

# THE

## House of Assembly Debates

### (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

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#### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Tuesday, April 21, 1998*

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 1998.

#### 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. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.B.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., 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. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

\*Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

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.

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 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 Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood. Mr.*

SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

#### MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, April 14, 1998.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes for the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, April 14, 1998, which Minutes have been circulated, I beg to move that they be taken as read, Sir.

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

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

#### PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker I am commanded to lay the following:-

April 21, 1998

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No.7) Order, 1998.
2. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No.8) Order, 1998.
3. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No.9) Order, 1998.

#### ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform the House that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 48 asked by the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South is ready.

#### 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 remainder of today's sitting.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: 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. 3.

#### ORDER NO. 3 - SECOND READING OF THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND BILL, 1998

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter before this Parliament, the creation of a Social Investment Fund, is a very integral and a very fundamental part of Government's Poverty Eradication Programme and in this Second Reading Speech, Sir, I would wish to have this particular new financial instrument considered within the context of the parameters of that overall Poverty Eradication Programme.

I approach this debate, Mr. Speaker, with the recognition that poverty and matters pertaining to poverty have been some of the most emotive issues in public life. Many an academic and public career have been made by those who have intellectualised the lot of the poor. Indeed, Sir, I am given to saying that if it were possible to collect all of the false tears that have historically been shed about the lot of the poor man, and particularly the poor black man, that we would have enough salt water to run the Atlantic and the Pacific out of business.

There is a lot of public cynicism about the intentions of politicians when we approach this issue of poverty because the address of matters pertaining to the poor is an area that has historically been vandalised by political opportunists and political ideologists. Many political careers have been made by people seeking to posture on behalf of poor people. Poverty and the concerns of the poor, the quite legitimate concerns of the poor, have been used as an excuse, in some instances, for very crass pork barrel approaches to politics and approaches that have nothing to do with the relief of poor people concerns but the aggrandizement of political figures.

I am very conscious, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lot of public cynicism residing in the minds of the genuine poor about the way in which political figures approach the issue of the relief of poverty. Therefore, I feel at the outset of this debate a responsibility to put the matter of Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme in its appropriate administrative and philosophical context. I feel a responsibility, Sir, to outline to the House the way in which Government's Poverty Eradication Programme has been conceptualised, approached and developed. I see the need to outline the salient aspects of Government's Poverty Eradication Programme to precisely pinpoint where a social investment fund fits within the overall framework of the programme as conceived.

I would also like, Mr. Speaker, in this presentation to address some of the issues that lie ahead of us as we mount a comprehensive coherent and sensible onslaught on the remaining pockets of abject poverty in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I start at the conceptual level by saying that Barbados has done well for itself as a society as represented in a number of macro economic manifestations, as manifested in the quality of our infrastructure, as manifested in the quality, range and depth of our social services, the quality of our social institutions and our welfare institutions, and the extensiveness of our social welfare and safety net.

I say that, Sir, to underscore the point that in seeking to articulate and implement a poverty eradication programme at this time, Government is conscious of the fact that we are not inventing the wheel. Tremendous socio-economic progress intended to deal with matters pertaining to poverty has been the concern of successive Administrations over the course of the last 50 years and it is not by chance that Barbados ranks at the very top of the pile of developing countries in terms of the quality of the human condition in our society relative to other societies.

Having said that, Sir, it has to be recognised that amidst these relatively impressive signs of progress, acute pockets of poverty exist in Barbados. Their existence

and the sharpness of the degree of poverty diminishes the society as a whole and commend themselves as inspirations for us to go the additional step to ensure that at the turn of this century, and the eve of a new millennium, that we put in place the mechanisms to put behind us poverty in this most abject fashion once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, conceptually poverty has to be seen not just as an economic condition reflecting itself either in low incomes, lack of incomes or lack of jobs. It is a distressing human condition reflecting itself in the denial or deprivation of persons from access to basic economic and social amenities. It represents itself in the lack of self-esteem of those who are marginalised in our society who feel that they have no stake in society, who feel that the avenues of opportunity are blocked to them whether by reason of structure or sustainable factors in society. It represents itself particularly in the plight of certain marginalised groups, particularly the elderly, those living on fixed and non-contributory pensions, single mothers heading households with large families. It manifests itself in the plight of young people, young men particularly who do not have requisite skills to compete or function in a modern economy and who would appear on the surface to be relegated to a life of liming and a pattern of dysfunctional and disorderly behaviour. Mr. Speaker, those are the traditional elements of poverty as exist in most societies.

We are also experiencing in Barbados the phenomenon of the working poor, persons who despite being gainfully employed find themselves unable to afford themselves sustainable livelihoods simply because they cannot make ends meet and there is an element of the lower middle class and, indeed, the middle class who have in recent years found themselves involved in disruptive economic relationships with the State to the point where they now experience a sense of relative deprivation.

In that respect, Sir, there is a new sense of poverty in Barbados representing itself in a highly perceived sense of relative deprivation, particularly on the part of the middle class, many who found themselves and their expectations about their place in society disrupted by the 1991-1993 economic holocaust and the stabilisation programme that was put in place. 11.30a.m.

Sir, let us be in no doubt about it. There are large numbers of persons in the middle class in Barbados who in the early 1990s had to dispose of their insurance policies just to be able to get the cash flow to make ends meet. A number of consequences have ensued that their rational and reasonable expectations regarding their relationship to the

society were changed because what they expected as a matter of long term security was disrupted by their having to do things of an emergency nature to cope with the situation as it represented itself.

Many of them, Mr. Speaker, found it difficult to pay their mortgages and had to indulge in very extensive schemes of refinancing, the effects of which are still being felt even to today. Let us not be in any doubt that poverty is not just in our country as absolute abject poverty but there is a sense of relative deprivation on the part of some classes of the society who feel disadvantaged by recent economic policies and who now want to have their expectations rooted in a more secured foundation and want to have some of their immediate socio-economic problems addressed.

We itid&t also, Mr. Speaker, not underscore the extent to which the stabilisation policies introduced by the Democratic Labour Party in the 1990s ravished the plight of the poor in this country. When the economic history of Barbados comes to be written it will have to be said that yes, there was an adjustment and that the adjustment was made necessary because a political party decided to put the country on a course of bankruptcy in view of the then leader so as not to cause his party to commit political suicide. There was a process of economic adjustment forced on the society as a result.

In the process of that economic adjustment the stabilisation measures that were introduced were stabilisation measures that caused the poor in society to shoulder a disproportionate part of the burden of adjustment.

Sir, this is not only borne out in the across the board 8% cut as if 8% of the income to the man at the bottom is the same thing as 8% income to the man at the top. There were indiscriminate cuts in income, Sir. It had to do with the fact that the safety net in Barbados was undermined by the policies of the Democratic Labour Party. The facts are very startling, that up to 1990 through the Welfare Department \$9.5 million were provided each year in assistance to the most needy and the most indigent sectors of our society.

Mr. Speaker, would you believe that between 1990 and 1993/94 assistance to the needy as dispensed through the Welfare Department was cut from \$9.9 million to \$7.8 million. The point of all this is that you had a 12% deduction in the economy over the period but a virtually 25% \* 30% cut in Government's assistance to the needy. That is what I mean by the point that the burden of the adjustment fell disproportionately on the poor.

That was part of a pattern, it was not only reflected in assistance to the needy through the

Welfare Department but the vote of the National Assistance Board and the expenditure of the National Assistance Board was cut in that period by some \$3.8 million to \$2.8 million, virtually again 25%-30%. The Child Care Board allocation in the midst of stabilisation measures fell from \$9.1 million to \$7.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, because the country was forced through that process of adjustment where the poorest of the society were asked to shoulder a disproportionate part of the burden of adjustment, we have in Barbados today a strongly perceived sense of relative deprivation which if I may explain in this sense, that people feel rightly so, that they have been called upon to rescue the country, that they have shouldered the burden and that now things are getting better, Sir, they feel that they have a rightful entitlement to share even more so in the benefits of economic prosperity that would ordinarily have been the case.

Mr. Speaker, it is also true that Barbados also unfortunately has manifestations of poverty and inequality in the levels of development of communities. We have a situation where, across Barbados as a whole, we are approaching a first world standard of living in terms of community facilities. It is true that some facilities in Barbados still, at the turn of this century, do not have access to what ordinarily is regarded as the basic amenities for a high quality life - simply roads, lighting, water borne toilet facilities and the like, Sir.

The inequality in the development of our communities is obviously a consideration that has to be taken into account in defining the nature of the poverty that confronts the society and obviously has to be a factor that must inform any coherent approach to the relief of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I want to underscore the extent of poverty in urban Barbados. There are substantial sections of urban Barbados which represents urban tenancies where the extent of squalour is monumental. I have said so, Mr. Speaker, to the derision of members of the Opposition who believe that I only knew of poverty when I contested the by-election in St. Michael North West. The facts are that it behooves the society from the very top, from the level of the Prime Minister to the very bottom to recognise that there are parts of St. Michael where urban squalour is no different from what you can find in the ghetto of any other Third World country and that we have to face it and we have to be serious enough to deal with it.

There are also parts of rural Barbados, Mr. Speaker, where mercifully already we are beginning to see the beneficial effects of the implementation of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act in the form of improvement in the

housing stock but there are still substantial parts of rural Barbados that have not been sufficiently touched by the hand of economic and social progress in this country.

Mr. Speaker, there are large manifestations of poverty \* in our society. Our society must never become so vain to rest on our laurels as being the world's most developing society nor take a false pride in the fact that we have a higher human £ index of development than any other developing country but to recognise that it is within our means to launch a concerted and consistent and coherent onslaught on the pockets of poverty that remain and to do so in a sustained and in a broad-based and a sensible fashion.

Mr. Speaker, my administration recognises, as I have said that poverty is not just an economic condition representing itself in the form of low income or lack of income or lack of jobs. It is a debilitating human condition that represents itself in the denial of a person's access to social amenities and represents itself in a lack of self-esteem of marginalised groups, in the alienation of people who feel marginalised from having a stake in the society. It represents itself in a kind of disarticulation in the way in which the society has been developed representing an inequality between urban and rural development and within rural Barbados, dichotomies between communities and even so to the same extent dichotomies in urban Barbados.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is a need for a multi-faceted approach to the problem of poverty. A need for a coherent, holistic approach that is intended at the simplest level to systematically target relief and assistance to those individuals who cannot make it in this society, who are not making ends meet and who are in danger of falling between the cracks. 11.40a.m.

I know there is a lot of talk in this day and age, Sir, about work for the welfare, but there are still a large number of elderly pensioners living on non contributory pensions. There are a large number of single parent families where people cannot make ends meet and we must start by dealing with poverty at the level of the individual and give those persons an assurance that they have a stake in this society, Sir, by putting in place facilities that will stop them from falling through the cracks.

I have also spoken, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that poverty represents itself in the absence of coherently developed communities. Our Poverty Eradication Programme must fundamentally address itself to how we can equalise the opportunity for community participation by the equalisation of the quality of facilities at the level of communities.

But, Sir, I do not think anybody would dispute that fundamentally the fight against poverty is also the fight for the broadening of opportunities in this society and the bringing of more people into the economic main stream of the society through broadening the scope of opportunities for the creation of enterprise. The Government, Sir, has sought to weld those intrinsic parts of our overall approach to poverty into a coherent programme where we are seeking to deal with the fight against poverty at the level of the individual, at the level of the community and seeking the fight against poverty by putting in place a whole range of new facilities and institutions that can substantially broaden the scope within which enterprises that can enable people to advance their economic and social lots and flourish in this society.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has not approached this matter in an ad hoc, meagre fashion. I know the Opposition is fond of saying that we discovered the poverty alleviation in the St. Michael North West by election, Sir. But we came to office with no programme and no plan for poverty eradication drafted by the former Democratic Labour Party administration. That is a fact. For the first two years of this administration's tenure, we spent substantial sums preparing the studies and evaluating the nature of the institutions that we were going to create to deal with poverty eradication.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the very first supplementary that was brought to this House was a supplementary to provide for the financing of a study for rural development because there was no articulated or conceived programme for rural development by the Democratic Labour Party. I think in November of 1994 amidst derision from the other side came to this House and asked for \$250 000 to spend for the rest of the financial year on a study of the problems of rural Barbados. A comprehensive survey was done on the conditions of poverty in rural Barbados leading to the definition of a programme for rural development. A Mr. James Nurse was engaged as the principal consultant and I would like to extend the Government's thanks for his leadership in this particular regard.

We also spent considerable sums of money, Mr. Speaker, Sir, on studying the problem of urban poverty and have developed a programme for the relief of urban poverty in the St. Michael, Christ Church and parts of St. James areas. Those documents exist as development programmes to be executed over a period of time.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government did not stop at that point. We sought the assistance of the UNDP to help us to carry out a process of national consultations. Because poverty is about people and the relief of poverty is about

bringing solutions to people's needs. We felt genuinely that they had to be a process of national consultation in which we involved the entire Barbadian community in assisting us to define who the poor were and to define the approaches that the poor themselves felt should be brought to bear to render relief on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to thank the facilitator of the UNDP Project Team, a Miss Dawn Marshall and I want to thank all of virtually one thousand Barbadians who attended the 16 consultations that took place across the country and I would like to make documents of the House the report on the National Consultation and Poverty and the reports of the parish and community meetings that were prepared as a result of the consultations that the Government, through the kind assistance of the UNDP sponsored.

I feel, Sir, that all Members of the House should be familiar with the way in which poverty is seen by the people to whom in whose names we are proposing to speak today. I want it to be very clear, Sir, that we felt the need, Mr. Speaker, to have as wide a process of consultation with the society at large on this matter of poverty eradication and the recommendations of the consultations and the recommendations of the project team have been taken into account in the way in which the Government has put together this approach to the eradication of poverty.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Government felt that while we must bring to bear new institutions to deal with the question of relief against poverty and the eradication of poverty that we could not leave the old institutions responsible historically for the provision of welfare in a state of forbearance. As a result and as you are very personally aware, Sir, we commissioned a study of the social welfare institutions to suggest to us the way in which the principal institutions such as the Welfare Board, the National Assistance Board and the Child Care Board should be reformed to make them more effective instruments in the fight against deprivation and marginalisation in this society.

I feel, Sir, that more than most of us in this House would be in a position if the rules of the House allowed you to contribute to an elaboration of what those reports say, but I would like on this occasion, as well, to express the gratitude of the Government for the Consultants, Miss Phyllis Roett and Rev. Joseph and other members of the team who have prepared for us a study that the Government intends to use to reform the mainstream social institutions of Barbados.

This report is before the Cabinet. It has over 110 recommendations and we will use it together with the other reports that is the blueprint for a poverty eradication programme well into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have said enough to suggest to you that we feel that to give substance to our intentions there have to be concrete programmes to satisfy the society that we are dealing with the problems of poverty at the level of the individual and that we were dealing with the problems of poverty at the level of the community and that there was a broad-based programme for the relief of poverty by the creation of enterprises.

I want, Sir, to speak specifically to the various aspects of those programmes. You are aware that in last year's Estimates the Government and the House approved the allocation of some \$10 million for a Poverty Eradication Programme to be administered by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Of that amount, Sir, some \$4 million and it eventually rose to \$6 million were intended to be cash grants to minimum wage earners. I am pleased to say that some 14 000 minimum wage earners have benefited from those cash grants. We recognise the existence of a category called the working poor in Barbados. 11.50a.m.

The working poor last year benefited from the provision of \$350 to each minimum wage earner in this country from the Poverty Eradication Fund, addressed precisely to deal with the problems of poor people. Some \$2.3 million was allocated from the Poverty Eradication Fund to deal with home repairs. Since there is a need for transparency and accountability in public life I would like to inform the House as to how these home repairs have been allocated across the country. Some 202 houses in dilapidation have to date been repaired. St. Michael - 59, St. Philip - 24, Christ Church - 24, St. John - 12, St. Peter - 9, St. Andrew - 12, St. Lucy - 11, St. James - 12, St. Thomas - 11, St. George - 21, St. Joseph - 9. No part of Barbados has been left untouched by the programme.

In some instances, Mr. Speaker, where the scope of the housing repair programme has gone beyond what has been recommended by Members of Parliament, I want to say that I have established a commission of officials headed by the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs in which the heads of the Child Care Board, the National Assistance Board, the Chief Welfare Officer and together with Rev. Joseph, a sociologist, to constitute the Poverty Eradication Committee of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

I have asked them to keep to this matter in a non-partisan way because poverty does not know constituency nor party lines. Sir, in addition to these 202 houses that have been dealt with to address the dilapidated conditions of housing across Barbados there are some other houses that are still in the process of being dealt with. If we were to do 12 per parish obviously there are some parishes like St. Michael

where there is a concentration of numbers where we have done more than 12.

