, without anticipation, Sir, will shortly be before this Honourable Chamber.

The important point is this, Sir. For years in our development we have sought to provide assistance to persons on a piecemeal basis. If they need housing, you just go in and deal with housing. If there is a drainage problem, you go in and deal with drainage without reference to the fact that there may not be appropriate roads or paths for people to get out of their houses.

One of the main objectives of the Urban Renewal Programme is to be able to treat the difficulties being experienced by persons living in St. Michael in a holistic manner. In other words, we seek to go into communities and raise the quality of life of those persons living in the communities by addressing problem in terms of the physical infrastructure whether it be in relations to roads, footpaths, drains, sewerage, conversion of pit toilets to water borne toilets or whether it is in relation to providing funds for lending for home improvements.

In the case of pensioners and indigent persons, grants for the conversion of the pit toilet to water borne toilets and indeed home improvements in relation to those pensioners who would not be able otherwise to afford to fix their houses.

Equally so, Sir, we also believe that it is necessary for the establishment of an Urban Education Fund which will provide financing for persons who would not otherwise in most instances be able to walk into a bank in Broad Street with ease and get funds for any sort of projects, whether community related or projects in relation to some form of small business or cottage industry. When we take all of these together, Sir, we add what perhaps is the most significant move in relation to our treatment of tenantries.

I believe, that much of urban Barbados which did not benefit from the subsidised rate given under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, 1980, where the listed tenantries under that Act, mainly plantations tenantries where able to purchase at ten cents per square foot that they too, in many instances, need the opportunity to be able to benefit in terms of giving them an environment within which they can improve their circumstances, improve their physical condition and improve their economic opportunity.

We believe, Sir, that rather than many of these persons being forced to pay $5 or $6 per square foot, we have seen almost every week in the *Nation* and *Advocate* newspapers, tenantries, whether it be Alleyne Land, Bush Hall or Strakers Tenantry in Black Rock whatever, across St. Michael, persons being asked to pay prices that we believe bear no relationship really to what in the first instance has normally been put in by Government in relation to services. Sir, in any event, the law already provides that in reaching the fair market value the land owner cannot take those services into account, but that the subsidy which has been received in the instance of the plantation tenantries and that while we cannot set the price at ten cents per square foot that there should be an element of subsidy available to people living in St. Michael. So that what cash they have they may be able to better distribute not only for the purchase of the land but indeed to the improvement of their own housing condition. This has been combined with a view that the land owner should also be subsidised where the price is lower than the fair market value.

I believe the Honourable Minister of Housing has spoken on this matter already and the price that we believe to be a fair price is somewhere in the region of $2.50. Where the fair market value is in excess of $2.50 then we believe that the land owner should be subsidised to that extent so that the land owner is not out of pocket. But you have considerably assisted persons living in urban Barbados towards the realization of being able to purchase that land and in many instances to use what savings they have or what money they have to borrow directly towards either construction or home improvement.

Sir, this is a substantial piece of social engineering by the Government and I want to publicly congratulate the Honourable Minister of Housing because it gives those thousands of people living in St. Michael the opportunity to be able to purchase land at prices that are affordable. We have done a survey and I believe the Honourable Minister will be producing his Green Paper on Housing very shortly. But what is significant is that this is not a policy that has jumped up overnight nor was it in response to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, but we have been having discussions in relation to this policy for over two years now. I have been meeting with the Honourable Minister of Housing and his planner in the Civil Service and the Ministry of Housing and they have done extensive research throughout St. Michael.

I want to use this opportunity to respond to the suggestion made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Because his suggestion in terms of incorporating the derelict properties into the housing stock, particularly in St. Michael is one that has already been taken on board by this Government and one that we believe will substantially increase the available housing stock, because the survey showed, that there was in excess of 1,000 derelict houses in St. Michael alone.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Ministry of Housing would have been familiar with the voice because it was not spoken only today it was continuously being spoken and I actually sat down as Minister of Health and wrote to a Minister of Housing, so it would have been on the file.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am glad, Sir, that the Honourable Member recognises the wisdom of such a policy and I am equally more happy to report that this Honourable Minister of Housing unlike the previous one, to which he had written, also recognises the wisdom of the policy and has gone towards the stage of implementing that policy.

We cannot in urban Barbados where land is so scarce, afford to ignore properties that are derelict that become public nuisances, either in terms of the health problems that they attract, because of rats and other vermin or in terms of, very often, being used for illegal activity in existing communities. These must be brought on board in relation to the existing housing stock and to enhance the capacity of the National Housing Corporation to meet the thousands of people in this country who want houses in St. Michael and who do not want to move out of St. Michael, that is the significant point, who do not want to move out of St. Michael, to be able to have access to housing. We must use that available housing stock.

In relation to the tenantries, as I said Sir, I believe that once we have a strong public communication programme that eventually I would like to see the day in St_4 Michael, within the next 10 years where every person living in a tenantry owns their land and in addition to owning their land, are in a position to be able to substantially improve the housing that they are in on that land. Because the land is now theirs and there are considerable improvements that they can make because of now having the title to the land. That is what this policy is about. That is what urban renewal is essentially about.

I do not believe, Sir, that there is any Honourable Member in this Chamber who would seek, particularly as it is part of the poverty alleviation programme, who would seek not to wish this programme well in its implementation. Because it is not a matter of where you live but anybody who lives in St. Michael and who is subject to these condition must have their situation redressed and must be given the opportunity to be able to provide for themselves.

It is only then, Sir, that the State is ultimately going to be able to reduce its commitments in relation to providing welfare for many of these people.

One of the staggering statistics that came out of the work of the housing official, Sir, is the number of persons who are unemployed or who are below minimum wage living in St. Michael. When you realise that, you realise that to tell them to come and buy land at $5 and $6 a square foot means absolutely nothing because they cannot afford to do so, when many of them are working for less that $12,000 a year. So how are they going to afford to purchase land at $5 or to even borrow the money and then turn around and fix the house? So any policy which seeks, as this one does, to set a price at $2.50 a square foot, for which the person living on the land wants to come under the conditions of the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act in terms of being a qualified tenant, will be able to purchase - and then you subsidize the landowner to the extent of the difference between the $2.50 and the fair market value - discounts the money that Government would have spent in services in reaching that fair market value. You have ensured that the land owner is satisfied as well as the person on the land. 6.35 p.m.

I believe that if there is one difference between this and 1980 it is the commitment to ensure that the landowner also receives an element of the subsidy to the extent of the fair market value. Because we recognise that in St. Michael, unlike many of the plantation tenantries, we are dealing with a lot of persons who may not have vast means and vast finances, but who may have had land passed down to them, seed to seed, and who may just have had seven or eight or ten lots and out of the kindness of their hearts allowed people to be on these lots. They therefore should not be disenfranchised as a result of an interest to assist the persons. It is different from 1980 in that regard.

I want to applaud the Honourable Minister of Housing for recognising the need for that critical difference because the standing of these persons is not the same as the standing of the plantation owners who would have been affected in 1980.