There is the intention to address this matter as a national matter rather than a partisan matter and I give the House the assurance that our Poverty Eradication Committee will treat all cases with seriousness. It has not been able to do all at once. f 1

In many instances, the requests have to be surveyed before action can be taken and that takes time. I know that some Members of Parliament have been concerned that not enough urgency has been shown on their cases but each case has to be surveyed and the House will appreciate that out of the hundreds of representations, not only from MPs but from the wide cross section of society, to have touched the lives of 200 people living in dilapidation possibly within less than a year is a credit to the Poverty Eradication Committee. The evenhandedness with which it has been done represents the way we are approaching this matter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are some people in Barbados who have been very badly marginalised or brutalised by a section of the society. I think in terms immediately of battered women and the victims of domestic violence who represent a particularly distressing group of poor Barbadians. We have sought to address their needs by providing \$380 000 in funding for a hostel for battered women and the victims of domestic violence out of the Poverty Eradication Fund. I venture to say this, Sir, that there is perhaps no group of Barbadians to whom poverty is worst than the victims of domestic violence and those single mothers who are the continuing subject of masculine terrorism in Barbados, and it has to stop.

The State cannot do it all but we certainly can play our part by putting in place facilities for them, to offer them shelter and sustenance when they are demonstrably the victims of domestic violence. The Poverty Eradication Fund is funding and will continue to fund the hostel for victims of domestic violence.

I am not saying that to suggest that the presence of facilities is any reason for men now to feel that they can exact even more vengeance on our women folk. It is just that it has to stop. ^ J

We have also funded with the assistance of the Salvation Army a hostel for fire and flood victims and I want to thank the Salvation Army for agreeing to be the non-governmental organisation that is managing the hostel for fire and flood victims at St. James. I want to say, particularly on this occasion, that we are seeking to use as many non-governmental organisations as possible as the executing agencies to reach as many dispossessed

and marginalised groups as we can and I would like to urge, Mr. Speaker, the churches in particular, and those dealing with the homeless and those providing food for the hungry, those who already have institutional programmes in place addressing the needs of those dispossessed in our society to make representations to the Ministry of Economic Affairs Poverty Eradication Committee because we want not to *M* invent things from the start but to build upon existing programmes of non-governmental institutions.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that there is a social aspect of poverty eradication and we are also providing recreational facilities at Pondsides in the amount of \$183 000 because we have to deal with the worst aspects of crime and the lack of amenities in the inner cities of Barbados and I think that is money well spent. On the representation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central we will be providing recreational facilities at Gully Hill as part of poverty eradication in that constituency.

The Poverty Eradication Fund has also provided \$920 000 for house repairs and the provision of houses, including toilets and baths, to the Urban Development Commission but, as I said, Sir, we have to find a means of stopping those persons who cannot make ends meet in Barbados from falling between the cracks.

Last year, through the poverty eradication programme, some \$442 000 were utilised to pay the utility bills and the rents for poor people in Barbados. There are a number of persons living in National Housing Corporation's units, families where they are not enough people who are working to be able to stay current. They have accumulated arrears and we are under a commitment to help them on the understanding however, that those persons living in National Housing Corporation houses who can pay must pay.

The Government will pay the arrears of those who cannot pay but, in order for the National Housing Corporation to be able to continue to help build houses for poor people to live in those persons living in National Housing units who can pay must pull some weight. We will deal with the needs of the truly poor but those who can pay must pay.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we envision this year to continue that programme and may I say on this occasion, Sir, that we also would like to support those institutional programmes designed to rehabilitate the habitual drug users. To that end, the first allocation from the Poverty Eradication Fund for this year will go to the Teen Challenge Programme in the Substance Abuse Foundation located at Verdun in St. John

where a very worthwhile effort has already been mounted by a lot of private individuals and charitable organisations.  
12.00p.m.

We feel that the Government should also make a contribution to this, Sir, and \$100 000 has been pledged to the Teen Challenge Programme to enable it to cater to a wider cross-section of Barbados whose poverty arise from their flirting with the use of narcotics and other illegal substances, but I want to stress, Mr. Speaker, that we would like to have the poverty eradication vote of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, not just only to cater to representation from Members of Parliament but also be the subject of private/public partnerships by building upon the programmes of existing institutions that have a track record in the field.

As a result Mr. Speaker, last year we were very pleased that the Pinelands Creative Workshop was able to bring forward a poverty eradication programme that was of sufficient worth to warrant the Government putting \$1.3 million of the funds last year into the programme. That money has already served the Pinelands Creative Workshop to help them to deal with the matters of training of people, to help them to create enterprise, and I would like to take this opportunity to urge other institutions to come forward with programmes of that scale that can enable us to ensure that we can get the public funds reach the poorest persons in the society who, without that assistance, Mr. Speaker, will surely fall through the cracks.

I would like to make the appeal also to Members of Parliament that they should really be active in creating poverty eradication committees in their constituencies, that enable the non-governmental organisations and the social groups in constituencies to participate in the articulation of the programmes, because there is a willingness on our part to make sure that Barbadians feel confident that there is a system in place to stop them from not being able to meet their needs.

I have said enough, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that the Government sees the Urban and the Rural Development Commissions as very powerful new institutional arrangements to deal with the eradication of poverty at the level of the community and it has taken us a while to get the Commissions up and running. We had as I said at the start of our Administration, to spend some time studying the problem at hand, in developing a programme to constitute the core of the work of the new Commission, Sir. We brought new legislation to this House, to establish these Commissions. We funded them and I think, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that it is entirely to the credit of this administration that today there are two institutions in this society where people go to work everyday to deal with the

problem of poverty in urban and rural Barbados and their specialised preoccupation.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that there has been from time to time attempts to have this matter dealt with as part of the programme of the National Housing Corporation and other institutions, Sir, but I do not think the House can gainsay that having these specialised institutions, specialists dealing day to day with the eradication of poverty at the community level, Sir, is a tremendous advance. And I suggest to the House, Mr. Speaker, that if we stay on course, and every year make the commitment in financial and other resources to these Commissions, that a day will surely come when we can be satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that this situation which we started with the development of the community is something that we can one day say we have put behind us in this country.

I know, Sir, on the other side, there have been attacks on the Urban Development Commission. This is the nature of partisan politics. The other side feels that if these Commissions are successful in reaching poor people at the level of the community, that the Barbados Labour Party is going to get the credit, and it is going to eat into the support of the Democratic Labour Party. That is the nature of politics, Sir. We have heard therefore from the Leader of the Opposition that a Democratic Labour Party administration will one day abolish the Urban Development Commission. We have a different perspective, Sir. We believe particularly where urban Barbados is concerned, that the problems are severe. Many people are not aware, Sir, that the Bridgetown St. Michael area is made up of a large number of tenancies where people live without security of tenure, where the landlords have not put in the facilities to deal with the problems of squalour, and where there is no existing legislative framework to deal with those people's needs as the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act has dealt with the problem of the security of tenure for rural Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before we can make an onslaught on the problem of urban poverty, the problem of land tenure and a solution found that takes into account the legitimate interests of the landowners and the legitimate interests for the development of the tenants. And I feel, Sir, that we have now evolved a procedure and a mechanism that would see the Government ensuring that the landlords get a fair price for their land, on the understanding that part of the price to be paid will be a subsidy by the Government I think by as much as \$2.50 per square foot.

We want to see the people in urban Barbados become part of a property owning democracy in the way that the people of rural Barbados have been made part of a property

owning democracy by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. We want to have that brought about, Sir, without doing violence to the rights of landowners and without imposing a financial burden on those who have historically been tenants.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is also a tremendous pent-up demand for house spots across urban Barbados and this co-1 exists with a lot of dilapidation in housing conditions, a lot of derelict buildings in the urban areas. In fact, the studies done to inform the work of the Urban Development Commission, have suggested that if we can put in place programmes to deal with derelict buildings and derelict houses, that we can create 1800 new house spots in Barbados that can be used to address the problem of the tremendous demand for housing.

We will be putting in place mechanisms by which people can have access to mortgages to improve their dilapidated houses, Sir. We will be encouraging people who no longer want to use their house spots and on which derelict buildings are located to sell them to the Urban Development Commission so that we can have access to them. We really have to take stock of the very shabby condition of urban Barbados and use the Urban Development Commission as an instrument of the relief of the squalour which exists. These two Commissions, Mr. Speaker, Sir, therefore are intended to substantially change the relationship of our urban and our rural core by changing the way in which they relate to the society through the amenities at their disposal.

The Rural Development Commission for example in St. Peter, has taken a district, Benn Hill, and completely transformed it, not only by putting in roads, Sir, but by upgrading housing, putting in water-borne toilets and so on. At Forty Acres the same thing has been done, Sir. The Urban Development Commission has taken an area in Bush Hall and we are seeking to do the same thing. We want to develop communities in a coherent way to instill a sense of community pride, and be not esteemed to the old traditional communities of Barbados, Sir. That is a fundamental part of its mandate, and I am pleased to say that the Commissions have been proceeding on this in a very structured manner.

Sir, in all of these things we have to recognise that the old established communities in Barbados were places not only where people used to live, but were places where a lot of economic activity used to take place. Poverty eradication, Sir, is about building upon the best values of a society, taking the social capital of a society, strengthening it and enriching it. Among our social capital, among the social virtues and values that have made Barbados a good society have been the sense of industry, thrift and enterprise at the community level. But as the

society has become modernised, and with the march of industrialisation and the growth in the service economy, there has been a commensurate decline in enterprise at the level of the community. In my time in politics, for example, I have seen Jackson transformed into a place where we used to have about three major retail enterprises where there is none today. And all across rural Barbados there has been a decline in enterprise at the level of the community. 12.10p.m.

I strongly believe, Sir, that we can build a just society, we can build a fair society, we can help eradicate poverty by going back to those old values, encouraging that sense of thrift among our poor people, bringing back to the community that element of enterprise and economic activities that made our communities grounded societies. It may age in the minds of young people, Sir, but I remember a Barbados where in the village in which I was born when I was a child there was a blacksmith, although we do not want to go back to that, there was a baker shop, a tailor, a shoemaker. There were a large number of shops and over time, of course, all of those have gone as the society has modernised.

I am not saying that we should go back to the blacksmith, Sir. I am saying, however, that at the level of every community in Barbados can be found people with the talents to be entrepreneurs and we have to find a way of empowering them. As a result, therefore, Mr. Speaker, fundamental to the functioning of the Urban and Rural Development Commissions will be two enterprise funds, a Rural Development Fund and an Urban Development Fund that will address this fundamental issue of empowering poor people to enable them to help themselves to rise from poverty by becoming entrepreneurs of their own.

The reason why we have this legislation before this House, Mr. Speaker, is to enable us to create a Social Investment Fund into which we can put money from which the Urban and the Rural Development Funds can draw to enable the small man in St. Andrew, Christ Church, St. George and all across Barbados who cannot go to the Bank, who has nowhere else to go but who has an idea to help himself that he must know that he must have some place to go in Barbados where he can get that small bit of seed capital to help himself and his family.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that is the intention of Government. The Rural Development Commission has already, through the Rural Enterprise Fund, started to provide seed capital for the creation of these enterprises all across rural Barbados without reference to constituency or political persuasion.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I will deal with St. John and the Honourable Member for St. John sympathetically in the course of my representation to this House later today, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all. Through the Ministry of Education we have also created a Youth Entrepreneur Scheme recognising that young people represent a special class of persons for whom special needs and financial empowerment have to be created, and the Minister of Education will speak in this debate to the way in which that Youth Entrepreneur Scheme, designed to help create enterprise at the level of marginalised youth has been proceeding.

The House is also aware, Mr. Speaker, that this Administration, yes, we decided to close the Barbados Development Bank but we have created two successor institutions to replace the Barbados Development Bank.

Now, Sir, one of these institutions is a Micro Enterprise Development Ltd. located on Tudor Street, otherwise known as Fund Access, which came into existence on January 2, 1998. Between January 2 and April 17 of this year, 1 135 applicants were interviewed by this new Micro Enterprise Development Ltd. Sixty loans have been approved totalling some \$624 904, thirty for new businesses and 30 for the expansion of existing businesses.

The number of new jobs created by the existence of this Micro Enterprise Fund in its three months of operation, Sir, have been 107. We are now in the process of fine-tuning the procedures for the disbursement of funds through the Micro Enterprises facilities taking into account legitimate concerns that have been raised on this very Floor by Honourable Members from the other side.

I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South was good enough to bring to the attention of the Government that a member from his constituency had a difficulty in finding the guarantors who would provide the security for the loan. I have brought this to the attention of Fund Access and they have relaxed that condition to make it far easier for people who have ideas to have access to this facility.

I want to impress upon the House, Mr. Speaker, that we are not seeking to reinvent the old Barbados Development Bank where people got involved in a process of loan financing with a Government institution. First of all, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the financing for this institution comes from the private sector and we will expect a private sector ethos in part to pervade the way in which the institution is managed.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, applicants whose loans are approved will be provided with technical assistance in setting up the accounting systems and setting up the business structures. To prevent the applicants from having to shoulder the burden of that cost, the Ministry of Finance for the first five years of the operation of this new Enterprise Development Company will pay for the technical assistance that is rendered to every micro enterprise in Barbados that benefits from a loan from the Fund Access.

Applicants are also, Mr. Speaker, brought in and made part of a process of consultation as to business practice, accounting systems and so on. We are through this new Micro Enterprise Development Ltd. not seeking just to provide a loan facility or credit facility for small businesses, but we are trying to make small businesses part of a business culture where credit, financial assistance, technical assistance and advice on business organisations are an overall part of a package that gives the small entrepreneur a realistic chance of setting up a viable activity.

The House is also well aware, Mr. Speaker, that consequent upon the closure of the Barbados Development Bank the Government also agreed to establish another institution called the Enterprise Growth Fund which would be responsible not for making loans, but for making equity investment in qualifying enterprises. Again, Mr. Speaker, the interest in the facilities of this new enterprise has been enormous. The applications have now been classified into four sets of categories, and let the House be clear, Sir. We are talking about this institution taking out equity in enterprises and not making loans available to them ranging from a tourism related enterprise, entertainment, rentals, furniture manufacturing, craft, light manufacturing, water sports, air charter facilities, printing, hospitality industries, construction and the travel industry.

We anticipate, Mr. Speaker, that the \$12 million in equity injection will soon be made into a large number of these enterprises enabling us to be sure that a new form of financing of small business in Barbados that departs from the traditional deficiencies is brought to bear in support of the development of small enterprise in this country. 12.20p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to underscore this point. A lot of small businesses in Barbados have failed because they had inappropriate forms of financing. They have depended too much on loan financing and have struggled to meet the interest cost associated with loan financing. There is a need obviously, therefore for more equity financing if small businesses in this country are to get off the ground and to survive. This Enterprise Growth Fund by providing that

venture capital facility is going to bring a new approach to the financing of small business in this country which I hope will completely transform the way in which the prospects for small business in Barbados are perceived.

May I say on this point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I am not going to change even under pressure from the Small Business Association, the position of the Government in relation to the use of the \$2 million in funds that the Government provided for the Small Business Association for the venture capital facility. There are some elements of the Small Business Association who would want us now to convert that into loan financing. We believe that small businesses, like big businesses, have to learn how to use equity and we are still prepared to work with the Small Business Association to enable them to get their own venture capital facility intended for their own members up and running.

In the interval, Mr. Speaker, this Enterprise Growth Fund is going to be utilising that \$12 million in a creative way and I am pleased to say that there are some entities in the special development areas who are looking for equity from this in order to create new black enterprises in Barbados and new jobs for small black people in this society, I commend it strongly to the House and I commend those persons who are in charge of the operations of these institutions for their initiatives in this particular respect.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to indicate that the Barbados National Bank, while realising a substantial profit...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I would like to say that the Government of Barbados has given the Barbados National Bank a mandate that on January 2, 2000, the first order of business must be for the Barbados National Bank to be a company listed on the Stock Exchange of Barbados offering shares to the public and functioning like any bank functioning on the Stock Exchange. The first order of „ business to the bank in the 21st century is that it must be ready to function as a bank like any other commercial bank.

Over the course of the last three years the bank has restored itself to profitability. This year it is making a substantial profit. It has been taken out of the negative news and I want to commend Mr. Grenville Phillips and the excellent Board who have transformed the fortunes of the bank and for putting the bank in a condition where it can satisfy all of the requirements of functioning under

the Companies Act and to satisfy all the conditions of payments of dividends to shareholders and all the other things that will go with a company functioning on the Stock Exchange.