In addition, Sir, the urban enterprises fund is also going to be critical. Like the rural enterprises fund it is going to be dedicated towards providing a vehicle where persons can seek to become self-employed and self-sufficient in relation to projects. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition in the second reading speeches spoke as to the need for this Government to give persons in communities opportunities to be able to benefit from tax conbessions. But he stopped short at the point of financing in that speech. We are saying that this fund provides an opportunity for access to financing in a way that they cannot now go into a bank in Broad Street without being asked a million questions and without being able to seek for collateral, which in many instances they find impossible to do. So in the same way that they will find it impossible to be able to communicate the idea in a manner that may be acceptable to a Broad Street Bank, we will have officers who will help them formulate the proposal, and who will allow them to be able to see how they can have access to these funds.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. I look forward therefore to the successful implementation. A lot of these things, Sir, Government already provides in separate agencies. The point is that we go in, we provide it and we come out. We do not seek to see how we can improve the quality of life and the expectations and aspirations of people living in urban Barbados.

The whole idea of a urban renewal programme is to facilitate delivery of services in a cohesive manner and to seek to be able to go into a community and change the physical infrastructure, ensure that it is of a certain standard and seek to change people's aspirations by giving them opportunities that they would not otherwise have. As I said, it is sensitive to those who are pensioners and who are indigent in that they will make grants to many in those instances but those who are working must borrow like anybody else.

I therefore look forward, Sir, to the implementation of this programme. The pilot, Sir, which is in Alleyne's Land in Bush Hall and Perfection Road and Review Road, has started, Sir, and I know from my own experience that the constituents in this area are extremely happy. I have been working with them since 1992, particularly as it relates to the question of the house price, the price of the land, where they have all received notices to pay $5.00 per square foot although Government had put in the roads, the drains, the electricity, the water and in some instances the proper drainage and it would have been unfair for them to have paid $5.00 a square foot out of their pocket. Fortunately, because I worked with them from the very start only 3 out of 237 people have purchased at $5.00 and the others now will be able to benefit at a substantially reduced rate.

I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West supports this policy. In fact he even said it was his. But as I said, this has been discussed so much so for the last 2 years that he probably heard about it when he was at the University, since the Ministry of Bousing used many university students to conduct the socio-economic surveys of every household in the target area on a random basis throughout all of St. Michael. This is something that has to be treated in a way on all sides of this Parliament as our effort to change the landscape of St. Michael and greater Bridgetown as we move into the twenty-first century. I look forward to the support of all Honourable Members for the Honourable Minister of Housing in this regard. Thank you, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to respond to a few points which have been made by Honourable Members. I would like to mention three other amendments which I did not include in my presentation to the proposed amendments to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. These are based on certain problems encountered by tenants in the survey which we did when we were dealing with the urban renewal programme.

The unit within the Ministry did encounter concerns by persons who presently have businesses in the tenantries. Persons in the tenantries are excluded from the provisions of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act if they own a business and the intention of the amendments to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, is to ensure that if a person has a shop in a tenantry, that person will be a qualified tenant notwithstanding the fact that he might have a residence elsewhere.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, the Act did specify a process under Part n whereby a person who has been refused a conveyance by the landlord might make application to the Registrar. But it did not go far enough and there is a question of interpretation as to whether or not the Registrar can proceed and issue a conveyance. In order to avoid any doubt it is hoped that this proposed amendment to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act will be able to allow the Registrar to convey.

In the survey we also encountered persons who lived in tenantries, old age pensioners and persons who because of physical and mental incapacity were unable to maintain themselves. These persons were being looked after by other persons. And we have had cases of situations where those old people died or where those persons who were handicapped died and even though it was very well known that there were persons who were looking after them, they were not even allowed by the landlord to occupy the houses. As a matter of fact, we have had situations where such persons were put out like the day after the old age pensioner or the handicapped person died.

We feel that this is wrong and we feel that the definition of qualified tenant should also include persons who have looked after old age pensioners and handicapped people even though these persons are not related as in the case of a daughter, a son, a parent or a guardian who enjoys the benefit of the provisions in the Act. It is hoped that very shortly we would be able to have this Bill before Parliament with the concurrence of the Opposition.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central did raise the difficulty of tampering with the constitution in relationship to a proposed statutory price of $2.50 per square foot. 6.45 p.m.

I think the concerns he did mention would only be relevant if we were intending to deprive someone of rights which they already have under the Constitution. But, we are not seeking to take away any rights from anyone. All we are seeking to do is to allow the tenants to purchase at a statutory price, but the landlord himself would be entitled to any difference which would be paid by Government.

There were also other problems created by the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act which this amendment will alleviate as well. When the last administration did the amendment, whatever merits there were in the amendment, I am not quarrelling too much with the

amendment but there was a category of tenant within a tenantry as defined by the Act before it was amended, a situation where there were more than two and less than five tenants.

Though these persons were given the benefit of the amendment, they were protected in that the landlord could not move them off the land, but they were placed in a no-win situation, in that the tenant could not be a qualified tenant in the same sense that other tenants were qualified tenants in that he could not purchase. He had no right to express an option to purchase. I mean those people.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: He could not be moved. His status was different from the other tenants who were given a certain period of time and at the same time, the landlord could not exercise his right to sell under the Act. I notice from my seat that the Honourable Member from St. Philip South is speaking to the issue and it shows the question of the problem relating to the interpretation of the particular piece of legislation and it is hoped that we will solve this interpretation problem with that particular amendment.

Following up from what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said with respect to the Urban Renewal Programme, our survey showed that there were some hundred acres of abandoned and ruined structures within the St. Michael area. It is hoped, as she rightfully said, that we would be able to acquire all of these properties. We obviously cannot do that over a short period of time. It is more or less a ten-year plan. Over a period of time we will give the tenant the right to purchase. We will improve those houses which need fixing. We will make loans available to the occupiers and the tenants of the houses.

Also, we hope in dealing with security of tenure to include legislation whereby tenants will not be at the mercy of landlords who fail to keep their houses fit for human habitation.

There are situations in the urban area where the landlords only show up at the end of the week. There are cases whereby houses without proper windows and floors, and yet the landlords are there at the end of the week for the rent. We want to put a stop to all of this and we hope that the existing Landlord and Tenant Act will be amended or there will be new rent restriction Acts in order to deal with situations like this to ensure that houses will be fit for human habitation.

Mr. Chairman, I did not get the opportunity to touch on Public Works and someone is asking from his seat to say something about the Building Code.

The Building Code is one which we have actually discussed in the Ministry. We have had a number of discussions with all the professions engaged in the building industry. We have also had discussions with building authorities in England, but it will be some time before we could actually come up with a formula. Obviously, it would impact on what we do with the Town and Country Planning Department and then it would be a question as to whether or not the authority or the Department administering the Building Code ...

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

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: ... whether it would be the Town Planning Department or whether or not it would be within the Ministry of Housing. But, we are hopeful that come 1998 we would be able to implement the Building Code and I am, however, happy to say that most of the houses that are being built at the moment, I said, "most" are being constructed with the Building Code in mind.

Mr. Chairman, I did not get the opportunity to deal with other matters pertaining to my Ministry, the Transport Board, the Water Authority and the Drainage Unit. Time would not permit me to deal with all of these matters, but I would just say briefly, with respect to the Transport Board that we have had some problems pertaining to the aging fleet.

We came in and we found an aging fleet, and it is obvious that we could not have gone as policy makers and give instructions as have been done in the past to purchase buses, without knowing exactly what we wanted.