The bank must also still have a social responsibility and exercise a social conscience. As a result, Sir, I am pleased to indicate that the Barbados National Bank in recognition of the need for us to have loan facilities created for micro enterprises has, out of its retained profits, also set up a micro loan facility that is intended to provide loans of between \$500 and \$5000 per person to promote micro enterprises and particularly to promote the growth of enterprises by young entrepreneurs.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the bank is to be congratulated for this display of social conscience. Borrowers will not be required to provide collateral for the credit but they will be expected to come forward with a good business idea. We are making it as easy as possible for some of the bank's retained earnings to be used to help transform the social landscape of this society through the creation of these enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, the point that I am coming to is this. Everybody recognises that in the final analysis the fundamental solution to poverty will be found through the creation of enterprise. Giving people the means to help themselves, putting people who have not had access to credit, putting them in access to credit. Enabling people who have ideas but who have not been able to approach the traditional commercial banks to have those ideas funded, to have some place to go to get access to those resources. Not only loan financing but to put the marginalised and the dispossessed in contact with a new business culture where they can be sure that their new ideas will not flounder for lack of technical assistance or consultation of business practices and the like. I am pleased to say, Sir, that in less than four years this Administration has put in place five new specialised institutions designed to deal with the problem of the creation of enterprise among the poor black people of Barbados.

I want to repeat it, Sir. Through the Youth Entrepreneur Scheme, the Rural Enterprise Fund, the Urban Development Fund, Fund Access, the Enterprise Growth Fund and now the BNB Micro Loan, Barbados now has a welter of financial institutions that are designed specifically to handle the needs for financing on the part of the poor and small businesses in this country.

I feel that once we steer the course on these matters and allow these institutions to grow that in time our social and

economic landscape will be transformed by the evolution and the growth of a new class of thriving small businesses throughout the length and the breadth of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to touch on a number of matters concerning the way forward. Last year the Government introduced a new arrangement whereby a cash grant was given to minimum wage earners in recognition that there is a class of Barbadians who we can regard as the "working poor". People are working in this country but they are not working for enough to make ends meet. Our cash grant of \$350 last year was intended to make sure that the minimum wage earners in Barbados had at least two weeks additional extra income to help them to pay their way.

Mr. Speaker, we feel that there is a need for a more permanent and more broad-based mechanism to address the "working poor" some of whom may not even be minimum wage earners. The Ministry of Finance is now in the process of evaluating a proposal which recognises that although persons earning \$15 000 or less do not pay Income Tax they are still in the tax net because they are paying indirect taxes. We would like eventually to create a society, Mr. Speaker where persons below the poverty line are taken out of the tax net entirely. I want to commit the Barbados Labour Party to that policy, that persons below the poverty line should not pay taxes whether direct or indirect.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to deal with the direct tax by giving them back by having their Income Tax tax free but we will have to find a way of giving them a reversed tax credit whereby they can get a credit for the taxes they pay when they go to the supermarket and pay taxes on goods and so. That mechanism obviously has to be carefully studied but it will be our policy to put in place a new mechanism whereby persons below \$15 000 can get reversed tax credit or cash grants for the tax that they pay when they go to the supermarket. That is being developed, we will not be able to do it in one year but that is how we feel; that the tax system must be reformed for the future. That is how we feel that the poverty eradication should also be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already indicated that the Commissions will this year be expected to extend their programmes to have the two funding mechanisms, the Urban Enterprise Fund and the Rural Enterprise Fund in place. 12.30p.m.

When you read the legislation before the House, Mr. Speaker, you will observe that the Government sees the Social Investment Fund from which monies will be allocated to these urban and rural enterprises fund, not

only as instruments to receive monies from the Consolidated Fund but to receive monies from elsewhere.

It is the intention of the Government, Mr. Speaker, to put before the Inter-American Development Bank a project for funding from the Multilateral Investment Facility of the Inter-American Development Bank to secure additional funds from the IADB for micro enterprises in Barbados to be disbursed through the Social Investment Fund.

Let me put that as simply as I can, Sir. The Inter-American Development Bank has a facility called the Multilateral Investment Facility that is intended to support the development of micro enterprises. When we create a Social Investment Fund as a result of today's actions, Sir, it will be the intention to have that Social Investment Fund used to support the growth of Micro Enterprises in Barbados. The Urban Development Fund can draw from it. The Rural Development Fund can draw from it. Institutions like the Pinelands Workshop that have enterprise related projects can draw from it. But we have to build up beyond the \$10 million with which we started.

We will start with \$10 million in the Fund, but from time to time the Government will replenish it with its own resources and we intend to approach the Inter-American Development Bank with a project to draw support from the Multilateral Investment Fund so as to make sure that in a few years time our Social Investment Fund is larger than it presently is.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also need to say something about the Social Investment Fund which I am asking the House to create. The notion of a Social Investment Fund is not a new concept. It is something that exists in Jamaica and in most of Latin America. In most of those societies, Social Investment Funds are not only designed like ours to deal with financial enterprises they are intended also to be the sources of finances for infrastructural projects. So the Jamaica Social Investment Fund is used largely as a source from which a lot of the funding of infrastructural work in Jamaica is undertaken.

I am satisfied that there are enough other Governmental organisations involved in infrastructural development that we do not have to make that a responsibility of our Social Investment Fund. Our Social Investment Fund is intended to transform this society by providing financial resources for the creation of enterprises at the level of the marginalised in the society. The issue, of course, that the Opposition would want to seize on is the fact that this money is coming from the Public Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware in the early 1990s as a result of very strong representation from the then

Democratic Labour Party Opposition, some of the funds from the sale of Hey woods and Arawak Cement Plant was put into a public enterprise fund. We have inherited those funds, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are being used to rehabilitate the south coast hotels. Some have been earmarked for the redevelopment of Hilton and Needhams Point, \$5 million. Some have gone to the Small Business Association and now it is the intention that \$10 million of those funds that were secured from the sale of Arawak and Heywoods and other public enterprises are to go into the Social Investment Fund to be used to help create new small enterprises across Barbados.

Sir, I do not think that anybody can question the salutary purpose of such an intension. The reason why we have to bring legislation is that the Public Enterprise Fund was so narrowly constrained that only specific investments could draw from the Fund. We have changed the legislation to allow the Public Enterprise Fund to be accessed by other investment funds, like the Social Investment Fund or the Rural Enterprise Fund and hence the legislation before the House.

In Opposition, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had raised the very strong criticism of the Public Enterprise Fund that it was unconstitutional in some of its aspects. The Constitution of Barbados requires that the payment of the public debt of Barbados should be a charge on the Consolidated Fund.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: My analysis of the situation then and now is that the Constitution says that the public debt must be a charge on the Consolidated Fund and the Public Enterprise Fund was established to enable it to pay the public debt of Barbados which I feel is contrary to the Constitution. This Administration has not used it to pay the public debt, but the Other Side, of course, criticised us for not changing the law that we criticised when we were in Opposition. But perhaps we can get to that in due course.

For the time being, Sir, I want to be able to use the resources of that Public Enterprise Fund that arose from the sale of assets in one period to help create a new class of enterprise in Barbados in another period and the legislation is intended to do so. \*

Regarding the features of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, the Social Investment Fund will be subject to audit by the Auditor General of Barbados. It will be administered through the Accountant General and I propose not to create a new bureaucracy to administer the Social Investment Fund. All across the third world we have this very absurd situation where too much of the money intended to deal with poor people's needs go into bureaucracies

and overheads and I try to keep the administration of the Eradication Committee legal by having a committee of officials administer it.

I propose, Mr. Speaker, to have a committee of officials as well to administer the Social Investment Fund. Again it will be headed by the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs and I propose to include on it representatives from the Micro Enterprise Development Limited, the Enterprise Growth Fund, the Rural and Urban Development Commissions, because we need to coordinate and make sure that all the institutions involved through the public sector for providing financing for small enterprise, see the same information, and also a representative from the Small Business Association. That committee officials will be responsible for the administration of Social Investment Fund.

The House will be aware that it has been receiving periodic and timely accounts from the Public Enterprise Fund, Sir. I give the House the assurance that the same procedure in relation to the publication of the accounts of the Public Enterprise Fund will be made documents of this House.

May I say, Sir, that of the \$10 million that will go into the Social Investment Fund, \$1 million will go to support the Urban Development Commission and \$1 million will go to support the Rural Development Commission through their Enterprise Fund. We have also determined that at least half million dollars must go into a programme called Enterprise in the Fight Against Crime and Violence. 12.40p.m.

The Attorney General as Minister of Home Affairs as you know, Sir, has been concerned fundamentally with preparing a new approach to penal reform and to deal with programmes to better rehabilitate persons with criminal records back into the mainstream of society without the stigma that has attached to their status as offenders. We have addressed that in part by abolishing the concept of minor offences in some instances but there have been a lot of creative programmes developed not just under this administration but hitherto to try to find ways of rehabilitating prisoners back into the society by endowing them with skills while they are in prison, training them to become useful members of the society.

We feel that we have now, Sir, to go the additional step, that many of them come out of prison with skills, some with certificates and then find that because they have a prison record they cannot get access to sufficient credit to buy the tools to be able to help themselves and very soon that whole good endeavour in social development is

frustrated by people coming from prison, not being accepted by society, not having the wherewithal to help themselves from going back into criminal behaviour.

We feel, Sir, that that is a waste of their souls as people and a waste of the resources committed to training them and the rehabilitation systems in prison. As a result, therefore, Mr. Speaker, we would like to be able to have a programme where there will be a tracer relationship with those inmates and that when they develop skills and come out of prisons and want assistance to get seed capital to start their enterprises that there will be a programme called Enterprise in the Fight against Crime and Violence through which those persons who have been the beneficiaries of training in the institution can have access to resources to be better integrated in the society and to live socially useful lives.

I am excited, Mr. Speaker, by that particular programme. We propose to commit at least half a million dollars of the Social Investment Fund to it. I am sure that the entire House will agree that we are going to have a stronger, safer, more just society if we can reach out to those who for whatever cause have been involved in similar behaviour and find the best way of reintegrating them back into society.

Mr. Speaker, we are also proposing to use some of the proceeds of the Social Investment Fund to carry out an important pilot project at the level of the community. Members of the House are aware that at Gall Hill, Christ Church, for many years there was a derelict old dance hall, Club Randall, in a community of a lot of young people. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South has asked me if I ever joined him in there. I have never had the privilege so to do.

Rt. Hon. L. E. S ANDIFORD: On a point of order, Sir. I have not spoken in this debate and I do not think that the Prime Minister should call my name in vain.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought you were going to say that you have never been there.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I think members on his Side would wish he had stayed there but that is not the point.

Sir, in other countries we have seen how inner city problems have been addressed by taking derelict facilities in the inner cities of communities and transforming them into useful facilities that change the way in which the communities feel about themselves and at the same time create jobs and new opportunities for the people in the communities.

We also agree that the Gall Hill, Silver Hill area, has been an area that from time to time has been plagued with relatively high levels of violence because of lack of opportunities and we are therefore determined to transform the old Club Randall site into a new community facility with shops for artisans and other people as well as a community centre and the \$1.2 million for that project will come from the Social Investment Fund. We would like to be able to replicate this across Barbados where there are large concentrations of people living in conditions of marginalisation with derelict facilities in their midst.

I feel that we should use resources from the Social Investment Fund to transform the way the community feels about itself and to transform the opportunities available to young people in the community. We imagine being able to create at least 10 retail outlets in that facility and we hope that at least 25 or 30 people from the community itself will find gainful employment from this initiative that is being made by the Government in community development.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I could not deal in this debate about poverty eradication in Barbados without touching especially on the parish of St. John and I do so for a very deliberate reason. As part of the effort to inform ourselves as to how we should approach the development of a poverty eradication programme we had a study done for us under the auspices of the Inter-American Development Bank, a systematic study of the nature and the extent of poverty in Barbados.

The study indicated, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that about 12% of households in Barbados are below the poverty line making Barbados quite a relatively well developed society *vis-a-vis* the developing world where it is standard that over 30% and sometimes 60% of the households are below the poverty line. But 12% of our households are below the poverty line taking into account not only income but a large number of other criteria.

The startling and very savage statistic was that in St. John, Sir, 27% of the households, twice the national average, were below the poverty line. It is obviously clear that if a serious approach to poverty eradication in Barbados is to be put in place that the special concerns of the parish of St. John will have to be addressed.

Sir, the House and I am sure during this debate people will have to focus on this particular statistic. The causes of it will be the subject of enquiry. There are some who will argue that St. John has been the victim of the safe seat syndrome, that there are those of us who because we represented marginal seats have had to go the extra mile in ensuring that things are done in our constituency. There is that general feeling which I must tell you has been expressed that

St. John has been so safe a constituency that successive representatives have not felt the urge to do what some of us have had to do to be consistent in our representation, that the little things that are necessary have not been done.

I also want to say Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I have heard about a St. John Development Plan. I have never seen the St. John Development Plan. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South from his seat is volunteering a copy. I can only say, Sir, that it is not a matter that is at all referenced in the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto of 1994 which I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. John had a very hand in drafting.

The current Barbados Development Plan prepared by the Democratic Labour Party did not conceive of spending on the St. John Polyclinic in the years 1994, 1995 and 1996. It conceived of spending in 1997 and that was the only one project that is referenced but that is a long period to withhold spending on that.

The point I am making is that if there was a St. John Development Plan that was executed obviously, the plan was badly conceived because it has failed to the extent that St. John comes out as being twice the average of any other constituency but, for my certain knowledge, I have never seen the St. John Development Plan.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have started to make sure that St. John is the beneficiary of the programmes being executed by the Poverty Eradication Fund, by the Rural Development Programme and we are anxious to make sure that Barbados' overall profile as a society is improved by making sure that poverty in its most distressing form is addressed in a radical and serious way.

I can only give this House the assurance that we do not feel that any section of Barbados should be left out because we are all diminished when that is the case.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of the development of St. John therefore is something that must concern us all if only because those responsible for its development obviously have failed in their endeavours hitherto. 12.50p.m.

I have had meetings with representatives of the St. John's Parish Church and asked them to submit a poverty eradication programme. The Honourable Member for St. John knows of the interest that I have in seeing that economic activity comes to the constituency. May I say in this particular matter, Sir, that St. John is in many respects what Barbados would have looked like, had it remained largely rural. It is in many respects the most rural part

of Barbados, and some of its development is constrained by the fact that a lot of it is in the water zone.

St. Peter also used to share the disability. Speightstown, for example, strived as an urban area when it served a large agricultural district but as the growing north has declined, so has Speightstown diminished as an urban centre. There is a need for us to put in place special development legislation to ensure that those parts of Barbados that have lagged behind the general development of the society can come forward into the new world. Special Development legislation has been drafted for Speightstown, but it has also been drafted to encompass the Scotland Development Area including St. John. I would urge, Mr. Speaker, entities with investment proposals to come forward and to present them for support under the Special Development Area legislation, Sir.

This Administration has been instrumental in ensuring that a new tourism investment at Villa Nova takes place, and we are pleased, Mr. Speaker, that a new concept of inland tourism, of market tourism is being executed in the parish of St. John to broaden the income base of the society, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition and I have been talking to investors about a development for Bath, because the truth of the matter, Sir, is that St. John is not going to develop unless the income base of the parish is developed as well. That would benefit from the provisions of the Special Development legislation that is so routinely maligned, Mr. Speaker, by the Members on the Other Side.

There are other opportunities for entrepreneurial development in that part of Barbados for which the Special Development legislation caters. I know that the Other Side has become fond of ridiculing the Special Development legislation, that it is intended only for big white businesses, Sir.

In my own constituency the first two sets of enterprises, I do not mean this in any discriminative way, Sir, to benefit from the Special Development legislation have been two black enterprises - one in St. Peter and one in the Carlisle Bay area, Sir. We are not discriminatory, but it is a very false mischief that the Special Development Legislation is intended to assist big white business. It is intended to help develop Speightstown in St. Peter as it is intended to help develop St. John because those are constituencies and parishes that historically have not shared in the relative...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Oh, there is something for St. Lawrence Gap as well.

Sir, we cannot have a study that says that poverty is at a disproportionately high level in St. John without seeking to deal with it in a concentrated way. I can only give the Honourable Member for St. John, Sir, the assurance that we on this side will not subject St. John to the benign neglect to which it had been subjected by him and his predecessors over an extended period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close on a very personal note, Sir. It has been alleged over and over again, Sir, that I discovered poverty in the St. Michael North West election. I know, Mr. Speaker, what it was as a child to have had to help to supplement the household economic activities, to run a household and to send to school children. I know poverty in a direct way. Earlier in this debate, I made the point that poverty is not an economic condition, but it is a human condition. My experience is that poverty, above all, Sir, is also a state of mind and there is nobody who might have been born into material poverty, who cannot aspire to rise above it once they have the will, Sir, and can find the way.

This Government, Sir, believes that this society has the will and that we must find the way, and this social investment fund that is before this House, is part of our confidence that Barbados will find the way to put poverty behind us once and for all. I beg, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

#### SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 1.00p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. John. The Honourable Member has 95 minutes.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I will need all of the time but I want to say

how happy we are to have the opportunity to participate in this debate so that the people of Barbados may have a better and clearer understanding of what the position of the two political parties in Barbados is, and if there is a third contribution what the positions of the three political parties in Barbados are on the issue of poverty and on the issue of the development of social programmes in our country.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter started by saying that there is a lot of cynicism about the debate on poverty, and I believe that is true to say. I would like to add that the Honourable Member for St. Peter himself has contributed somewhat to that cynicism, and the Government of the Barbados Labour Party has contributed significantly to that cynicism.