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

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: By now it is on record that we did commission a study on the Transport Board and included in that study was the requirement to purchase a number of buses. We have obtained a loan as you well know, of $30 million and it is hoped that over the next five years we will be able to increase the stock by 110 buses.

With respect to the Bridgetown Road Project, it is hoped that we will be able to start up the Bridgetown Road Project in this administrative year. Someone had inquired as to the increase of $14 million for road construction.

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

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: This would involve, Mr. Chairman, the disruption to a number of roads in the Bridgetown area. It is hoped that we will be

able to have meetings with the Parliamentary Representatives and the constituents in the various areas, so that we would be able to alleviate any problems of dislocation and disruption at the time of construction.

There will be serious disruption and very shortly officials from the Ministry will be meeting with residents and the Government Information Service in order to let the residents know what will be involved.

I thank you.

The question that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 18 - AUDIT - $417 891

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

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 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (AS AMENDED) - $66 694 247

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, 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 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (AS AMENDED) - $38 447 375

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 28 - THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - $5 916 201

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 29 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS - $156 992

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

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

The question that Head 29 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 6.55 p.m.

HEAD 30 - (AS AMENDED) ATTORNEY GENERAL - $41 134 381

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 30, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 30 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 34 - (AS AMENDED) MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS & CULTURE - $185 299 703

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 34, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

Hon. 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 36 - (AS AMENDED) MINISTRY OF HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT - $207 198 490

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 36, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 36 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 39 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS - $49 713 171

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 39 stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 39 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 40 - MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - $13 242 026

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 40 stand part of the Bill.

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 - (AS AMENDED) MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE & BUSINESS - $5 708 019

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 41, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 41 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 50 - (AS AMENDED) POST OFFICE - $7 675 265

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 50, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 50 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL (AS AMENDED) - $1 165 703

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to recommit Head 10.

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

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 10, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 16 - (AS AMENDED) MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE - $5 513 111

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to recommit Head 16.

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

The question that Head 16 be recommitted was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 16, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

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

The question that Head 16, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $13 270 200 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF GOVERNMENT AS SHOWN IN SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1996-97, NO. 13

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, in 1995 when the Barbados Development Bank ceased operation it did so including among its sundry liabilities an amount of $22 410 000 in National Development Bonds. The House will recall that in financial year 1995/96 the Government provided an amount to clear, I believe, about $12 million in those Development Bonds as they fell due. The object of the exercise before Parliament today is for us to provide for the total redemption of the 8th and 9th issues of National Development Bonds that constitute part of the liability of the Barbados Development Bank.

Mr. Chairman, I just want in dealing with this matter to say that as was the case in our having to deal with, and the Honourable Member for St. John will appreciate the point I am making, the debt of the sugar industry, we are trying to create opportunity out of crisis.

I want to use this opportunity to tell the House, Sir, that the Barbados Development Bank has been closed. It was closed because it was operating as a bankrupt institution, holding an accumulated deficit, when it was closed, of over $76 million but with capital of only $50 million. We are seeking to create opportunity out of the crisis the bank would otherwise have presented to the society.

Subsequent upon the closure of the Bank, Sir, the Government has decided to create three new institutions, one called the CRL, Cost Recovery Liquidation Limited, which is now managing temporarily the sound portfolio of the Bank, together with the unsalvageable portfolio.

We have also decided that rather than put the small hoteliers on the auction block as somebody wished -1 will come back to that, Sir - we have decided to create a company to refurbish them and to create a new hotel brand in Barbados called "Gems of Barbados."

We have also decided, Mr. Chairman, to create a new Development Finance Institution. A large part of the problem with the old Development Bank was that it was only involved in loan financing. The field of development financing is quite separate from loan financing. There is tremendous scope for us to approach the matter of development of businesses in this country by finding means other than loan financing to assist businesses with start-up capital and to assist them with capital needed for expansion.

This matter has been the subject of a study. I have given the Leader of the Opposition the study. Subsequent upon the closure of the Barbados Development Bank, the Government took a decision that any new institution to deal with development financing should not be an institution that is only involved with loan financing, an institution that was a public sector institution, but it would have to be a development finance institution to meet the needs, if the need existed, for equity financing to be specialised in dealing with the needs of micro enterprises and to be an institution that would be sufficiently broad-based to be of interest to the private sector.

We had a comprehensive study done of this to assess the demand for it by Peat Marwick and a company called A.R. Consulting Group. They have, in fact, established that there is a market for development finance, that the niche that has historically been filled by the BDB, the National Development Foundation, WID and others cannot be filled by the commercial banking system. 7.05 p.m.

The Government has accepted recommendation that we should proceed with the creation of a new development finance institution and that we will commit the performing portfolio of the old BDB into this new development finance institution. Insurance companies and other financial institutions who will make equity financing available should also be allowed to participate in this institution. It will have a special focus of providing facilities for micro enterprises.

At present, Mr. Chairman, a consultancy is being drawn up for us to settle on the legal, institutional and the fiscal concessions to be applied to this development finance institution.

It is anticipated that the consultancy will be completed by June and that before the end of the year, that we can have in this country a new development finance institution to cater, not just to loan financing but to a broad range of development finance for the non-traditional and disadvantaged sectors of the society.

Sir, I have gone to the extent of making this disclosure and also to say that before we establish this institution, I propose to bring the matter to the House as I know that Honourable Members of the House are keenly interested in the nature of any institution which is to replace the Barbados Development Bank and to fill that important niche in our society that cannot now be filled by the commercial banking system. I have to report to Parliament that the matter is now engaging consultancy. We will be creating not a new development bank, interested only in providing loan financing, but an institution that can provide equity and venture capital, technical assistance, specialised in the needs of the small business, in particular micro enterprise and that the old performing sound portfolio of the B.D.B. will be committed to the new institution as part of the Government's equity. The Government will largely be a facilitator. We are looking for a substantial private sector involvement in it and it is therefore very important that we take the time to make sure that the new institution that we will create will start out as a sound institution, broadly based and offering attractive services and capable of meeting the need of the non-traditional sectors of the society.

Now, Sir, there has been complaints from time to time about what appears to be our slowness in this matter. But we ought to learn from the mistakes of the old B.D.B., that loan financing is not just the answer, first of all but also to encourage people to believe that they can only relate to the state institutions to the development of finance is not the answer in Barbados either.

I trust that the Opposition will study the report that is in its hand, and as I said, before we proceed to create the new development finance institution we will have, I hope, a full debate on it in this House. I am hopeful that before the end of the year those persons who are now falling between the cracks and who cannot get their needs met by the traditional banking sector will have a new development financial institution to cater to their needs.

Mr. Chairman, recent events have fortified me in my view, that we have taken a very correct decision in not putting the small hoteliers that were in debt to the B.D.B. on the block and auctioning them off to the highest bidder as some would have wished. They were some who felt that that was the way to go. Take them and auction

them off! We took a decision that the Government would try to rehabilitate them, encourage the former owners who owed money to the banks, to see the capital and equity as something they could invest in a new company. We have committed $10 million to the refurbishment of the institution. We now have a situation, Sir, where hotels that were not in debt to the B.D.B. are interested in participating in the new project called "The Gems of Barbados" and we have given a value to their property. But there are some owners who do not like the valuation and do not want to be part of the enterprise. We have given the option to the existing owners to re-purchase, if they want to re-purchase as some would wish. They are enterprises outside of Barbados which want to be able to operate under "The Gems of Barbados" under franchise by paying us a royalty. What is happening in Barbados is in fact quite similar to what is just recently happening in the Bahamas where about 15 small hotels have come together to have themselves marketed, managed, and have common reservation systems under a brand called "Small Treasure". And this is the way forward for small hotels that were badly capitalised and lack the type of critical mass to be able to support the marketing, reservation and advertising systems that are so very much a part of the functioning of the large hotel systems.

All of the legal issues surrounding the existence of "Gems of Barbados[11] have now been resolved. We anticipate that refurbishing will begin in one month's time and the anticipation is that we will be able, through this endeavour, to retain those hotel properties in Barbadian hands, refurbish them, upgrade them, provide them with common management, upgraded management, marketing and reservation systems and bring them into a modern form of hotel development and secure for ourselves at least a thousand refurbished, upgraded beds as part of the general effort of making sure that the south coast facilities bear a relationship to what Barbados really should be putting on the market.

They have been some issues, Mr. Chairman, regarding the functioning of the third entity, the collection, recovery and liquidation entity. We have been as liberal as we can be in dealing with most of the enterprises which owe the B.D.B. where the loans are regarded as unsalvageable and have in many instances forestalled on having the business put into receivership.

I want to say this, Mr. Chairman, there are some businessmen in Barbados who believe that the general climate sometimes allow us to pander excessively to so-called small businessmen to allow them to get away with murder in this country.

There is one outstanding case that ought to be the subject of a study where a person acquired two hotel properties by way of loans amounting to more than $4 million from the B.D.B. and has not paid back a penny either in principal or interest but would want to hold on to the property and would do so by merely saying that he is a small black man. Then we have a situation, where, somebody would say that they would like to take over the properties and they have $60 million to invest and we are expected to write off all of the debt to the B.D.B. and not dip into the $60 million pool that he says that he has lined up. That is a scandalous attitude that would have people come to own property by way of loans from a Government institution but the rest of society pay for his acquisition of the property.

Mercifully, Mr. Chairman, that is not the standard case but it is the extreme case. There are a number of other instances where people have received loans from the B.D.B., refused to pay back the B.D.B., gone and acquire other property, and the Bank has been instructed that in instances like that they have to take a tough position. We are in every instance trying to facilitate those who are willing to repay. 7.15 p.m.

There are some instances where persons who owe the BDB have managed to put in place refinancing arrangements with the commercial banks to be able to take their properties off the books of the BDB and we are facilitating that.

There are some loans that were regarded as non performing loans that we are now treating as performing loans because the owners of the enterprises have put in place arrangements that have satisfied the Bank that they can become current. There is an element of flexibility, Sir, being exercised by the management of the Bank in all of its various endeavours.

We have put in place a special regime for the treatment of the boat owners because as you know, Mr. Chairman, many of the persons in Barbados who today own iceboats and so on do so through the instrumentality of loans from the BDB. Sir, I just want to give the House the assurance that there is a sensitivity being observed by the Government in treating the way in which the company responsible for collection, recovery and liquidation is going about its business and in many instances, Sir, my task as Minister of Finance has often involved me in having to seek to intervene to make sure that the bank give people a chance where it is demonstrated that given a chance they would be able to convert non performing loans into a performing portfolio.

That is the spirit, Sir, that is consistent with my 1995 budgetary provisions where I put in place a very generous regime to allow enterprises that were in

arrears to government revenue collection agencies a grace period to convert those arrears into long-term loans subject to our grace period of at least 3 years, Sir.

Sir, I am satisfied that as was the case with the crisis faced with the financing of the sugar industry that out of crisis will come opportunity. I am satisfied, Sir, that we will be able to resurrect from the ashes of the former BDB two strong institutions which will become a credit to this country - a "Gems of Barbados" hotel facility that will be perhaps one of the largest hotel properties in Barbados offering new, upgraded, attractive facilities, a credit to the country and a new development financial institution which would fill a very important niche in the market for development financing in this country.

I therefore, Sir, against that background wish to respectfully move that the $12 057 000 of this supplementary, stand part but the supplementary also covers other things that other Members may want to speak to and I will give other Members the opportunity to speak to it.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 19 stand part.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, my contribution is coming in the form of questions and clarification. On page 8 of the Estimates, under financing, I was able to detect $86 million in domestic financing under, Other, and I could not get it resolved although I knew that some part of it would have been ....

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Given the indebtedness to the BDB I was able to guess that part of it would have been for the BDB, but I could not understand or I did not have a feel for the magnitude and given that the indebtedness with the BDB is much higher than $12 million I was wondering why the allocation was as high as it is for 1996-97. In fact previous reports ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I am giving the Honourable Member a little latitude but as far as the order of the House is concerned if you are going to reconsider the matter under the original Estimates I do not think that is allowed but we are now looking at the supplementary. If you want that information to use for this ...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I know. What I am saying is that we are now looking at this supplementary which is a different matter altogether.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the law requires that I have to present to the House a financial statement and in that financial statement would be a full statement of how this year, ending March 31, government operations were fully financed. I give the Honourable Member the assurance that on that occasion when I present a financial statement I will advert to the full details of the particular matter.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Okay, I can respect all of that but the thing about it is that the amount that is now being sought by the BDB, how was it determined? How do we come to $13 million?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I said, Sir, at the outset that when the BDB was closed in December 1995 among its sundry liabilities were $22 million in the form of national development bonds. Last year the House will recall that we redeemed the sixth and the seventh issue amounting to about $10 million. We are coming this year to clear the balance of national development bonds. The Bank has other liabilities, Sir, that it has to meet but we are here dealing only with the national development bonds part of its liabilities. When this part of the exercise is finished we would have cleared from the books of the Bank its liabilities of national development bonds but there are other liabilities that have still to be addressed, Sir, and that is the point I want to make. I should point out as well that the CRL is managing the portfolio of the bank. The performing loans the owners are meeting principal and interest. We have had to liquidate some of the non-performing from the revenues. We hope to be able from the revenues collection, recovery and liquidation company to be able to help work down some of the liabilities but what cannot be met from the disposal of the assets will have to be met obviously from the coffers of the state.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, this supplementary Estimates No. 13 in the amount of $13 197 200 includes an amount of some $985 000 under Head 36, the Ministry of Health and the Environment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with Head 19. We have not got to Head 36 yet.

The question that Head 19 do stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 7.25 p.m.

HEAD 35 - TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT - $165 000

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is in respect of a property for the Deputy High

Commissioner at London. As I have made known to the House quite a while back, October of 1994 when the Government first looked at the residence at Number 58 Downing Road, where the Deputy High Commissioner for Barbados at the United Kingdom lived, it was found to be in a state not suitable for human habitation.

It was also found that there were serious structural cracks and we had it assessed. The Deputy High Commissioner was put to live in an apartment.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, no. In an apartment, which was very costly to the Government, until I found an attic at the Chancery at No. 1 Great Russell Street, at the cost of $14 000.

At the cost of $14 000 it was put in a condition in which the Deputy High Commissioner and his wife were prepared to live. We found pieces of furniture in the basement of No. 1 Great Russell Street, including a bed and we were able to piece together a livable apartment for them.