On the last occasion that we were debating the Public Enterprise Investment Fund the Honourable Member for St. Peter announced to the House that he did not wish to hear a word from me on the subject of poverty because my personal circumstances in life did not, according to his assessment, accord me the privileged position of being able to say that I speak on behalf of the poor. He said at no point in my life did I come into contact with poverty but that he was clearly an authority on the subject, that his personal circumstances or so he alleges, or so it is part of the Barbados Labour Party's myth, were such that he is invested with substantial powers to speak on behalf of the poor which others do not possess. In doing so, no doubt he has disqualified all the other members of his party to speak in this debate. I have always been of the view that he would be much happier leading this party than the party he presently leads but I do not share the same envy because I have no desire to lead the Barbados Labour Party.

The point I want to make, Sir, is that we do not have to believe that you can only speak on issues of poverty and social policy in Barbados if you wear your social origins on your shoulder. Of the 10 persons whom we have named National Heroes recently, five of them were not born to poverty, five of them came into contact with poverty on a daily basis, and five of them were able to so transform Barbados, notwithstanding that limitation which the Honourable Member for St. Peter would wish to place on their shoulders, they nevertheless were able to carry out major social and political transformation in our country and were able to empower the vast majority of Barbadians to achieve greater heights and to reach greater levels of excellence during their respective lifetimes.

What this debate should be about, Mr. Speaker, is for the public of Barbados to judge the relative sincerity of the political programmes of their political parties to the issue of dealing with poverty.

Mr. Speaker, a student of the late Sir Arthur Lewis who was studying Economics here in Barbados at Cave Hill, as did the Honourable Member for St. Peter, William Lee Farnum Bradley, he was one of six students who studied Economics of Transformation at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies in 1973. It was a course that was taught by Sir Arthur Lewis. One day in class it is said that Sir Arthur called the students' attention to a Barbadian canecutter trudging across the Cave Hill Campus and he told them:

"However much taxes you pay after graduation, you will never be able to pay her back for the sacrifices she has made for your education. Funds that should have gone to alleviate her situation, have instead gone towards your education."

It was something that student never forgot, and it is something that we as Barbadians would do well to remember as we move upwards meteorically or otherwise slowly step by step in our lives that we owe a great debt of gratitude to those persons on whose backs the brunt of taxes, the brunt of sacrifice has been borne to ensure that we could be better off than they were.

Now, Mr. Speaker the question that arises, notwithstanding the Honourable Member's speech in here today, is what is poverty and at no point did the Honourable Member for St. Peter seek to delineate for Barbadians what he considers to be the circumstances which he is seeking to deal with, the Government having yet to set the parameters.

In some debates the Government talks about poverty alleviation. In other debates the Government talks about poverty reduction, and on other occasions the Government talks about poverty eradication.

Now, Mr. Speaker, poverty alleviation-refers to support that may be given to individuals and households to provide for their current consumption requirements, material or otherwise. In other words, poverty alleviation refers to those measures which a Government may take to provide contributions to assist a household in meeting their daily obligations so, for example, recently the Government gave grants to the minimum wage earners. That could be considered a poverty alleviation measure. When the National Assistance Board gives assistance in kind, or cash contributions, or the Welfare Department makes payments, those can be considered measures that go to poverty alleviation.

There may, in fact, be circumstances where the Poverty Alleviation Committee fixes the houses of the poor in Barbados. Those are elements of a poverty alleviation programme but that is separate and distinct from

measures at poverty reduction because poverty reduction is where support is given and programmes are designed to improve the capability of the poor to lift themselves out of poverty permanently, in other words, measures which are taken and programmes which are put in place which have the effect of sustaining those individuals and their households at a new level so that they can afford the basic necessities of life and that they can enjoy the full incidence of their citizenship as Barbadians.

Poverty reduction and poverty alleviation are, in my view, two separate and distinct kinds of programmes. They may run together. They may have some overlap but unless you focus on what the object of your social programmes is, you are going to run into confusion and in today's debate the Honourable Member for St. Peter ran into considerable confusion, road blocks and potholes as he sought to describe Government's multifaceted, almost confusing approach to the issue of poverty alleviation in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, then there is poverty eradication. Poverty eradication is an end in itself so when people talk about a programme of poverty eradication it sometimes confuses me. What they mean is a programme of poverty reduction, or poverty alleviation which leads to the eradication of poverty at the end of the day and that is an end in itself.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a debate in here today in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter went far and wide. We heard about recreational facilities being built in certain parts of Barbados as part of a programme of poverty alleviation. We heard, and I think quite regrettably, because my own view is that domestic violence in Barbados cuts across social barriers. It cuts across economic barriers and it is not a permanent or pervasive feature of poor people in our country. It is not a pervasive feature only of those who are least well off. Battery of women by spouses is something that cuts across all levels of the Barbadian society but we heard about setting up a shelter for battered women as if the only people who are being targeted by setting up this shelter are poor people or that the only people engaging in domestic violence are poor Barbadians. As I said that comes from a confused design of a Poverty Alleviation Programme. 2.15p.m.

Mr. Speaker, what we also had was a clear indication of the Government agencies tripping over each other to provide exactly the same kind of amenities. We saw it in the Estimates debates. Who does a Member of Parliament write to in Barbados today in a rural area when you want a street light. Do you write to the Rural Development Commission, do you write to the Ministry of Public Works? Who do you write to when you want recreational facilities? Now we hear that Poverty Alleviation funds can now be used to provide

recreational facilities along with writing to the Chairman of the National Sports Council, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and I assume the Urban Development Commission and I assume the Rural Development Commission. The approach that we now have to use when we want to get amenities and facilities in our constituency, based on what the Honourable Member for St. Peter said today, is to write to every agency hoping that at the end of the day that one of them will deliver the programme to the people of Barbados. This is an example of an extremely confused and unclear policy for poverty alleviation. It is not the first time that we have had to visit this issue in the history of Barbados. I will get to some of the things that were done previously.

What Barbados needs, Sir, I believe firmly, is a much more focussed program of poverty reduction. A programme of poverty reduction which is carefully designed, which is discussed and debated in this Parliament and in which all of us understand the direction that we are going to take in the process of transforming Barbados and Barbadians. I believe that would have been cleared up, if it were announced today, much of the misconceptions and confusion about Government policy.

The Democratic Labour Party has in the past been able to design poverty reduction programmes and no doubt the task will fall on us again in the future to design for this country a coherent poverty reduction programme which seeks to minimise mendicancy, which does not move people from work to welfare but which empowers them to the extent that they are able to sustain their lives and the lives of their families. I will get to our record in due course, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The Government assumes that poverty exists as we all do. Even before the Poverty Report was out the Honourable Member for St. Peter, I assume he did not have advanced notice of the IADB report but maybe he did, pointed out in a by-election campaign that on his shoulders fell the task of identifying the pockets of poverty in Barbados and directing resources to deal with those pockets of poverty. Since then a report has been done by the IADB. Mr. Speaker, we have all had the opportunity to read that report.

Before that report was done, the Honourable Member for St. Peter delivered a speech at a symposium on social development held by the Consortium Graduate School of the UWI, UNICEF and CARICOM very early in his day as Prime Minister. When I finish reading it you will understand why it is critical for one to make the distinction between his early days as the Prime Minister of Barbados and his later experiences and what he is now saying to people of Barbados about poverty alleviation.

I want to quote from a foreword of a book which was put out, I believe, by the Consortium Graduate School and edited by Mr. Norman Gerber. In that foreword was contained the Honourable Member's address in which he said as follows:

"I would also like to state that the point at which social and economic development meet is at the creation of jobs for our people. The telling social and economic distinction between poor and rich nations is that unemployment is endemic to the former while it has been largely abolished in the latter. It does serve the purpose of developing countries to create an artificial distinction between social and economic development. Indeed social marginalisation and poverty will be eradicated when unemployment is reduced to negligible proportions. My training, my judgement and my experience have all caused me to accept that the challenge of my generation and of those to whom power has been entrusted is to seek to eradicate unemployment in our time. The administration which I have the honour to lead has accepted this challenge as the highest to which the purposes of public policy can be put".

Sir, this would have come shortly after the Honourable Member's pledge to create 30 000 jobs. It would have come shortly after the pledge that "job No. 1 is jobs". It would have come shortly after all of that experience. Unfortunately it would have come, Mr. Speaker at a time when Barbadians would not have believed that job creation rested only on a building boom and that the kind of jobs that this country was going to create for them would have been lasting sustainable jobs which did not depend exclusively on the election cycle or on inordinate construction activity in our country.

The Prime Minister then said:

"We believe that we must not carry with us into the 21st century levels of unemployment which consign large sections of our people to material and social deprivation and hopelessness".

He ends, Sir by quoting from Martin Luther King by telling the person that he was speaking to:

"I may not get there with you".

We are already aware of that, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that he gave us advanced warning that he may not get there with us when the problems of unemployment has been solved.

We had a debate on poverty today. If I am to take the Honourable Member by his word then central to this debate

should have been an indication of exactly what the Government was doing to create sustainable jobs in this country. Jobs which would not leave Barbadians at the end of the day consigned to the categorization which the Honourable Member for St. Peter must have borrowed from the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, being the category of the working poor. What we need from the Honourable Member for St. Peter in this debate is an indication of how the policies of the Barbados Labour Party, poverty reduction and poverty alleviation and so on, mainly poverty alleviation because poverty reduction has not been focused on, are going to provide those sustainable jobs for Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we were to turn to the very report prepared by Mr. Medena of the IADB, the question would arrive, where does poverty exist in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Peter following the approach the Government has used, would have reflected extensively on what the report said about the location of the majority of the poor in the constituency of St. John.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the Honourable Member for St. Peter saying all of that in this debate because it is near to election time and it must be a great cause of concern to him that despite three elections that something about the Barbados Labour Party mix does not appeal to the people of St. John. Perhaps, I should be foolish enough to accept the designation that St. John is the poorest parish and then get in here every week and say that because it is poorest that we are supposed to receive a substantial proportion of every social programme in Barbados. 2.25 p.m.

This study was done, Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a methodology which at the end of the day, determines the extent of poverty on the basis of a ratio. That ratio was in each constituency the number of poor to the number of the non poor.

Now, Sir, when I go through each constituency in Barbados, St. Michael, 3 493 poor households were identified out of 24 223 non poor households. That is how St. Michael got me designation of 212.6%. In Christ Church there were 1 401 poor households identified and 13 663, these are of the households they went to. This is methodology, but the Honourable Member for St. Peter took this methodology in St. John. Seven hundred and thirty poor households were identified and 1 932 non poor. But in St. Joseph which has similar characteristics to St. John they found 193 poor households which is 600 less, but 1 837 non poor households.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the methodology on which this report rests has to be flawed in that regard because they could not be 2 500 households in St. John only. They

could not be 2 000 households in St. Joseph only, either parish or constituency. There could not be 27 000 households in St. Michael. But even if you did it on a parish basis, Sir, there are 3 000 more poor people in St. Michael than there are in St. John. In Christ Church there are almost twice as many poor. In St. Philip there are 300 more poor households than in St. John. In St. Andrew there are 1 098 poor households compared to 730 in St. John. In St. Lucy the report says there are 1 084 poor households, but there are 5 602 non poor. So when you do the ratio, St. Lucy is bound to come out better.

The Government, without explaining to the people of Barbados how this report was carried out was very happy to publish and to have the contents of this report leaked to the press, because it identified St. John as the poorest constituency in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I refute that out of hand and I go on to say that the socio demographic characteristics of poverty intensity in the same report show that the proportion of households is at 33.2% in St. Michael. In Christ Church it is at 18.1%. In St. George 5.6%. In St. Philip 7.2%. In St. John a low of 3.2%. That is the proportion of poor households of the national figures and we are at 3.2%.

Mr. Speaker, St. Peter is also at 3.2%. But the Honourable Member for St. Peter is very happy to take a document like this and to invest it with political partisanship and to seek to give the impression that St. John constituency is the poorest constituency. When you look at the contribution to national poverty, St. John's contribution to the national poverty is extremely low. These are the same statistics. But at the time, of course, the Advocate newspaper had a vested interest, because of certain characters loitering on the premises, and published information which is subversive of the Democratic Labour Party and the people of St. John.

I am not surprised that that kind of report would have reached the front page of the Advocate as if to give the impression that it is something that somebody should be \* embarrassed about. There are large numbers of pockets of poverty in Barbados. There are still pockets of poverty in St. Peter. There are pockets of poverty in St. Lucy and let us not therefore take the poverty parish by parish and carry out this kind of silly comparison about the elements of poverty.

I do not know of anybody in St. John who is sleeping on a side walk at night, but in the City of Bridgetown there are a large number of people...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member. I can speak with some authority on the City. The majority of the people who are

using the side walks for a bed in the City of Bridgetown are not people who come and originate from the City of Bridgetown, and indeed some of them in fact do come from the parish of St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is precisely the kind of response which an analysis of this report is going to produce. Everybody is going to want to jump up and say that their parish is not the poorest because the people who are poor do not come from there, or they come from outside of Barbados, or they are going to be tentative as the Honourable Member for the City has been while she was sitting in her seat all the time trying to say that I should take responsibility for poverty in St. John.

As soon as I talked about the City, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member jumped to her seat to say that the people who are sleeping on side walks do not come from the City, so does that mean that we do not have a responsibility or duty or that the Member of Parliament for the City has no obligation as Member of Parliament to ensure that those Barbadian citizens wherever they come from are at least given some basic amenities and assistance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter sought to open that can of worms and it has produced exactly the result which I have seen in here today and I am not surprised. Therefore when Canon Jimmy Springer while addressing a service in St. John some months ago pointed out that what was in that report was, as he said, "a lot of rot," it is clear that when you read the report that you cannot come to the kinds of conclusions which Honourable Members on that side of the House have come to.

What is important though, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is how the report characterises poverty. The report has been very helpful in statistics in pointing out the economic profile of the poor in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Peter failed to come into contact with some of those very important points. It pointed out for example that unemployment among the 15-19 age group in Barbados was at 36.8% that among the 20-24 age group unemployment was at 41.7% and so on. It is those kinds of statistics which the Honourable Member for St. Peter should take to bed night after night and should cause him to lose some sleep as a person on whose shoulders the responsibility lies to deal with issues of poverty.

In the 15-19 age group, 51% of those unemployed could be characterised as poor. In the 20-24 age group 25% of those unemployed contribute to the statistics in poverty. In the 25-29 age group, 18.2%. So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this report points out the economic profile of the poor. It is this kind of information that is helpful. It points out that 77.7% of females - okay? When you look at the economic participation by sex within the poor population 77.7%

is among females between the ages of 15 to 19, 72.7% is among females of the age group 20-24. 2.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of statistics should point us to the fact that the clearest link between the problem of poverty in Barbados is the problem of joblessness. As the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said, even sometimes when you create jobs you create a category of person called the working poor where the money that they take home on a daily basis cannot make the very basic obligations which they have.

The Report also points out why it is that the present level of welfare benefits are not enough because while there may be a large category of persons drawing them for whom it is adequate there is also a category of Barbadians for whom we need to target more resources and the Report identifies that category and we will get to that in due course.

What I had hoped for in this debate was some assessment by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter of how he understood this report in relation to the discharge of his obligation as Barbados' premier economic planner for the time being. What the Report should have done is it should have informed Government's attempt to deal with the underlying problems of poverty in Barbados. What we have, Sir, is political propaganda ruling the day.

It has reached the stage, Sir, where sometimes I am frightened to talk in this Chamber about poverty alleviation because it seems to get to the place where members on that side are nearly about to call the names of the people on whom the benefits have been conferred just to score cheap political points. Fortunately, it has not happened yet, but once or twice when we on this side have complained members on that side have got near to the point of singling out Barbadians who have received some small token benefit from the Government to prove that they are not being partisan in the way in which poverty alleviation funds are dispensed in Barbados. I am going to get shortly to the issue of why that is an extremely dangerous approach to public policy in Barbados and we will not countenance it. That is why we have not been sometimes as aggressive as we should have been in dealing with some of the issues which come before this Chamber for fear that some of our constituents and some of our friends in constituencies we represent would have their names brought before this Chamber for people to ridicule at the end of the day.

We need to get the politics out of the issue of poverty alleviation, get the partisanship out of it, get the propaganda out of it and launch a national assault as was done in the 1960s by the Democratic Labour Party when it introduced

policies which had the effect of reducing poverty in this country substantially and until later economic problems we thought forevermore. It ensured that a generation of Barbadians was given equal access to new opportunities in the 1960s. That is what poverty alleviation is about.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter boasted about the resources that the Government has given to the poverty alleviation agencies. I was taking a glance at the National Assistance Board Report. The Report for 1993-94 on the last page. This would have been among allocations under my watch as Minister of Finance when the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South was Prime Minister.

The NAB provision for capital was \$630 630. Its current account provision was \$2.8 million. In 1994-95 the provision declined in relation to the capital account to \$375 500. Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would have thought that the first step that the Right Honourable Member would have taken since he said that he was watching carefully the whole process of adjustments that the provision for the National Assistance Board would have increased substantially thereafter. It increased by \$25 000 to \$400 000 in the year 1995-96 and there was a current account, an amount of \$3.5 million with a supplementary vote of \$80000.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, thereafter the National Assistance Board which at that time was the only agency in Barbados that our elderly could go to - this is before the Poverty Alleviation Committee was set up, before the Urban Development Commission was set up, before the Rural Development Commission was set up, before the plethora of institutions and funds and so on were set up by this Government - the only entity that dealt with welfare, houses and that kind of thing has not met for an entire year. That institution was emasculated from being able to carry out this very urgent task which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said was critical in the post-adjustment period of ensuring that resources were made available to those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that spoke volumes to the very many Barbadians who would be watching the Government to see whether it was honouring its pledges or its commitments to assist those who are most vulnerable in our society. For an entire year that Board did not meet and had to be replaced sometime recent.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, since then the Government set up an Urban Development Commission, a Rural Development Commission. It set up various funds. It set up a Poverty Alleviation Committee. It posted out \$350 to those

who were earning under the minimum wage. All of these, disparate entities and policies the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter wishes to lead us to believe form part of a total poverty alleviation package for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, notice these have been set up quite recently and I have always tried to take the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter at his word but on Tuesday, September 17, 1991 the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter uttered these words in this Chamber. In Hansard page 991:

"I say to the House, Mr. Speaker, that we must write into our financial laws in this country rules that prevent Government from conducting what Tom Adams called "electoral works". Barbados is not a gravy train which pulls into the station every five years, unloads goodies and then goes out again. Mr. Speaker, if at the end of every electoral cycle there is going to be this bunching up of Government's expenditure whether the country can afford it or not, and if this country runs itself on this basis, and if the people of the country themselves cannot become mature enough to tell the Government that you cannot come every five years and do this last minute project and we do not stop this practice, there can be no hope for this country."

What we are witnessing at this time, Mr. Speaker, is the gravy train. The gravy train is going through town. I saw in the Estimates you have three different entities falling over each other to put up one street light. You have Poverty Alleviation Committee putting up recreational facilities. You have Poverty Alleviation Committee setting up a hostel for battered women and we have no objection to that, Mr. Speaker, but there are agencies which throughout the history of our country have been working in these areas and which Government has built up equity within the public service to assist in the development of those kinds of projects. They are all being by-passed by the gravy train approach to Government activity.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter tells us in this debate that the previous attempts at poverty alleviation were crass pork-barrel policies and he wants to avoid crass pork-barrel policies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a Commission of Enquiry on the activities of the National Assistance Board for the period 1984-86, September, the Commissioner said this about what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter calls "electoral works". This is dealing with the NAB, the National

Assistance Board and I quote from page 21:

"The Committee is satisfied that, in the election "run-up" period and during the election campaign itself, some sitting Members of Parliament, as well as other candidates of the ruling Barbados Labour Party had no hesitation in employing the facilities of the National Assistance Board to repair and rehabilitate houses of persons in various constituencies, frequently in complete violation of any norms of fairness or of equitable distribution of benefits, with little if any attention being paid to concepts of proper procedure."

They go on.

"It is difficult to escape the feeling that the National Assistance Board had been deliberately "softened up" - by way of a comprehensive erosion of most of its public service accountability - so that, by election time, it was a ready-made pork barrel into which members of the ruling party felt that they could dip freely and with impunity.

Given the anarchy which prevailed at the administrative level at the Board the total lack of independence of Board Members, and the general free-for-all atmosphere which reigned - in particular at the Bank Hall offices where the big-spending Housing Welfare programme is located - it is not surprising that the Committee has heard repeated assertions to the effect that people at the lower level of the administration also operated their own purely personal pork barrels."

Mr. Speaker, they go on.

"As was noted earlier, it is quite conceivable that in the run-up to the elections and during the actual campaign, such largesse was distributed across political party boundaries in view of the special circumstances." 2.45 p.m.

That is the report of a committee set up to investigate the NAB. Now, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is be extremely careful about setting up these corporations and these funds and all of these entities because the Honourable Member for Christ Church South once made a point in this House that the biggest challenge to public administration is to save these public corporations and so on from the influence of political touts and pimps. He said that when debating the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, and I hope that the same diligence which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was paying to those matters and

no doubt will continue to pay, will pervade the atmosphere as we move into the next general election. But nobody can tell me that it is merely coincidental that there has been a mad rush by the Government to set up all of these entities with millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, which at the end of the day people feel that it is an attempt by Government to bribe people with their own money.

Mr. Speaker, that is, if it were true, craft pork barrel politics. We have to be careful about it, Sir. I do not mean careful in the sense that the Democratic Labour Party would abolish the Urban Development Commission. The Honourable Member for St. Peter sought to give this Chamber the impression that we said we would abolish it. What we said is that we would repeal the legislation and we would replace it with other legislation but we were entirely dissatisfied with the liberality of the provisions of the Urban Development Commission.

Again in this legislation which we have before us today, Sir, as we had with the Heroes' Legislation, as we had with a whole set of legislation, there is absolutely no accountability in the sense that no independent persons, other than public officers function, Sir, at the behest of their Minister. They do not have any independent capacity, so when you put a public officer to sit on a Board he functions on the basis of his accountability to his Minister. The Minister is then accountable to Parliament. He does not have any special powers which can invest him with the opportunity of devising his own poverty alleviation programme. Public officers on a committee have to carry out the dictates and the direction of their Minister. They act on behalf of their Minister.

They are other countries in the world, Mr. Speaker, Belize is one of them, in which the same kind of legislation has been set up. Jamaica is one of those countries and Trinidad is one of those countries, following the same UNDP approach to social development and poverty alleviation in which a committee has been set up which includes the representatives of non-governmental organisations, which includes the representatives in some cases of the church, which includes representatives of the private sector, of youth organisations, of women's organisations to ensure that there is a level of democracy and transparency, and accountability operating in relation to these funds.

Almost every single piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, which has been brought to this Chamber to deal with poverty alleviation has invested significant powers in the hands of the Minister at the end of the day. This is another piece of legislation which follows that particular approach. Mr. Speaker, we have to take issue with the approach which the

Government has been using in setting up these various funds and commissions, but Mr. Speaker, I am not the only one who took issue with that approach. The Honourable Member for St. Peter was speaking quite fulsomely, and while I was hearing him out of one ear talking about this multiplicity of institutions that he had set up, and how wonderful it was that Barbadians can go to all of these institutions to borrow money, while I was hearing the Honourable Member out of one ear, my eyes were fixed on a debate in this Chamber on Tuesday, April 24, 1990, in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter, Mr. O. S. Arthur, said as follows:

"... a small black man who wants a loan should feel free to go to the bank, Sir, and get a loan without being terrorised by an over-projectised approach. It is very important, Sir, that we understand this point. I also want to warn the Government as I warned in this year's Estimates Debate that there is a danger in most developing countries with fracturing the way in which resources are brought to bear on behalf of the small black man."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I pause. The Honourable Member for St. Peter in his speech today exalted the virtue of the Jamaican approach, the institutions that they set up. He did not quote. He spoke about the Jamaica Social Investment Fund. He told how it was set up. He said it focused more on projects - infrastructure projects - than on helping individuals, but he spoke positively about it. Listen, Sir, to what he said in 1991.

"...there is a tendency to tokenise the small people, of the society by throwing institutions behind their problems. I have spoken already in the case of Jamaica, where you had about 7 different institutions ostensibly supposing, to be providing grants, promotions and technical assistance on behalf of small businesses."

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member was at that time opposing the Government, the Minister of Trade and Industry, asking for his piece of the action in setting up what we had called the New Enterprise Administration and the unit at the Ministry of Trade.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, since you do not trust what you said, I will read it to you because you have to hear it in this debate. I trusted what you said until I had read some of these debates. He went on "...in Barbados, Sir, you are now having a situation where you already have a National Development Foundation, Development Bank, and now we know from this year's Estimates, the Minister of Trade and Industry wants his piece of the action. I want to suggest to the Minister of Finance again that next week when he brings that large \$10 million vote for the development of small business to supplement the

\$100 vote, Sir, that is included in this year's Estimates that he should merely use the Ministry of Trade as a conduit for all the financial assistance for the development of the small business sector to be channelled by way of the Development Bank. 2.55 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter told us today of five funds that he has set up in the past year to assist small businesses. Sir, there is a book by Norman Mailer called "Cannibals and Christians" and I want to quote from page 63:

"Anywhere but in politics the speed with which the position had been shifted would be a sign of monumental instability, but politics would be placed where finally nobody meant what they said. It was a world of nightmare, psychopath growth, the profound and searing conflicts of politicians were like the quarrels between girls in a brothel. They would tear each others hairs out one night and do a trick together the next. They had no memory. They had no principles but for one. You may kill each other but you do not quit the house."

Mr. Speaker, we have constantly had examples in this Chamber since the last election of scenarios where the Honourable Member for St. Peter has said to this Chamber that he supported a proposal of the Democratic Labour Party and when you go back into the record, you can see that at that time he heaped the most sneering criticism on the Honourable Member for St. Michael South as Prime Minister.

It happened with the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and here, Sir, is another example of a scenario in which what is being put before this Chamber is the complete opposite to the approach which the Honourable Member for St. Peter had spoken about in 1991. But, Mr. Speaker, Norman Mailer said it was monumental instability. I do not know myself how to describe it. I want to change my approach from him and I want to deal with this question of the role that each of these entities is going to play.

Despite the Government setting up all of these entities, the Rural Development, Poverty Alleviation, Urban Development and the whole list of entities it has set up, there is still a very large core of Barbadians who are not having their problems solved on a daily basis, and many of these initiatives which start out with good intent and which we in this Chamber may support on the basis that we believe they might be workable, are very quickly subverted because of what we call the election cycle and the Honourable Member for St. Peter has spoken about it.

We are now hearing about a hotel development in Bath. In 1976 the Barbados Labour Party came to office and tried to haul the then former Prime Minister Errol Barrow before a Commission of Enquiry simply because he tried to set up a project at Bath in St. John called Rocky Point Resorts. We are now 20 years later, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is now telling the House that at this time again we are discussing the possibility of some kind of physical development in that constituency. This is the same Errol Barrow they said did nothing for St. John but was working assiduously at that time to set up that Rocky Point Resort Development at Bath in the constituency of St. John, so we have come full circle, Mr. Speaker.

Having said I have done nothing for the constituency, the Honourable Member for St. Peter then goes on to say that he and I have been talking to investors about doing something in the constituency. I believe it must be made clear that there are some circumstances which can impact significantly on the ability of a Member of Parliament to even facilitate infrastructural development in his constituency.

The kinds of things that are presently happening in certain parts of Barbados, if they are to happen in St. John you are going to have to make a decision as a country that the impact of Zone 1 as well as the problems of land slippage and so on are going to be properly dealt with because I have a constituency in which almost every development which is proposed below the Cliff, the Town Planner, because of land slippage, has not permitted.

Some people cannot even build houses in areas like Foster Hall, Bath and College Bottom because those are areas prone to land slippage. Now, if the Government is saying it is going to change that and that as a result we can attract more economic activity into the constituency of St. John and redesignate those lands from agriculture to other commercial activities, then the kinds of development which are taking place in other parts of Barbados can also take place in my constituency. Are we ready for that? Because whenever one seeks to go that route, there is going to be criticism about cutting up agricultural land. There is going to be criticism by environmentalists that you are building in a national park. There is going to be criticism about the preservation of the Scotland District. We have to make a decision as a country about the directions we want to go in and whether we are going to provide the opportunities for our people to get the best possible employment and the best possible opportunities.

I had to say that, Mr. Speaker, because I have had on previous occasions to point out the major physical problems which have militated against the further development of St. John. It has happened in parts of

St. Joseph and it is also part of the experience in St. Andrew. We know that so we do not have to pretend that there are not circumstances which have created those problems.

Most of the land above the Ridge is fertile agricultural land which the Town Planner has been reluctant to rezone for housing or commercial purposes. Below the Ridge in the Scotland District area the Town Planning Department has discouraged the construction of houses even because of land slippage. It was therefore extremely difficult to identify any area suitable for housing or other development.

We got to the stage, Mr. Speaker, where we identified an area next to St. John's cemetery, between the playing field and the cemetery, for 65 service lots. The contract was signed before the Government demitted office in 1994 and to this day nothing has been done by the National Housing Corporation to have those roads put in and to have those service lots made available to the people of the constituency which the Honourable Member for St. Peter said is the poorest.

The Polyclinic which had to be stopped because of economic circumstances in the constituency which the Honourable Member for St. Peter jumped up in here today and said was the poorest has not yet been completed because the Minister of Health said it was too big for the people of St. John and then the Ministry asked me to identify other kinds of activities which could go on in the Polyclinic because they would not be able to run a building of that size in a constituency like St. John because the catchment area is too small.

So, Mr. Speaker, even the attempts you make to improve the lot of people in areas like that have been entirely frustrated, but new resources can be found in Barbados to undertake all kinds of other projects, projects in St. Peter, projects in St. George, and I have nothing against that, Mr. Speaker, but I am saying that at least those projects which would impact most on the poverty and suffering of people in rural Barbados, including St. John, should be given the kind of attention which they deserve.

I do not have anything to say about the Rural Development Commission because I want the Honourable Member for St. Peter to know the extent to which the pork barrel politics goes. 3.05 p.m.

I wrote to the Director of the Rural Development Commission and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter today say that he would work hand in hand with me to ensure that St. John gets benefits and I should follow his example.

Mr. Speaker, on September 26, 1997, I wrote to the Director of the Rural Development Commission as follows:

"Dear Sir,

Re: Rural Development in the Constituency of St. John.

I read with great interest the comments attributed to you in the Wednesday, September 24, 1997 edition of the *Barbados Advocate*. I am proposing to ask the Minister of Rural Development a number of parliamentary questions but I am alerted to the fact, based on the news report, that you might be in a position to answer the questions which have been raised with me by my constituents. I am sure that the importance of sharing public information is a major feature of the Commission's mandate".

I hope the Honourable Member for St. Peter heard what I just said. I went on to write:

"(1) How many street lights have been installed in the constituency of St. John in the first year.

(2) In what areas have the street lights been installed."

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is not a matter for a parliamentary question. If you have a Rural Development Commission it should be committed to providing public information. I am not going to get sidetracked by the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

"(3) How many loans or grants have been made and for what categories of project or projects?

(4) What other projects of a capital nature has the Commission undertaken in St. John?

(5) What is the basis for the Commission poverty assessment?

(6) What projects does the Commission propose to undertake in St. John in the next year?

(7) Has the Commission appointed an officer to undertake assessments, surveys or social work in St. John?

I should be most grateful for your urgent reply to the above questions which would be of invaluable assistance in assessing the success of the Commission."

Copy to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and to the Permanent Secretary in that Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, do you know what the Director of Rural Affairs wrote back and said to me?

"Dear Sir,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 26th September, 1997, on requesting information on rural development in the constituency of St. John.

I note from paragraph 2 of the letter that you are proposing to ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development a number of parliamentary questions which presumably will relate to the information that you are now seeking from the Commission.

I therefore do not consider it prudent at this stage for me to provide answers to your questions but I believe that the Minister will respond appropriately when the questions are asked in Parliament."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you were to read the Order Paper of Parliament .... Mr. Speaker, the Director of the Commission told me to ask the Minister. I am looking on the Order Paper of Parliament, Mr. Speaker. I am going to start to go through the parliamentary questions that have been asked.

Since November 4, 1994, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has asked a question No. 5 of the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing. It has not yet been answered.

On December 6, 1994, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South asked another question, this time of the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. It has not been answered.

Question No. 8 by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East asked on March 14, 1995. It has not been answered.

I asked a question of the Minister of Education about Hothersal Primary School in St. John on June 20, 1995. It has not been answered.

I asked the Prime Minister a question on June 20, 1995. It has not been answered.

I asked the Minister of Finance about Foursquare Factory on August 15, 1995. I am not surprised that has not been answered.

I asked a question about fiscal concessions on the importation of motor cars on August 15th. It has not been answered.

I asked the Prime Minister a question about the Civil Service. It has not been answered.

Mr. Speaker, I have about 20 questions on the Order Paper. So I am to continue to fool my constituents that I have tabled a parliamentary question which four years later would remain on the Order Paper, never to be answered by the Minister of Rural Development. Then Members on that side have the temerity to accuse us on this Side of not representing our constituents.

I have just given you an example of the level to which accountability has sunk in this country. That you cannot even as Leader of the Opposition, as a Member of Parliament, as a person holding a constitutional position, interested in the advancement of his own constituents ask the Director of a newly established Commission what work he proposes to undertake in your own constituency. He then tells you to go back to the House and ask the Minister.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is what he said. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would be shocked. I can see it. It is unbelievable.