I have to say that this country must be indebted to the Deputy High Commissioner, who, not only has lived in really the most uncomfortable circumstances but that he was still able to make it possible to entertain on behalf of the Government. When we had last November in London, the meeting with all of the Honorary Consuls, it is just amazing to me that in a kitchen no bigger than the Clerk's table, that the wife of the Deputy High Commissioner was able to feed all of the Honorary Consuls who came from over Europe to meet and do a day's work there and to give us tea, and a drink after tea as well. I have to say that this is way beyond the call of duty. It cannot continue.

We have been searching. We had 70 prospects. Twenty properties were viewed. On my way to the ITT in Berlin two weeks ago, I was shown a property which all at London felt was .suitable and indeed I concurred in that. It really is very suitable. We had set our criteria you know on three to four bedrooms, not too much grounds to have to upkeep. In fact, there are hardly any grounds to upkeep. But, it is a suitable house at Brandsbury Park in a quite nice section of North West London. It is entirely in move-in condition and when we displayed an interest in it the owners took it off the market until we had made up our minds. They are saying that we now really must at least pay a deposit, if not they are going to put it back on the market. This goes to the deposit.

The price is, I am speaking off the top of my head now, 467 000 pounds. They are asking for a deposit of 46 000 pounds.

When we sold Downing Road we realised 190 000 pounds which I think was really not bad, considering the condition of it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Whose standard of living?

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We are fortunate that the Deputy High Commissioner would agree to live in a little apartment in the attic of the office. That is not the point. That is not the point. The point is that you have to have a house that is suitable for whoever the Deputy High Commissioner is, and I have to say too, as I have said before, the Deputy High Commissioner is a person who does in truth and in fact entertain on behalf of the Government. It is he who interfaces a great deal with Barbadian nationals.

This is a house, as I said, at Brandsbury Park on Christ Church Avenue and the Cabinet has agreed that we should go ahead and make this purchase. The timing is right for the purchase as well because the market is a little jittery now on account of the anticipated change of Government in the United Kingdom. So, I do not think that we could do better in all of the circumstances and I recommend it to the House.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 35 stand part.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am just amazed that the Minister came in here to speak off the top of her head while we are going to be spending 467 000 pounds. That bother me. Off the top of her head, easy so, just after the Estimates, 467 000 pounds and tells me she is talking off the top of her head and she is not too sure.

Look, Mr. Chairman, this Minister takes this thing too casually. First of all she came in here...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. I will not be subjected to any claims that I am incompetent to this matter. I remember these details because I presented this to the Cabinet, yesterday, and I do not now have the file on me. I do not think my memory is too bad.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: So, let us postpone it until you have the files. Do not come in here and tell me you presented it to the Cabinet. I am not in the Cabinet. None of the Honourable Members over here are in the Cabinet. You cannot be asking for 467 000 pounds, 1.3 million dollars and telling me that you do not have the Cabinet Papers, you presented it to the Cabinet yesterday. I am nothing to do with when you presented it to the Cabinet. You are presenting it to the House today and you should have your officials down here. I am down here. They should be in here. You knew you were bringing a supplementary in here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, would you please address the issue, I think you have gone a little wide with the issue. Please address the issue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The issue is that she comes for 467 000 pounds.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, you are telling me that if you make a commitment for a down payment of 165 000 dollars for something that cost 1.3 million dollars that I cannot speak to the 1.3 million dollars. Is that what you are saying, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Speak to it then.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am speaking to the 1.3 million dollars.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying that she should have the official documents with her.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Fifteen minutes you have.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am addressing you but I do not have to look at you when I am addressing you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am addressing you, but I am looking at my colleagues over there so that they can understand the importance of the point that I am making. You should be glad that the Honourable Member for St. George South does not feel like getting up and speaking to this matter.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member does not speak properly because she said that she does not have the files. I have never seen such incompetence in my life.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you are not addressing the Minister's attitude, you are addressing the money issue here.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Any minute now she is going to come back in here for seven or eight million pounds. I would not be surprised if the Honourable Member comes back the next time we sit and says "by the way, we are going to adjourn shortly, but, I have this thing here for 5.6 million pounds which I would like you to pass."

Now, Honourable Members tell me they are tired and they want to go home. This reminds me of a "G" Paper.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please address the Chair, please. 7.35 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I reserve the right to come back to this issue.

Mr. Prime Minister, in all the circumstances, I will reserve my position on this until I hear the rest of the package.

Mr. Chairman, let me just put this on the record. Let me tell you the technique of this Minister. I am certain as God is above and the sun rises that this Minister has something up her sleeve in relation to London. I bet you before long this same Minister will come in here - You see this? This is only a slight tip of the iceberg. She is up to something. I do not know yet. My instincts tell me that this Minister is up to something. I am going to take a rain check on this.

Minister, you are the person yourself in the last public statement you made on the question of finance, you said in a manner that everybody would believe you, that the highest probity . . .

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am going to let it ride because I do not wish to offend the sensibilities of Honourable Members. They have acknowledged by their posture that the Minister has been caught napping. They will allow her to think so but I know her well. She is up to something. This is not the full package. I feel there is more to come.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know. If I knew, I would put it on the table.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. You are satisfied? I want to hear from you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, could you find out from the Prime Minister if he is satisfied? I am going to rest on this but you owe me one. When the Minister comes back down here for the rest of the money, I am going to take off her clothes. That is a promise.

The question that Head 35 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT - $985 000

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this sum is sought for the Sanitation Service Authority. At page 32 of the Barbados Labour Party's 1994 Manifesto the Government committed to two things: Closing the landfill at Mangrove and compensating the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts who have suffered much discomfort and who in some cases have suffered physical illness as a result of the operation of that landfill over some considerable time.

In May 1994, the residents by way of class action suit went before the Supreme Court seeking injunction, damages and other relief. An injunction was, in fact, granted, though at that time the case in relation to damages was not heard. We took a policy decision that all the residents of the area should be compensated. We did an assessment of the number of households within the Arch Hall and Bennetts area. The decision was that compensation would be on the basis of households as opposed to individuals and that the head of the household would be authorized by the other residents in the house to sign for receipt of the damages on behalf of the other members.

The attorneys acting for the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts met with the attorneys acting for the Sanitation Service Authority. After much discussion, after reference to established precedents of law, they determined that a reasonable sum for the compensation of the residents was $6 000 per household or roughly $5 000 per household for general damages and $1 000 for special damages for any expenditure occasioned by discomfort, medical attention and so on, they may have had, as a result of irritation arising.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The global figure is $6 000 per household. It is $5 000 General Damages and $1 000 Special Damages.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: General Damages being the sum they would be compensated for their discomfort, pain, suffering and loss of amenities. The $1 000 Special Damages would represent any expenditure they may have had as a result of going to the doctor or other discomfort, medication, whether it is something for dermatitis, cold or cough, that kind of expenditure.

We looked at cases that had been decided both in Barbados and the United Kingdom. At that time the last case, I do not have the name in front of me, the compensation that was awarded in a similar case where an ongoing nuisance had taken place and resulted in similar allegations, physical discomfort, coughing, dermatitis and so on, I think the court at that time awarded $4 000. This was some years ago here in Barbados. I regret I do not have the name of the case in front of me but I am willing to supply it to the Chair at a later date.