When the Honourable Members on that side say that this is a new level of public administration, that they are setting up entities which would respond quickly and cut through red tape, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it alarms me that those basic questions that I asked about my constituency cannot be answered by the Director of Rural Affairs.

I do not know if that is the experience of other members but I have a feeling based on what I heard that even if the Minister ask the Director certain questions he may not get an answer. If he asks about his own constituency, because I know he has been trying to get certain things done in his own constituency, St. James North, from time to time but the Director is looking slightly more northwards as well.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Member when he is in this flow but there are Rules of the House and I want to repeat Rule 28(10). "Any member who desires to refer in debate to the character or the conduct of any person in his official capacity must deliver to the Speaker written prior notice of the proposed reference". Sir, I have to ask you if such prior reference to the conduct of the Director of the Rural Development Commission has been made. A letter was

written to the gentleman prefaced by "I am proposing to ask the Minister Parliamentary Questions".

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is very unfair to the Director of Rural Development that in breach of the Rules of the House, his conduct is being questioned without prior reference to you as required by the Rules of the House. I am asking, Sir, that you rule on this matter and that all of these unfortunate remarks bearing upon the conduct of the Director be struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chair does not believe that any imputation about the conduct of any person was made.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking, Sir, about the performance of the Commission. I am interested in delivering results to the people who I represent. I am saying that I have met stumbling blocks in the way in which I have been trying to deliver those results. I am saying that my experience has been at complete opposite to the experience of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I say to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that either there is a direct attempt...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On another point of order. The Member has said enough now to indicate that he is imputing that the Director of Rural Development is putting stumbling blocks in the way of his carrying out his parliamentary responsibility. He is therefore reflecting upon the conduct of the Officer in his official capacity without prior reference, Mr. Speaker. I am asking you to rule on this particular matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member please. I believe you are aware of Rule 28(10). In your last utterances, you did say that stumbling blocks were put in your way. You are not speaking generally and you have made a clear reference to the Director. What I am suggesting to you is that the Rule states clearly you cannot so impute against the conduct of a person. The latter words that were said about stumbling blocks should be withdrawn. 3.15p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am speaking as a Member of this House, and I am saying that stumbling blocks are being placed within the way of Members of this Chamber in discharging their duties and particularly in areas where the Honourable Member for St. Peter had indicated that it is his policy that these things should be freed up, that there should be more access, more accountability and more democracy.

I am saying that I am experiencing that. I pointed the House, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to some example, during the

course of this debate, of stumbling blocks which have been placed in the way of Members of this Chamber in seeking to represent the interest of their constituents. But the Honourable Member is not going to keep me on that point, because he thinks that by jumping up, as usual, on a number of points of order that he would throw me off. I will continue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am certain that the people who live in Benn Hill and those who have land surrounding it will be very happy about the physical developments which have been taking place in Benn Hill as one of the first projects of the Rural Development Commission. It improves their land values, it improves the general ambience of the area, so they should be very happy that this was the first mission of the Rural Development Commission.

I do not know on what basis it was chosen prior to the Rural Development Commission starting that project. It is true that I travelled up Benn Hill. I had associated the area with certain individuals of great note in our society. But I had never taken the time to check the physical arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Forty Acres, there is also a developer who will be very happy at the physical improvement which has taken place in that area, he will be very happy that the Government has undertaken development in those areas. I want to speak about this, that the same Rural Development Commission has not undertaken one single capital works project in the constituency of St. John. The Society Road that is being built, it is true that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West lives in that area, but he and I have both been begging for the longest time for that tenantry road to be constructed. It is the Ministry of Public Works that is doing it. There is not a single capital project being undertaken in what the Honourable Member for St. Peter says is one of the poorest parts of Barbados and that he is holding my hand trying to develop.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you can see the sincerity of Government's policies. You can see who is to benefit most from Government's policies. You can see why public funds are being expended in certain areas in Barbados and I will ask the people of St. John to continue to make that kind of assessment as we move on over the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these measures do not address the underlying cases of poverty in Barbados. What we need to do is to provide permanent relief to transform the lives of those in poverty. We need also to address the structures which in turn contribute to the cycle of poverty.

The Honourable Member spoke of individuals. He spoke of communities but it is also important to speak

of families in this context. It is very critical, because when you look at the report in chapter 5, the first chapter which contributes to poverty as unemployment, there is another factor. Economic arrangements which have governed us from the outset which alienates the vast majority of the people of this country from economic resources.

A man can live in a tenantry with acres and acres of land around him, and Sir, other than the house spot on which he lives, he has no relationship whatsoever to that economic resource around him. It is that kind of thing that needs to be addressed. I read in the newspaper, this Sunday, Sir, I do not wish to quote from it, some statements of a young man in St. Peter, in Mile and a Quarter. The point that he seemed to have made and it should not be missed because it is a point made by a lot of educated young black Barbadians, is that you could provide a thousand jobs at the Marina. You can provide a thousand jobs on all of the sugar estates in St. Peter. You could provide a thousand opportunities of the traditional type to him. He is not pursuing them. Because, at the end of the day what he sees is his labour being used to build up somebody else's wealth but at the end of the day he does not move from point A to point B in the process. But the person who is benefiting from his contribution moves from point A to point Z in the process.

Now that is a psychological issue and a social issue that we need to address in Barbados. There needs to be some direct connection between people's input in labour and the result which they receive. One of the reasons why we took the position that the workers at Hey woods Hotel should have access to shares when it was sold was that every bit of labour that they put in the enterprise would improve the value of their ownership in the institution.

That is one of the reasons why the Democratic Labour Party announced in its 1991 Manifesto that its concept of economic enfranchisement was to make more and more shares available to workers so that they could see some material advantage to them other than payment for their labour.

Mr. Speaker, unless you start to address those kinds of issues in Barbados we are for ever going to be bringing up generations of Barbadians who will have exactly the same relationship to economic resources which their foreparents had. We would have allowed them to build a house on the spot which they grandparents lived on because of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, but we would not have provided them with opportunities to live in that area and to participate as fully in the economic activity and the economic resources which surround them.

That, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the kind of social engineering that one would expect would form part of the development of Barbados now that the people who have benefitted most

from the educational policies and from all of the other policies which were put in place in the 1960s. Instead of that we can still have a category of Barbadians who, working for \$40 a day, at the end of the week when he carries home that money, could still be characterised as part of the working poor in our country.

People are not foolish, they know what they want to achieve in life and many of our young people know that they want to make a couple of steps, if not giant leaps further than their grandparent and parents made. That is what the poverty and poverty reduction and poverty eradication in Barbados should be about. That is what I believe we have been teaching our young people.

Therefore we should not be surprised that they feel so alienated and so disguised with economic arrangements which do not advance their interest beyond becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water. So, Mr. Speaker even when you are earning bus fare and lunch money, you might be able to learn something which could advance you.

Mr. Speaker, I started to work at 11 years of age. The Honourable Member for St. Peter likes to wear his origins on his shoulder. I started on evenings sweeping the floor at Furniture Limited with the boys from St. Mary's Choir. I worked every vacation as a youngster because I lived in a single parent home. I know that there are hundreds if not thousands of young people in this country who do not wish to see their own children grow up not understanding what it is to own economic resources and to be full participants in the economic system in our country.

That is what I was looking for from the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I was looking for the Honourable Member for St. Peter to tell us that beyond EduTech that the educational programme of the Government is going to make our young people more versatile and adaptable. It is focusing on making them better citizens who feel that they can contribute fully to the society.

I was hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Peter would have spoken about a safety net for single mothers. This report on poverty identifies single mothers in Barbados and large families as some of the key areas in which you will find poverty. No contact was made with that.

Mr. Speaker, in this debate the Honourable Member for St. Peter as I said focussed on individuals and communities. But single mothers have to bring up families of more than one in which their limited resources have to stretch to feed all of those mouths, send them to school and to generally stabilise that household. 3.25 p.m.

We need to know what that safety net is going to be in the process of poverty alleviation. We need to know whether there is going to be an extended safety net for those who are most marginalised in our society. Those are the kinds of issues that the debate on poverty should focus on and, Mr. Speaker, when I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter talking about all the institutions he set up for starting new businesses, 5 or 6 of them. For 2 years the BDB was closed and there was not a single institution. That was at the time when the cake was being divided up. Now that the cake has been eaten and the crumbs fall on the table cloth the Government is brushing them off on the floor and telling small business people to pick up those crumbs and move on.

At the critical time when they needed resources to fully participate in the new economic arrangement after structural adjustment and stabilisation the institution that would have delivered to them, the Barbados Development Bank, was closed. Now in haste the Government sets up 4 institutions after the cake has been divided up and almost eaten and brushes the crumbs on the floor and tells small business people in Barbados to pick up those crumbs and move on with them. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have some tremendous concerns which need to be addressed in a debate of this type.

The question arises how do I identify the principal beneficiaries of a poverty alleviation programme. It should not be on the basis of the Member of Parliament writing in a letter to the Rural Development Commission or the Urban Development Commission or people coining in here every week and saying that they asked me to write a letter and I have not written one yet or I only proposed two people or I only proposed three.

We need to develop the kind of capability in our social services network that has social workers out there in communities on a daily basis identifying, testing, bringing back information and ensuring that those resources are made available. So many of our community workers in Barbados because of our civil service structure and so on are desk-bound bureaucrats who are forced to write constant reports instead of being able to get out there into the community and do the work which they should be doing.

So it falls on Members of Parliament and a situation like that breeds partisanship. There must be a better way to deliver the benefits of a poverty alleviation programme to Barbadians and a fair just and equitable way where any citizen can go to an institution and can point out that somebody is in distress and needs to access benefits and that those benefits will be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, this debate about poverty is not a new debate. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has

coined many catch phrases about poverty since that last by-election but poverty alleviation has been at the heart and start of the Democratic Labour Party's programmes. Our efforts at public sector housing, the introduction of the Tenancies Control and Development Act to give security of tenure to tenants on plantation tenancies which was the piece of legislation which propelled the Barbados Labour Party to introduce the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

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The work which the Democratic Labour Party did in setting up the Urban Development Corporation and then amalgamating it to the Housing Authority to establish the National Housing Corporation, that was all part of the contribution to development of low income housing in Barbados. A lot of people forget that and history is being rewritten every day.

In the area of education, from primary, secondary and tertiary education the Democratic Labour Party provided opportunities for our country - social security, public transportation. So our fore-parents in this country knew how to deliver a poverty reduction programme and that is what the efforts in the 1960s in social transformation were all about, and I leave my colleagues to deal more with that.

It needs to be tackled now by some social policies some of which can come through these Commissions but some of which have to be done indirectly. I believe it is true that Government needs to introduce more day-care facilities to give single mothers the opportunity to earn a living and those day care facilities need to be located nearer to their workplaces so that those parents can be closer to their children while they are at work.

The Government needs to develop a major housing thrust and the criticism which is coming the Government's way about housing is justified because low income housing has been placed on the back burner by this administration and every other type of housing has been facilitated. We have spoken about minimum wages in Barbados so as to mitigate against the impact of persons earning low wages and consigned to the category of working poor.

Incentives for family businesses, in other words, where an individual through incentives sets up a business which is self-sustaining and could provide the resources for his family to live comfortably.

Improved education and training. A programme that finds jobs for school leavers in Barbados so that a cycle of depression and alienation does not take over in their careers.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these are some of the

programmes. When I look at the legislation on the

Social Investment Fund this legislation has not been in keeping with the high tradition of the development of social programmes in Barbados that we are used to. I am ashamed that we are one of the only countries in the Caribbean which sets up a social investment fund and does not give the opportunity for NGOs, women's organisations, youth organisations and others to sit on the committee to help devise the programme as a whole and to assist in getting the money on the road.

There are many precedents throughout the Caribbean. This legislation rests on the discretion of the Minister of Finance as with the legislation on heroes and as done on almost every other piece of legislation which comes to this Chamber, legislation and policies which are designed to invest the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter with more power to exercise these discretions.

I thought, Mr. Speaker, that it is precisely the opposite that Government was trying to achieve that it wanted participatory democracy, that it wanted more people involved in the process of decision-making in Barbados. So the Minister of Finance can take up the millions of dollars made through the sale of public assets in this country and can indicate very easily that that money can be spent in any way that he desires.

In every other country in the Caribbean the legislation sets out very clearly how the money is to be spent and what the objectives of the programme are all about. This legislation is a 10-clause piece of legislation which does not even speak to the issue of social investment. It simply says to finance projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am telling you that we have to have major concerns about this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I heard in this debate about the impact of the 8% cut but the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has forgotten about the impact of the botched way in which the VAT was introduced in Barbados and it was as a result of that that he had to rush to send out a \$350 grant to minimum wage earners because of the savage way in which the value added tax cut into the pockets of the poor in Barbados.

To this day, the value added tax is still having a tremendous impact on the diets and on the health and nutrition of Barbadians. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is sitting on a political war chest of \$200 million which he has carefully extracted from the pockets of the poor in Barbados and setting up all of these funds - urban, rural, social investments - for the purposes of targeting resources at supporters of the Barbados Labour Party.

If we felt that this was a genuine programme we would have had the evidence of it already because it would have been targeted on those people who are least well off in the society. This programme, Sir, is simply an attempt to take up public money, to set up institutions to get that public money on the road without the kinds of checks and balances and the kind of philosophical outlook which would attain the objective of reducing and eradicating poverty in Barbados as we move into the year 2 000. 3.35 p.m.

As I said at the beginning, Sir, it seems as though it is going to fall to the Democratic Labour Party again to creatively devise a programme to truly bring poverty reduction and eradication to the people of Barbados. I thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have observed for quite a while now, I would say certainly during the whole of 1998 so far, that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition enlarges his speeches in the Chamber with quotations. He is going back and recalling what people said at this meeting and at the other forum and so on and so forth. At the end of the day he adds nothing to the process. He has spoken an hour and a half and what we really heard is that he is now a major apologist for the lack of a development programme in the parish of St. John. He has come a long way though, Sir, from the days of lunch money and bus fare. He is more fulsome today. He spoke of lunch money and busfare when he was a Minister of Finance. Now as Leader of the Opposition we hear that he is singing a different tune and he is not even singing with the choir in this country.

Mr. Speaker, over many decades now, and certainly through successive administrations in Barbados, we have seen a magnificent investment made in what we are pleased to call the social sectors. It helped in education, in housing, in training, particularly in the 1970s and I regret to say to a lesser extent in the 1980s. The 1980s have been dubbed in international circles as "the lost decade," and I think it is only fair to say that in Barbados the 1980s, particularly coming to the end of the 1980s and leading up to the 1990s were the years of destruction, famine and want such as we read about in the Old Testament, in Barbados.

There are those who would say we must not harp back 'to that but people need to look back just a little bit to understand what they are coining forward to. I remember those days, particularly in the urban situation in the City of Bridgetown, when people went home without jobs. People were on short time, people could not pay their rent, could not pay their mortgage, and had to go back home to be living off parents who were living off a small pension, and then suddenly found that they had children and grandchildren coming to eat out of that pot.

I heard the Honourable Member talking about the gravy train. We were living on dry white rice in those days, Sir. I remember. I remember practising as an attorney, Sir, and having to say to the judge, listen to what this man or this woman is saying. I remember one man saying to the judge "please, Sir, just send my children back to where they were living and everything will be quite peaceful in my household." It was the anguish that he described that here he was with his little pension, the wife with her little pension, and suddenly three grandchildren and two and three adults turning up to eat out of this pot, and so family strife broke out and families broke up as a result of that.

That the Honourable Member for St. John would talk about families first now is an irony coming from a man who was Minister of Finance at a time when families were broken up in this country, and the court often had to preside over the consequences of those breakups.

Mr. Speaker, the social summit and other UN conferences of the 1990s finally brought some recognition of the interlinkages between these so-called social sectors. Some people used to call them the soft sectors, the Ministries that you gave to women, what a great big joke. These were the largest Ministries. These were the Ministries spending the largest sums of money. These were the Ministries building what the Honourable Prime Minister is pleased to call the social capital.

Happily, we have moved away from that and we begin to understand now that the social sectors are also productive sectors, and that the so-called productive sectors very much depend upon the strength of the social sectors. Mr. Speaker, it was a sad thing for us then in Opposition to watch the actual creation of poverty. We saw it on a daily basis in this country. I saw over 20 000 people march. I marched with them, as did Honourable Members on this side, something that I had not seen since I was a child and saw thousands of people marching behind Grantley Adams up Broad Street. I had not thought that I would have lived to see that again in my lifetime and that I would participate in it. I lived to see that. I lived to see that in the 1990s in Barbados. Incredible, but true.

Mr. Speaker, we heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister describe in great detail, in a brilliant exposition this morning, how step by step we have moved from that impasse of the early 1990's to where we are today. Do not let us beat about the bush with it. Barbados is envied, not only within this Caribbean, in this subregion, and not only within the developing world, but even in the developed world, at the tremendous achievement as a small island developing state that we have made in these closing years of the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, though, even having made that massive investment in the social sectors and the dividends have been paid off now, we are seeing the dividends to that now, we recognise that too many still in our system have squandered the social inheritance. And the social dynamics of today, requires persons to be tooled and competent, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to take advantage of a variety, a wide diversity of opportunities which lie before us in every single sector, in Tourism, in Agriculture, in International Trade and Business and Small Business Development. This is the only administration that I know of in the world with a Ministry dedicated to the development of small business.

These were not idle things. This is not just something you just sat down in a group and decided you were going to do this and do that. This is an administration with a plan and a programme to implement. Mr. Speaker, Sir, looking at this piece of legislation before us, I am looking at Clause 4(b) in particular, where it states that the purposes of this Social Investment Fund are to finance projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises.

This has a special interest for (b). I hear Honourable Members on the other side, and particularly led by the Leader of the Opposition beating up on the Urban Development Commission. I have here, Sir, only three, and there are others. I hold them up for you to see, Sir, if the camera picks them up it would be a good thing. These are brochures published by the Urban Development Commission. I have them in my constituency office and I sit down every week that I am there to explain them to people to put people in the right direction.

This one, this green one speaks to the Urban Housing Loan Programme - classic, Mr. Speaker, Sir. If you want to acquire a house, if you want to acquire a house spot, if you want to construct a house, if you want to refurbish buildings, if you want to alter, enlarge, repair, improve a house, or other buildings, Sir, or remove a chattel house from one location to another, Sir, this applies to you. 3.45 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is reading from a document that is not a document of the House. For the Honourable Member to quote from that document it has to be made a document of the House. She cannot breach the rules of the House and she must make it a document of the House and must indicate why the Government is discriminating...

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. The Honourable Member, please! You have made your point of order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I am Leader of the House. I have to know what the rules of the

House are. I have every intention of making not only these documents of the House but I will distribute copies to Honourable Members on the other side so that they may be enlightened as to the work, role and function of the Urban Development Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the red ones speak to the Urban Enterprise Programme, people who are interested in setting up small businesses and other enterprises. It sets out the criteria for loans, the procedure for the approval of loans, the disbursement of funds and how loans are monitored and so on. They are doing wonderful work, Mr. Speaker.

I also have a brochure from another of the organisations just up the street from my constituency office which, as you know, Sir, is at the corner of Baxters Road and Kensington New Road, the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development Ltd., No. 30 Tudor Street, a good address, an excellent address. They tell you about access to the funds, financing, training, technical assistance, accounting. They give people advice. I refer people to it on a regular basis, Sir.

This is something I had thought I would never see in the urban setting because as the point was made earlier today by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Barbadians are not properly aware of the fact that urban and suburban Barbados is really a large patchwork of urban tenancies. There are people still alive who can remember when Fairfield was an estate, when Carlton was an estate, and Bush Hall and Eagle Hall. As you hear the word "Hall" there is reference to an estate because that is reference to an estate house, if you understand the history of Barbados in that way.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot be thankful enough in respect of this Social Investment Fund that it will give vent to expression of people who have long thought that they were not getting a fair opportunity to reap some of the prosperity which they seek in Barbados.

In the City of Bridgetown, and I wish to speak to the Inner City - I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that this Government has done nothing in respect of housing for low income people. That may be because there are people who when they pass on Bay Street and see the Pondsides Housing going up because it looks so good they feel that it is something for upper income groups, but that is not the case, Sir.

As in Bridgetown always, first pick will be for those who are living in the most substandard and cruel housing conditions in the City of Bridgetown. I have to say this, Sir. In 1976 when the Barbados Labour Party came to Government, I understood clearly what the first priority was

in the City of Bridgetown and I went to the then Prime Minister Tom Adams and I said, I need to have housing. Every other parish has a housing estate, nothing in the City. I saw people living on dirt floors. I saw people living in barracks cooking outside in a communal situation. That is what I saw in 1976 when I came to the City of Bridgetown and the then Prime Minister took me at my word and that is how Kensington Lodge came into being.

In 1981 without shame in a second term of office I went back to him and the Minister of Housing and said: "I need something for the uptown area" and that was the beginning of Pondsides which was then truncated by an incoming Democratic Labour Party Administration. I lived to see, Mr. Speaker, again in 1994 another Barbados Labour Party Prime Minister without shame and I said to him that the priority for the City of Bridgetown has to be housing. That is what has been defined by the people in the City of Bridgetown.

We now see the second phase of Pondsides and let me tell you something about this phase of the Pondsides, Sir. Designed into it will be a creche. I am one who believes that you leave the children in the community where they were brought up. All of those retired persons who will be living in the ground floor in their little apartments will help with looking after the next generation in the creche. There will be a parade of shops one of which will be a barber shop and there will be a tailor shop.

Now out of this Poverty Alleviation Programme, Mr. Speaker, we are going to see for the first time ever in the uptown area - when I say that I hope Honourable Members understand that I mean that area around Nelson Street, Beckwith Street, Spruce Street and so on - recreational facilities.

For all the years those young people, boys and girls uptown could not go to the hospital playing field and ask for a chance to play a little football. The answer was "No." I have written letters until my finger was down to the stump to the Spartan Club begging for a chance for them to use the playground in Queen's Park when it was not in use. I never even got an answer in 22 years. They could not go to Kensington. The Biscuit Factory made it clear they could not go. Even the children from the Louis Lynch School could not get access to that playing field. So that in all of Bridgetown, although there were spaces for recreation, the people who live and have their being in the City of Bridgetown had no access to it so it is a big thing that there are going to be hard courts up there and a recreational centre which will all be integrated into that Pondsides Housing Development. It will be a model development in the world.

I cry shame on all of those, especially on the other side who should know better who want to criticise it and say that it is prime land and that poor people in the City of Bridgetown should not have the first choice to it. Mr. Speaker, as long as I have life and breath, it is going to happen.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do not ask me about who said so. Mr. Speaker, they wrote letters to me, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Housing to say that it should be used for other commercial purposes. These are people who are Philistines and do not understand the importance of people living within a city.

There is no modern city in the world where people do not live. You go to New York, Washington, Paris, London people have to live in cities. When people move away from cities, they shrivel and die. We saw that almost happen to Speightstown, we saw it almost happen to Holetown and until people come back to them you will not see the kind of development which is occurring now even in our own cities, Bridgetown and Speightstown in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have a very clear vision when we talk about main-streaming poor people. I am not only interested in main-streaming them. I am interested in up-streaming them. I am not looking to be thinking that you can integrate people downstream. That is always a job that is going to take you twice as long and cost four times as much. You want to put people in the mainstream as far upstream as possible which have implications for education and that is why I welcome EduTech 2000 which has implications for health care, which has implications for a certain quality of housing and most importantly, Sir, which has important implications for the training programmes and the opportunities for enterprise that you put at people's disposal, so my priorities are very, very clear.

Mr. Speaker, there is something I wish to speak to as well before time gets too far away from me in this. I hear criticism again today, incredible though it may seem, about the Government's failure to interface with civil society and NGOs. 3.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there in administration in the history of Barbados that has worked together with NGOs in the way that this administration has. This administration is the first with the courage to delegate to NGOs certain functions which formerly would have been headed by Government. NGOs have proven over the years that they have a greater capability, a greater competence, a greater capacity for

carrying out certain functions and they do it at a lesser cost and working at the grass roots some times in a way that Government cannot do. For years, not only here, I have to do it at the UN and I keep on challenging Government to have no fear of delegating to NGOs functions in which they have proven themselves to be more competent than Government. There is no shame in that.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me greatest joy that in the constituency of the City of Bridgetown the Salvation Army, at long last, it has taken me 22 years to finally persuade the Government to give the land at Reids Street to the Salvation Army so that they can set up their night shelter again. This question of people who sleep on the streets and the pavements of the City of Bridgetown, they come from all over Barbados. Some of them have recently returned to Barbados. There is a worrisome number of people who are coming back, some of them from the United Kingdom, some of them from the United States and Canada and other places, literally dumped on Barbados again, who have been living abroad for 30 and 40 years and have become ill, some mentally, some physically and find themselves back in Barbados looking for a family which no longer exist. The family has either disintegrated or moved somewhere else, sometimes the family reject these people seeing them as a burden and many of them opt for the streets.

The night shelter will make a difference, Mr. Speaker, in respect of those in Barbados who opt for homelessness. Many of these people could find a home but for all kinds of social, private and domestic reasons, are not comfortable in the homes in which they find themselves and they take to the streets for all kinds of reasons. Many of them are addicted to harmful substances, drugs of one kind or another and they go through these awful periods when they reject civilised existence and turn to the streets.

There is a role that the Salvation Army has traditionally played and that they will continue to play. Not only the Salvation Army but almost every church with a sense of pastoral duty and an understanding of servicing its congregation, not only milking its congregation, not only having church on Sunday, there are churches out there working in the community. I know it because I meet them up in my constituency and elsewhere and I am glad for it.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make some reference to the UNDCP. The United Nations Drug Control Program has set up a skills training centre in the City of Bridgetown. It is a wonderful thing and it is conducted at the Emmerton Community Centre. I have told the Attorney General that I cannot wait for a similar thing to be set up at the St. Ambrose Church Centre, up town is a suitable location for it. This is a programme that runs five days a week from five to seven in the evening for two hours. You can choose to do two courses for \$15 over a three-month term. All it costs is \$15 and if people are prepared to

stay the course I will sometimes say to them, look I will pay. I will pay if you are prepared to stay the course but I will not pay if you are going to go two or three lessons and then you do not want to go back. If you are prepared to stay, I will help.

It is a wonderful programme, it has had two graduation ceremonies. When I see the quality of the work put out, lingerie, drapery, flower arranging, pastry - it is just incredible. Some of it even looks ready made. There are young people and old people graduating. Young men are also coming into the programme and it has the nucleus of a cottage industry. Many of them are making juices and pastry and delicacies for sale to restaurants and to mini markets and they service various functions and other such events. It is incredible how people make an excellent living out of that, having given them the introduction to skill.

All of that I see happening and I am particularly pleased about the UNDCP programme. It all arose out of an initiative within the constituency group of the Barbados Labour Party in the City of Bridgetown. It is incredible because you do not know what skills people have. When I see how Undene Forte and Gregory Noel have just taken that programme so that people are now coming from St. Lucy and St. Philip to participate in this programme it is a very wanning thing, Mr. Speaker. You have to give people a chance, the opportunity and the access - this is what this fund is about. You will see the full outcome of it all. I am very pleased, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, there is one point which I cannot omit on this occasion. I have a great concern and it is not a new concern, it is a concern which goes back to the 1970s when the Central Bank now called the Tom Adams Financial Centre was built. I appealed then as a young, green Minister to the Tom Adams Financial Centre to management and the directorate of the Central Bank to find a way to interface with Church Village. Something must be wrong with this big building, the largest and the most impressive in Bridgetown and in the shadow of it you have Church Village where there is a negative quality of life there. It pleased me greatly when the Right Honourable Prime Minister said that he has given a certain directive to the Board of the Central Bank in respect of the relationship that it must have with Church Village in the future. The same thing in respect of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, they are developing property in Roebuck Street. The National Housing Corporation is aboi& to rebuild its premises which are admittedly in a very dilapidated condition, on Country Road. I have said to them and written letters to the effect that you are going to have to address Greenfields.

We have to be very careful ....

*Asides.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I can hear the Honourable Member for St. George North behind me making the point that the matter is being addressed and it must be. We do not want to see a Bridgetown with wonderful premises for the National Housing Corporation, wonderful premises for the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and hovelling matters in Greenfields. 4.05 p.m.

Greenfields represents some of the most depressed housing in Barbados. I am glad too that that is being addressed. Mr. Speaker, it all comes within that wide ambience of poverty alleviation. I would want to use the occasion as I close to give the highest possible praise to the work that the Urban Development Commission is doing and to wish it well and to wish it more. It is much appreciated in the City of Bridgetown.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, from the inception of the debate on poverty I had stated that there is no way which you can formulate poverty without understanding the character of poverty in Barbados and understanding whether or not we are addressing poverty in its relative terms or if we are addressing poverty in its absolute terms. In the absence of such information, it is almost impossible to pursue a strategy for addressing this phenomenon because it cannot only be characterised in its economic terms, but it has to be seen much wider, more for the social and political concern.

In that regard, therefore, it is not surprising that the Government has seen it fit to go wide and far all over the place in an attempt to address the question of poverty alleviation or poverty eradication or perhaps poverty reduction in Barbados. From that standpoint I wish to suggest that we could have done a much more effective job at initially looking at the categories of poverty in Barbados. In this vein I would wish to suggest that there are perhaps four or five separate understandings of poverty that could possibly exist in Barbados and for which once we understand, it would have to be alternative strategies in terms of a policy matrix to address these particular categories of poverty.

There is a class of poor which is referred to as the new or structural poor which is defined as individuals who were not born poor, but who have become poor as a result of structural adjustment of stabilisation policies. The Right Honourable Prime Minister stated earlier this morning in fact that the 8% cut under the previous administration was responsible for the creation of another category of

poor people in Barbados. While I would not wish to argue against that an 8% cut could have reduced income levels and could possibly have placed some people below that poverty line, I wish to suggest two things:

1. That that 8% cut was placed only on public sector workers in Barbados who constituted less than 20% of the working population.
2. That that 8% cut was restored, 18 months later and therefore even if we were to discuss the question of work of the new or structural poor we cannot say that that category has persisted beyond 1994.

In fact one can associate that fact with the Stabilisation Programme of the previous administration. But I wish to suggest that the introduction of VAT which has been placed not only on the public sector workers of Barbados, but the private sector workers as well, the unemployed, children, old aged pensioners and all vulnerable groups continue to carry the burden of VAT.

Therefore, I am saying that the new or structural poor, since the introduction of VAT would have been higher than the adjustment or the 8% cut imposed in 1992. That the population has been affected by VAT and the imposition of VAT would have in fact meant and does mean still a great pool of poor or structurally poor than the 8% cut under the previous administration.

So it is plain for me to see that in addition to that as well, the impact of an income's policy which had been pursued continues to be pursued by this administration which has curbed the growth of nominal wages in Barbados in spite of the increases in inflation which we have seen would also have contributed to the reduction of real spending power of poor people in Barbados.

Therefore, I am saying again that the income's policy pursued in fact contributed to that category of worker in Barbados. So that when you look at it and you look back at the 1992 programme there is more evidence to support the emergence of new poor in Barbados after VAT than there would have been to support the emergence of a new poor after an 8% tax. I repeat, that 8% cut was only on the public sector workers whereas the imposition of the VAT which has caused a spiraling on prices, especially food prices have been on the entire population, even the unemployed in Barbados. That cannot be a major point of debate in this point in time in the economic history of Barbados. It has to be dismissed for what it is.

There is also the working poor to which we have heard reference to earlier in the debate, individuals who are in low

paying jobs and they have been addressed in some measure. It will constitute mainly domestics, the shop stewards, shop assistants who work across the distributing sector and the retail sector in Barbados and that is another category of poor. But we have not effectively addressed that area. The \$350 which had been given cannot pull those categories of workers above the so-called poverty line and many other measures will have to be put in place. In the presence of an administration that admits to almost \$300 million in excess revenue from VAT, I repeat the call for further adjustments to the VAT system to ensure that there is a reduction of the tax burden on those categories of workers in Barbados.

We cannot expect that in this new arrangement where we have a working poor in Barbados and there has to be a working poor, because we have already admitted to that by giving that category of persons who earn \$171 per week or less a contribution of \$350 for the entire year. I am saying that a more sustainable policy would be to address the question of food prices by way of ensuring greater reduction than we have done in the previous budget of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I think around September 1997.

There is also another category of poor which is called the systematic or chronically poor. This type of poor is defined as those individuals who have been born into poverty and remain in their poverty-stricken state for the rest of their lives. Certainly any policy to address this category must differ from those policies dealing with the working poor or even dealing with the new or structural poor because their requirements are ongoing and long term. While I have always said that the objective of reducing poverty in any society is laudable, one cannot treat this issue without an understanding and a diagnosis of the poor and a characterisation of the poor. Before we can move forward, we have to be able to state clearly and categorically where those persons lie in relation to the rich, that is the relative poverty, or where they lie in relation to their capacity to sustain themselves which have to do with absolute poverty. That we have not yet defined.

I hear a lot of talk about addressing the question of ^ poverty by the creation of enterprises. That has to be the concept of relative poverty being invoked because any person in a state of absolute poverty cannot be assisted by way of the creation of an enterprise because that person does not have the wherewithal to sustain him or herself by way of even nutritional requirements. So we have to address the question of what poverty is really all about. There is a whole category of the poor. It is called the "transient poor". The transient poor are those persons whose situation changes on a seasonal or yearly basis, depending on the normal fluctuations which occur in any economy. That has to do with the crop workers who were only able to earn a comfortable living during the

sugar crop and thereafter struggled to get into a meaningful job. Therefore, this question of the seasonal poor affected those individuals.