When the attorneys considered what sum would then be put in for inflation they agreed between them on a figure of $6 000. It was then referred back to the Board of the SSA. Based on the advice of their attorney who had, in fact, negotiated with the attorney for the residents of the area, the Board was minded to recommend to me and by extension to the Cabinet, that this sum be accepted.

We took the view that since this case has arisen, although we had given a Manifesto policy commitment that the matter should go back to the court and on January 3, 1997, the attorneys went before the court to make the court aware and seek the approval of the court for the award of these sums. The court did approve these sums as being adequate in all the circumstances.

The judgment of the court at this time and the Court Order were that each of the plaintiffs named herein and such others being the heads of households appearing on the attached list, and it came with it, the 138 households, having instituted this action be at liberty to accept the sum of $6 000 in full and final satisfaction of damages claimed in this action. The said sum apportioned as to $5 000 for General Damages and $1 000 for Special Damages, that the defendants do pay the plaintiffs cost to be agreed or taxed, that the injunction granted by this Honourable court on the 5th May, 1994, are hereby discharged and that the parties have liberty to apply again. 7.45 p.m.

Costs was then agreed by the Attorneys. The cost to each Attorney would be $78,900. The rate 10% of the first $750,000 and thereafter 5%.

The Chamber has to be made aware, as Honourable Members in here who are Attorneys, would know, that the normal rate would be 10% of the global sum and 15% if you go to court. In fact, this represents a saving over what we would normally have to pay.

In bringing this supplementary to this Chamber, today, the Barbados Labour Party Government is in fact giving fulfilment to its manifesto commitment to compensate the residents.

I also take the opportunity to inform this Chamber that we are on our way to the second part which is the closure of Mangrove since the first part of the landfill will be ready for opening next April.

I beg to move that this Head do stand part.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I have to indicate that this amount of $985,000, at this time, does attract some attention and I view it with some degree of contempt. This Ministry has been carefully protected during the Estimates for the last two years and it is unfortunate that we have not had a full scale debate where we could have looked at the difficulty within the Ministry of Health with regards to the emergency facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the lack of ambulances. I am not commenting on them but I am saying that it is unfortunate that we cannot speak about those things.

Mr. Chairman, this amount that is being paid to compensate the residents of Arch Hall is worrying to me because of a few developments that will take place very shortly in Barbados and the Minister has to account to this Honourable House as soon as possible with regards to the number of position that have been taken. The Minister of Health indicated to this House that there were going to open the Greenland Landfill in April. She said on that occasion that the Greenland Landfill will not be opened to accept bulk garbage or raw garbage and that a transfer station would be set up where the garbage would be baled. The only garbage that would be received at Mangrove will be baled garbage.

This Administration has failed to acquire additional land at Mangrove....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us see a connection between the two. I am not seeing Greenland anywhere on this. We are dealing with Arch Hall.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the addendum says that $985,800 is required to compensate households in the communities of Arch Hall and Bennetts in respect of dumping incurred as a result of the operation of the Mangrove Landfill. So I am saying that this administration has failed to acquire additional land at Mangrove where they would be able to create a new cell and avoid the overflow that is presently taking place at Mangrove where there is a mini Mount Stinkeroo. There is a mini Mount Stinkeroo at present at Mangrove and I want to send a warning that when the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts accept this compensation, they will not be able to come back and ask for one cent more.

I am indicating that because of the utterings of the Minister of Health that you are going to have to wait until at least May 1998 before you can start dumping garbage at Greenland if not you will be doing it in default of what you have said. She would have confused everybody including yourself and everybody in this House and I almost said that you confused God. The problem you are going to have is that you are going to have to continue this process at Mangrove or find somewhere else to start dumping garbage in the meanwhile. If that happens, the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts are going to continue to suffer. What period of time does this compensation relate to? I am saying that it relates up to the date of the case. So if they are going to be suffering anymore, they would have to have a new action and we would have to come back for more money.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the Minister owes this House an explanation. I would like to know on behalf of the entire Barbadian community what is happening with regards to the disposal of solid waste in this country. Very shortly, I have understood in this Honourable Chamber today, that the Minister is deliberately taking garbage into the Greenland Landfill. I would like the Minister to explain the truth and to explain what the facts are.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. There is no garbage going to Greenland. The landfill is not even ready yet to receive garbage. There is no garbage going there. It is not ready yet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister just got up here and said to this Committee that no garbage has been sent to the landfill in Greenland. I am saying, Sir, of my own knowledge that the Sanitation Service Authority trucks went into the landfill at Greenland and deposited garbage. I challenge the Minister to get up and say that it is not true.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The landfill at Greenland is not ready to receive garbage. We are doing all kinds of preparatory work done there, including

various kinds of experiments but we are not withholding garbage at Greenland. 7.55 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is a committee. You can get up and speak unless you are the Chairman. You are the Prime Minister, not the Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I challenge the Minister to tell this House whether the trucks from Sanitation have not in fact destroyed a bridge in St. Andrew.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. There are rules governing the House.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is attempting to mislead the House. Garbage trucks from the Sanitation Service Authority have not destroyed any bridge at Greenland. There is clay being extracted as the excavation process for the preparation of the landfill is underway. Those trucks are taking the clay to somewhere else but no Sanitation Service Authority trucks have been going down there on any large scale. We have not been using trucks to go down there to destroy bridges. It is not true.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Minister owes it to this House to at least make an attempt to put in perspective what is going to be happening with regards to the process of solid waste. Very shortly you are going to be having sewage coming from the South Coast Sewerage Project. It is scheduled to go to Greenland. You know what the implications are for that. We have heard nothing from you with regards to the transfer station. I came in this House of Assembly and told you and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that you were wrong. I told Honourable Members that you were wrong when you indicated that you were going to Greenland this month - March, 1997. I said it was not possible. You would need to have ...

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I need the Minister to place the exact schedule of what is going to be happening. You will need a transfer station. It has to be in place before you take garbage to Greenland. Would you please stop confusing everybody and tell us exactly what is going to be the schedule? It has significant implications if you have to continue using Mangrove. You are in crisis at Mangrove. The residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts are not going to be relieved. Tell them the truth.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Wind up please.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I would not be long. Unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I will be very brief. Mr. Chairman, I am glad to see the people in Bennetts and Arch Hall get money. It is fair and reasonable that if they suffered they should get some money. But there has been a pulverisation plant in Workmans in St. George for 20 years and the files in the Ministry of Health are replete with complaints, meetings and site visits and medical reports showing over the last 20 years the people of Workmans, Fairview, Middleton have suffered gravely.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I want the Minister of Health to understand that now there is a precedent, there is no need for me, on behalf of the residents of that area, to file any writ. I will tell you why I did not do it. I believed foolishly as I am learning now since I got this question. I believed foolishly that people made sacrifices in the interest of all because in my constituency in St. George, I have had dumps in Dash Valley. I have had dumps in Jordans. I have had 5 dumps in St. George and it was my view that people put up with these inconveniences for the greater good. That is the reason why I did not file the writ. All I am saying is that since these people from Bennetts and Arch Hall have got what they deserved that you will be hearing from me in respect of similar compensation for the people of Workmans, Free Hill and Middleton.

I expect that since there was a consent order in the courts it means acceptance of any liability in these particular circumstances and I can get into discussion at an early stage to make sure that similar compensation be made for the people of my constituency. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I too am very happy to see the amicable settlement. The Attorney General assures me that he had nothing whatsoever to do with the amicable settlement which has occurred. It has nothing to do with his persuasive powers. It has to do with the attitude of the Government that they are amenable to receipt of submissions from all the citizens in Barbados who may have suffered as a result of inhaling fumes among other things. I look forward to the further litigation because I have more than a passing interest. I believe that I would say to the Member for St. George South who just sat down, when I was Minister, I did see many of his complaints which came from the landfill of which he spoke and indeed it was on the basis of his representation that we closed the landfill in St. George. 8.05 p.m.

I want to put on the record that I disagree fundamentally with the siting of a landfill at Greenland. I believe that the proper decision to have been

made would have been to remove the people in Arch Hall and Bennetts to a place in Bridgefield that is not very far away in the same...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What people in Sandy Lane. I am nothing to do with anybody in Sandy Lane, I am talking about the people in Arch Hall. This is about Arch Hall and Bennetts. Those people should have been removed because as the Barbados Labour Party Government headed by Tom Adams agreed that the best place in Barbados for a sanitary landfill is St. Andrew.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She is more concerned with Sandy Lane.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The alternative plan was to locate the landfill in the centre of St. Lucy at Lamberts, in accordance with the DLP last fiscal development plans.

If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West wanted to carry the landfill and put it in the centre of St. Lucy, Sir, he must tell us so, because that was what you approved in Cabinet.

Asides.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I categorically deny that I have ever approved or indeed, the Cabinet of Barbados has ever approved of putting a landfill in the middle of Lamberts in St. Lucy, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading this House. If he looks at the development plan he would realise that at Lamberts there are many springs and there is no way that you could put a landfill in springs.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the House is again becoming fractious, but I do not think the records of the House should reflect a statement as made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, who like myself has been in here long enough and no matter how angry he is, that he expects that the only person who would come in here and tell lies is the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If the Honourable Member was listening he would realise that I have ordered those words be expunged from the records, Sir. It is not really an issue. The words have already been expunged from the records.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have been in this House for over 25 years, Sir, and I would hardly make a statement to this House or to this Committee which I could not bear out. But, I am not going to pursue it on this occasion. When the Honourable Member gets up and tries to give the impression that I approve putting a landfill in Lamberts that is all right for the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. That is acceptable to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is all right. You could talk until the cows come home I am satisfied, beyond a shadow of doubt, as was Tom Adams, that the best place for a landfill in Barbados is in Mangrove.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Tom Adams was the one who sited for a landfill at Mangrove. He found the land by himself. In his own inimitable style he wrote and approved Mangrove and all the studies that have ever been done in Barbados have identified Mangrove as number one.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now that you are managing it, it was never any difficulty. Now that the Barbados Labour Party is managing Mangrove it would be properly managed and it was our understanding that the only problem was that it was being properly managed.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas could afford to sit there and smile and quirk because everything he asked for he has gotten. I do not hold it against him. I am disappointed that the Minister of Health did not have enough strength to stand up and say that we are putting the landfill in Mangrove in accordance with the recommendation.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order, order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In accordance with the recommendations of the experts. Instead she

has gone to the landfill in St. Andrew. Here is the rub, now the landfill in St. Andrew is conditional...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please! Order please!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The landfill in St. Andrew is conditional upon the proper functioning of a waste station. The relay station is no where in sight. It means therefore that raw solid waste in now going to be available for keeping at the same Mangrove, because that is where the waste station is to be built.

Since it is not ready, since there is no cell, since the Minister said that the last cell has been filled up, no new land has been acquired. There is no where to put the relay station and therefore, the people in Arch Hall and Bennetts will be getting the burdens of raw waste, instead of waste that has been covered.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well they got it from me, and you corrected that. The Barbados Labour Party came into office and corrected that and now you are going to give them full, open garbage and they are going to be worse off and you are not able to put any relay station. What is more?

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The trucks are going to go down there, and I am going to put it in the record, the trucks from the Sanitation Department and from the landfill have been destroying the bridge which you spent money to fix and which you are going to have to spend additional money to fix.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. One of the very movings that the Honourable Member, Sir, should have been aware of the fact of a moving to strengthen the bridge at Greenland, Sir, and to fix the roads leading to Greenland. Therefore the problems that he anticipates will arise, are being preempted by the voting of funds through Government to deal with them, Sir. So that the Government is mindful of the problems that can arise and we are preempting them rather than under his administration that his Minister of Finance, Sir, refused to give him adequate financial resources to get the job done at Mangrove and then having failed to give the adequate resources, Sir, then he fired him as Minister of Health.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see, that would help your Minister of Agriculture understand that if there was to be a second defendant it would not be the Minister of Health. It would have to be the former Minister of something else so, that will take care of the Minister of Agriculture. But, I wish the Prime Minister would not to try to give the impression that he is fixing anticipated problems. I wish the Prime Minister, in that pristine manner in which we have become accustomed in recent times, to say that he is to correct problems that have occurred. I would sit down after that, but I do not wish him to give the impression that I am discussing something that is to happen.

The Minister of Health allowed the bridge at Greenland to be destroyed and that is all I wish, to put it in the records.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman and the Members of the Committee, as soon as we started to let vehicles go over bridges we started to monitor the situation and it is precisely because we were vigilant to monitor, Sir, that we knew the problems had occurred and we are fixing them as soon as they have occurred, Mr. Chairman, and that is the point.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you had not been misled it would not have happened. That is the point. The misleading happened. Anyhow, I will back off.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, before the Head is moved there would be a tremendous gap in the history of the Mangrove, Arch Hall, Bennetts saga, if I did not speak. I incurred an interest. I declare an interest. I was the one who represented the residents in the litigation when it was filed in early 1994, February, I think it was and I just wish to put a few salient facts on the record.

First of all when that case was brought as a class action. 8.15 p?m.

The Statement of Claim was filed. The Sanitation Authority admitted liability and filed no defence. We were not the Government. It was the Democratic Labour Party at the time that did not take any action to defend the case, for six years, from 1988. I am not going to apportion blame.

Honourable Members on that side who were in here would know that every year, not only at this time, but at other times during the year, I complained about the problems with that particular dump.

The Honourable Member said he tried his best. When the dump got too high on one side and was open, a new one was on the Bobby Clarke side. I went to the opening. He promised state of the art. They tried. That got out of hand. The problems continued. That dump burned

on more than one occasion for weeks, at least two weeks on one occasion and all the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts took all of that.

I want to say this. My one regret about this settlement, and I will speak to the lawyers, is that the Church at St. Thomas Parish Church was not included. On Advent Sunday, 1996, the Reverend Canon Knight appealed to me for $6 000 for the Church because many were the times when the congregation, as far as St. Thomas Parish Church is from Mangrove, suffered the stinking fumes, what Don Blackman would call the malodorous effluvia from Mount Stinkeroo.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Ask Canon Knight who is well known to members on that side. Mangrove was a special case of nuisance. No abuses were based on reasonableness and people are expected to take some of the inconveniences of life in their stride without to the courts. That is the basis of the law of nuisance, reasonableness. But the Law of Nuisance also gives the right to sections of the public who are specially disadvantaged by the nuisance to bring action.

People forget that criminal case was brought by Mrs,, Murrell against the Sanitation Service Authority. We were prevailed upon by the management of the Authority to withdraw that case. In 1992 and 1993 those cases were withdrawn and the problems persisted. As a result of that we had to bring the civil action. This is the settlement that was reached and approved by a judge, I think Mr. Waterman, in court.

Mangrove is a special case. It is a precedent. Honourable Members saw the residents of Arch Hall on television more than once complaining. There is a nurse, Mrs. Ramsay, at the hospital who developed asthma, as a result of that. This is no ordinary nuisance. This was a persistent nuisance for eight years and it deserved compensation.

I am grateful that Honourable Members on the other side acknowledge the fact that for what they suffered they deserved compensation.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make one point and this is that I have spoken to the Honourable Attorney General and the also the Minister of Health on this matter of Workmans. She assured me long ago that all would be done to correct the problems at Workmans. I must say that the constituency of St. George North, especially in the Workmans[1] area, suffered more than the constituency of St. George South.

There are three churches but I understand that no action was ever brought against the Government at the time. Therefore, I fully support the people of St. Thomas in getting their compensation but I want the Minister of Health to assure me and the people of Workmans that all will be done to correct the problems up there. I have spoken to the former Board Chairman years ago about that problem.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I honestly believe that the settlement to the people of Arch Hall was too low. I was there, Sir. I went to the meeting and what I heard at that meeting I cannot honestly believe that the Minister of Health would announce a settlement like that in here today.

Furthermore, Sir, we are talking about a settlement today when the people of Arch Hall are still suffering from what they were complaining about in the DLP time. If you pass there tomorrow with your car windows down, and I know the Minister would not understand what I am talking about. You can still smell the landfill.

I am in Arch Hall nearly every week and I can tell you that they are still suffering and I will not take any blame for the landfill anymore because since 1994 we were told that Mangrove would have been closed. I took blame up to 1994, Mr. Chairman, but I will not take blame any longer. The Minister promised this Assembly. Do you know what was the most regrettable thing, Mr. Chairman? I was in a church the night when this promise was made to the people in Arch Hall.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Not on me. The church should fall on the person that lied to the people of Arch Hall.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I cannot say that the MP lied to those people because he did not make a commitment to those people. I cannot blame the MP but I heard people giving commitment to the people of Arch Hall and I know people who are still suffering and when I listen to the fees paid tb some people and the compensation paid to these people who have suffered, it is really worrying me. It is clear to me that an agreement has been struck and it has not been struck in the interest of the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts and I will continue to fight on their behalf.

I have heard the good Magistrate saying that the settlement is not enough and I agree with him. We in the Democratic Labour Party will continue to defend those people in Arch Hall. We are not interested in

the ones at Sandy Lane as I have been hearing over there because they have enough money to defend themselves. I keep saying to this Assembly that we are in this Assembly to defend the rights of poor people. The people in Sandy Lane can get their own lawyers and fight their own cases. I find it disgusting to hear from a Minister that we have to take the interest of the people in Sandy Lane into consideration.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is deplorable for a Minister to be putting Sandy Lane in this debate when we are discussing the interest of the people in Bennetts and Arch Hall.

I am also saying, Mr. Chairman, that there is no government I would allow to put a landfill at Lamberts, St. Lucy, when we have a reservoir just to the west of Lamberts. Furthermore, there are many springs at Lamberts and I would not allow anybody to poison the good people of St. Lucy.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, we have just heard, perhaps, the most sanctimonious speech in the history of this Parliament. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was a member of the Board of the Sanitation Authority that presided over the deplorable management of Mount Stinkeroo. He was a member of the Board and he should have come.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is right when he said that I was a member of the Board but he is also wrong because the records of the Sanitation Service Authority would show that the same things I am fighting for on their behalf today...

Mr. Chairman, he has to sit down. Two people cannot be on their feet.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order? Let him finish off.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that the same thing I have said in here today I have been saying at the Board.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: How you mean sit down? You think I beg to come in here. I came in here with 2 800 votes under the DLP. What are you talking about?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair, please. Finish your sentence.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the Prime Minister cannot mislead people in this Assembly. I have always defended the rights of the people of Arch Hall even when I was on the Board. 8.25 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has distinguished himself amongst all Members of this House as being the only person in this House who was a member of the Sanitation Authority when the abomination that came to be called Mount Stinkeroo was being fabricated under his skillful management.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The same way that the Prime Minister was a member of A.D.C. and I cannot accuse him, and bankrupt the A.D.C., I cannot say how he can say that about me.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, he cannot do that because he was also the financial advisor to the sugar industry and he helped to bankrupt the B.A.D.M.C.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Prime Minister is misleading the House again. I was never the financial advisor to the sugar industry. He was also an advisor to Mr. Manley when Jamaica went through a devaluation.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has to be listened to very carefully, Sir, because he has special skills in the mismanagement of landfills.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. I was not part of the management of the landfill and the Prime Minister would have to withdraw those remarks or I would say that the Prime Minister said in this House yesterday, he said that the $68 million for VAT was for three months when it was only for two months.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I rise in the debate to make a point of substance. There is a procedure in this country by which these matters have to be addressed. This is a very important precedent. This is a matter that was settled through the courts. The court agreed to the settlement. We are beginning to see in this country where people are becoming of the view that if there is a nuisance or disagreement against the Government that it can be settled through agitation. I want to stress, since I hear Members talking about Black Bess and Workman etc., that there was a procedure followed in this instance.

I am speaking, Sir, in relation to the South Coast Sewerage Project where people are of the view that the way in which to get a settlement is to invite Ministers to a press conference.

This has distinguished itself, Sir, as a case where people had a grievance and the matter was pursued by way of a known procedure, Sir, and I am pleased that we are now in a position to offer some relief to the people of the area.

The question that Head 36 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Appropriation Bill 1997 was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 1997.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday the 22nd day of April, 1997 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I would just like to say, I speak on the behalf of all Honourable Members, that we are indeed grateful to the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk at the table, the Reporters, the tapers and the security personnel, the Marshal and all of those who looked out for our welfare during this very strenuous week. It is the heaviest week in terms of Parliamentary Business for us in our annual agenda and I am pleased that we have come without any real incident to the end of the debate on the Appropriation Bill. The debate is coming at a time in this year, 1997, close to Easter and again on behalf of the Members on this side of the^ House and on my own behalf, I would wish to offer to all including yourself, and to the Members of the Opposition, to all, a Happy and a blessed Easter.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to second the motion for the adjournment. Let me also join on behalf of the Opposition as is customary in extending our gratitude to the persons who serviced the House during the time that we participated in this Estimates debate. Also to express a word of thanks and appreciation to my colleagues for the depth of their research and the hard work that they did during the course of these Estimates including the matters on which there was consensus and the matters on which there was divide. I will compliment the Leader of the House for the first time ever in being able to conduct this particular debate without any logistical or communication problems between herself and the Opposition. The ease of communication, the body language and the signals and others have been able to overtake some of the sharpness of some the practices.

Nevertheless, I wish to thank the Leader of the House for her kind remarks and we return the compliment of this Easter period to her and hope that she and Members of the Government will have a peaceful and blessed Easter. I also extend it to all members of the staff and the many others who participated and to you Mr. Speaker, most of all.

The question that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, April 22, 7997 *was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.* 8.35 p.m.

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