Again, an understanding of that was to recognise that those persons may reside mainly in the rural areas of Barbados and an understanding of that would recognise that those people would have to have a poverty programme which is structured to cater to those particular needs. Therefore I am suggesting again that to tackle the whole question of poverty would require extensive research being done and not just a willy-nilly attempt on the part of Government to set up urban development commissions, rural development commissions, a road in Speightstown, a social investment exercise and a whole range of things and then what you do at the end of the day is to bring them together under the banner of poverty alleviation. It has to be a far more structured job than that.

The institutions which have been established to deal with the whole question of poverty are the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission and now we are seeing a Social Investment Fund which we are debating today which is going to provide the impetus for funding the Rural and Urban Enterprise Fund which Government is establishing.

I am saying that I am perhaps in the most fortunate of positions in this debate because it is in the bye-election of 1996 that the Prime Minister identified poverty as a major issue in Barbados. I therefore wish to ask a number of questions in this debate. The Urban Development Commission has in fact identified two persons within the constituency of St. Michael North West for assistance. One person has been provided with a new house and we are very grateful for that and there is a second person who is to get a new home in Redman's Avenue. Up to the end of last year that has been the case. So I would wish to know what is happening in the area of Brandons where we identified and publicised, televised that individual for a period of time, explaining and demonstrating the plight of that old lady; and we have not yet addressed her condition.

I wish to add what has happened in the area of Danesbury where we have identified the area for slum clearance and I wish to ask what has happened in the area of Pile Bay in relation to the Urban Development Commission. It is my job as the representative but we have been told earlier in this debate by the Leader of the Opposition that even when you write and make representation you have been given all kinds of run around, you have been given the attitude that this is not for you to know, it is for the other person to know so that they can gain political mileage from it.

I wish to inform you, the residents of Danesbury, that it has been brought to my attention that your plight will be addressed in June of 1998 and I am therefore saying to the residents of Danesbury that the attempt for slum clearance and relocation and improvement of the drainage facility in that area is proposed to start in June of 1998. They look forward to any such privileges coming their way and I am going to ensure as their representative that they be given that opportunity to improve the standard of living for which they are highly deserving. I am going to press the Government to ensure that individuals in that area should be given such privileges.

The other thing that we obviously need to look at in the area is the whole question of the provision of simple things like street lighting which is part of a poverty alleviation programme. As representative, I would like to know which areas have been earmarked for such provision of street lighting and I am saying that there is no harm for me in saying that. I am entitled to that information because I have been elected as representative for the constituency of St. Michael North West and I intend to pursue that objective with the kind of vigour that I can pursue it with.

So I am asking why was such information not made available to the representative for the area of St. Michael North West. It is in my interest. I am also asking for areas under the poverty alleviation programme at Carters Gap where we need that area to continue to be a canal because under a previous Barbados Labour Party we had a situation on the Black Rock Main Road where the canal was stopped on the eastern side of the Main Road and was not continued on the north-west side so that the canal would have come right up to the Black Rock Main Road and stopped there and it was not continued on the other side.

It has become a health hazard. It has become dangerous to the residents of that area in terms of the mosquitoes and other health hazards and I am simply asking for representation to be made under the Poverty Alleviation programme to ensure the canalisation of that area in Carters Gap.

So there are several areas where we need representation. In the area from which I came, Deacons Housing Area, which is the second oldest housing area in Barbados; there is need for upgrading of the water-borne facilities or we need water-borne facilities in certain houses within the Deacons Housing Area. That housing area was established from 1956 and there are still some residents who do not have water-borne toilet facilities. As part of the poverty alleviation programme of the present Government which is supposed to be non-partisan I am again requesting that some facility be put in place to ensure that these residents are given water-borne facilities.

We have been told that the Urban Development Commission, the Social Equity Fund, that the methods by which we can alleviate poverty in Barbados is through the creation of enterprises. I wish to ask the question of the Prime Minister of Barbados who in 1986 in a debate on the Barbados Development Bank supported fully the Resolution for maintaining the Barbados Development Bank and I quote on page 3381.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Resolution, because the Barbados Development Bank from its inception has played such a very important role in providing venture capital for Barbadian enterprises that we have a responsibility to ensure that it is kept in funds so that it may continue to be a source of long term capital for potential investors in this country."

Could the Prime Minister of Barbados tell me whether or not the capital base of the old Barbados Development Bank matches that or in fact the reverse? Do these enterprises, the micro enterprise, the other fund which we had, did they in funding match the capital base of the Barbados Development Bank? Can these enterprises really perform the function of providing venture capital for small businesses that were so adequately provided by the existing Development Bank back in the 1980s and 1970s?

If no, why does he expect that these new arrangements would in fact give expression to the policy matrix which he has in mind for guaranteeing that there will be the creation of new enterprises in Barbados and the expansion of old enterprises. In fact, in his own admission, we had a situation with the Micro Enterprise Fund where there were 1 135 applicants and only 60 loans were approved. That represents 5% of the people being given loans. If we are saying that this fund can in fact allow Government to execute a programme of wealth creation then we have to question whether or not this achievement ratio here of 5% can in fact sustain Government's proposal to create new enterprises in Barbados in the way in which we are expecting as a measure of alleviating or reducing poverty in Barbados. 4.25 p.m.

I am saying that it strikes me as an extremely low achievement rate on the part of the Micro Enterprise Fund and it seems even lower than most commercial banks in Barbados. Of 1 135 applicants, 60 were successful and the average loans granted under this Enterprise Fund was \$10 000, and we were told it has created 107 jobs. Now, I must tell you that I am very happy to see that these enterprises which are so small, which have taken quite along time to acquire funds of less than \$10 000 in most cases, have been able to create, according to the Micro Enterprise Fund, 107 jobs in a short space of time.

I am always extremely wary of this kind of information because it does not give me a lot of hope to think that the people who expect to be successful when approaching these kinds of institutions can be guaranteed of success, when the success ratio to date is only 5% of the applicants; and we are here today boasting that we can alleviate poverty through the creation of these enterprises. It is an amazing thing that we can boast of this kind of success - limited success - and yet still feel that we can achieve the bigger objective of alleviating poverty. So you know what this is saying, that of the 100% poor people who applied for funding to set up a new enterprise, 95% were unsuccessful, so we still have not addressed the poor, by the evidence provided by the Prime Minister.

I thought that we were in fact seeking to accommodate the poor people, and yet still we are rejecting 95% of the poor who approached this institution. It does not make sense to me. It really does not make sense to me. We are saying to the people of Barbados that you are poor and we are going to embrace you, we are accommodating you at every turn, we look forward to having you come to this institution because the commercial banks cannot provide, and are unwilling to provide the funding, yet still 95% failure in terms of providing the applicants with the necessary funding which they seek.

This was supposed to be an organisation that went around all of the red tape. This was supposed to be an organisation that accommodate poor, black people and yet still the success rate is only 5%. Do you think that this is acceptable? Do you think that you can feel smart about this as a Government? Do you think that you can promote this as something that would contribute to the alleviation of poverty, and you are comfortable? Is this just another public relations exercise on the part of this administration, or is this a measure of success as projected by the Prime Minister once again? This Government is extremely great at public relations. In fact, so great that it sees it necessary to run one against me, a public relations expert.

It is time for us to get down to solid thinking about % where we are taking Barbados, and not think that we can convince the people of Barbados with these kinds of initiatives. We now have another enterprise which is supposed to alleviate poverty. It is called the Enterprise Growth Fund. We are supposed to supply small business with some form of equity because Government sees it fit to get involved in small business.

Now, again, I do not know how Government proposes to do this. I do not know why Government should think that it can get involved in tourism, it can get involved in manufacturing, it can get involved in other small businesses, it can get involved in financial exercises.

What expertise does Government have at the Enterprise Growth Fund that is so broad-based as to permit those people to know that a particular area in tourism will be a successful venture within which Government can safely invest some equity? Those same individuals then go to another area - clothing, manufacturing, and they bring the same expertise to fully assess why Government funds should go into such a business and then it goes from there into the canefields.

I am saying that there needs to be greater organisation on the part of Government. Government needs to know exactly where it proposes to take us, the people of Barbados. Government needs to know exactly where it is going, and that just to suggest that putting money at certain ventures in Barbados would guarantee success cannot be the way forward. It cannot cause poverty alleviation. It cannot cause eradication. It cannot cause poverty reduction, because this is not what poverty is about. Poverty is about understanding first the plight of the human being, categorising that plight, and then executing policies which would satisfy that particular group of individuals, but you cannot use this broad broom to sweep everything under a poverty alleviation programme. You cannot give it a social dimension and then refuse to execute a social plan. You cannot just see it in terms of economics and finance, it needs to have a structure.

In fact, the Deputy Prime Minister of the day, in a recent debate in these Chambers, was strongly against the establishment of some set of councils across Barbados, whether or not you call it local government, but yet still the Deputy Prime Minister last year chaired a session and strongly recommended as the Chairman, a proposal to introduce local government across the region, and came into these Chambers which I attended, and stoutly denied her relationship or affinity with local government, an amazing thing, but these kinds of things cannot work, because you see, you need to give an honest expression to understanding a problem. From there you can then execute whichever plan you wish to execute, but you cannot use a report which erroneously states that St. John is the poorest parish in Barbados, when all of us know that St. Andrew, in fact suffers that fate in Barbados.

Not only by way of that report, St. Andrew suffers the fate of being the poorest parish in Barbados, by way of the census data which is produced on a ten-year basis in Barbados, it is known on the evidence of income structure, it is known on the evidence of ownership of resources, it is known on the basis of outward migration from St. Andrew, it is known on several indicators of toilet facilities, of housing stock, that St. Andrew is indeed the poorest parish in Barbados on the basis of proper information which is gathered every 10 years under the population census status.

It is also known that as much as we would try to promote Speightstown on the basis of a special development's area, that since 1960 the population of St. Peter has systematically declined. It has done so in St. Andrew as well. It has hardly grown in St. Lucy, so it is therefore known that in the north of Barbados it is going to be extremely difficult to develop Speightstown as a major town within Barbados. It is going to be very difficult because the natural tendency is for outward migration from the north. That is why St. James has developed that kind of way. That is why Christ Church has developed because of population growth, that is why St. Philip, because of population growth. Therefore to fool people, in fact, that there will be a great turn around of events, economic and industrial in Speightstown, is to deny what is happening in Barbados.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On that score I am saying that this question of poverty debate first of all has to be understood by way of a proper investigation, a proper survey. You have to know exactly where the poor are located, what are the characteristics of the poor, whether they are the new or structural poor, whether they are the transient poor, whether they are the systematic or chronic poor, whether they are the working poor. It has to be understood that there are different categories of poor for which we would require different strategies in terms of policy making. On that basis to come to simply pull wool over the eyes of the people, to suggest that an Urban Development Commission can alleviate poverty by way of an Enterprise Fund, or can alleviate poverty simply by means of repairing a home, is to deny the very serious complexities of poverty, not only in Barbados but throughout the region and the world. Poverty is a very complex phenomenon which needs to be studied before you can address it by way of policies.

I thank you, Sir.  
4.35 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my strong support to the creation of a Social Investment Fund as is the intention of the legislation before this House today. This Government is firm in the view that there needs to be a comprehensive approach toward development at the national level but equally so, toward the reduction and, hopefully, eventually alleviation of poverty both at the community level and at the level of individuals in this country.

Barbados, Sir, has had a fortunate history from the perspective that we have had, a commitment on the part

of Barbadians who have come before us to provide a better quality of life for the citizens of this country and successive administrations, particularly those who have been involved in public life since the 1930s, have seen to it that they have placed the development of individuals at the core of public policy development by ensuring that Government invested heavily within the social sectors and provided the legislative environment so that persons could benefit across the country.

Indeed, Sir, it is noticeable that the investment in education was able to benefit substantially from a network of schools that existed on the ground from as early as the 19th century and it is a phenomenal fact that a country of 166 square miles can have among its midst over 200 primary schools at the turn of the century, a hospital providing general health care and even a psychiatric hospital facility which was built in the 19th century.

Now it was true that at the turn of the century while these institutions existed, that access to them was limited and determined more by colour, class and property than other criteria which would have provided equitable access to all the citizens of this country.

The rise in nationalism and the understanding that there should be equality of opportunity for all, however, has essentially permeated the views and philosophies of those persons who have come to public life for the better part of this century. We therefore start from the fortunate perspective, unlike many of our neighbours within the developing world, that we have the base through which we can provide opportunities for the majority of our people. With the best intention in the world, however, Mr. Speaker, there are those who will fall through, and have fallen through because even with free education for all, unless you can provide a certain quality of education through the system provided, persons are unable to benefit to the maximum of their ability.

Equally, with the provision of health care and other social services, unless persons are properly aware of the services that exist, they are unable to effectively benefit from them. We therefore determine, Sir, as a Government, that one of the things we needed to do was to take a comprehensive approach toward being able to target those persons who have not benefitted from the substantial delivery of services within the social sector to improve the quality of life over the course of the last 60 years, and there are still some within our midst, unfortunately.

There are other countries, particularly in the Caribbean, whose problems are far greater than ours and whose problems reflect a lack of commitment especially in relation to public expenditure in these very social services that has

seen thousands of Barbadians over the course of the last 60 years, but in particular in the last 40 years benefit substantially. Therefore, Sir, in determining what can be and could be a comprehensive approach to the alleviation of poverty, the Government has systematically, over the course of the last 3½ years, sought to develop institutions, introduce legislation and provide funding all with the aim of being able to improve the quality of life of those Barbadians who have failed to benefit from that substantial investment in the social sectors today.

It is significant, Sir, that the continued investment at the national level in areas such as education, health care and social services has continued at a rate where indeed the levels of expenditure being granted to these areas have grown substantially in the last three years. While recognising that increased funds may be needed in these areas, there is also a commitment to bring about levels of efficiency where possible and certainly to strive to that end because it is not simply about increasing the amount of money, but being able to more effectively use the resources at one's disposal to be able to target those persons truly in need.

At that level of the infrastructure, therefore, Sir, we decided that it was important to set up two Commissions, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission to go into communities and develop infrastructurally the types of programming needed to raise communities out of the levels of poverty by ensuring that there is a holistic approach to their development, not only in terms of coming in and putting in a road and leaving, but by ensuring that at the same time you look at the provision of a road you look at sidewalks. You look at drainage, you look at opportunities for people to improve their housing either by improving the housing stock of those persons who could not afford it because they were pensioners or because they were indigent, or by ensuring that there is access to capital so that persons can improve their own housing because the surroundings around them have improved.

Equally, Sir, once you provide that level of physical infrastructural development and support for land and house ownership then you look at the question of persons being able to have access to sustainable forms of living. And, that may be in the form of either the provision of jobs, opportunities for self employment or indeed the capacity to ensure that persons have the opportunity to receive training so that they can better meet the demands within the economy as to where jobs or services are required. That is what I call a comprehensive approach to the reduction and alleviation of poverty in this country.

It is not simply driven by the fact that you have a welfare department that has a couple thousand people on

its roll and is doling out money to the persons who are welfare recipients and you forget about them. It is not simply about being able to put in a road and then move back out and when you put in the road because you made no proper provision for drainage the road is undermined within two or three years and persons' houses are being flooded out again.

It is interesting, Sir, that this is not a perspective that is unique to this country at all and anyone who is familiar with the establishment of other social investment funds, or rural development programmes, or urban development programmes across the world will know that many of the same things that have motivated this Government were, in fact, prevalent in those countries. It is significant that Albania for example established a Poverty Alleviation Programme and a Rural Development Programme to bring a level of infrastructural development to communities that were not benefitting from works from the existing Public Works Department or the existing welfare agencies *et cetera* but to develop an agency whose sole and primary motivation is to move people out of the circumstances which they are forced to live and to seek to allow them to be able to provide for themselves. 4.45 p.m.

We therefore believe, Sir, that we are on a good batting wicket in respect to this. In 1995 we established the Rural Development Commission only to be followed in 1997 by the Urban Development Commission. My particular interest lies in both because the boundaries with respect to St. Michael North East in fact has persons above the ABC Highway with the Rural Development Commission and persons below the ABC Highway within the Urban Development Commission.

I have had the opportunity, Sir, of being able to work with both agencies and I recognise that their approach towards development has been such that they seek to want to be able to go into communities while at the same time dealing with the most urgent isolated cases across Barbados as has been represented to them either through politicians, specific groups, churches or whoever on the basis of need.

What is significant, Sir, is that these organisations are demand driven organisations. These organisations seek to put in services where there is a demand as opposed to simply developing a project and then going in and not knowing whether there is a demand for that as well. There is also a greater level of flexibility than would be within a Government agency largely because they have the capacity to be able to contract and not be bound by the same level of bureaucracy within the Ministries in Government.

Equally, Sir, they believe that there has to be greater level of consensus in terms of the planning particularly at the

community level and their efforts have not been limited to pleas from politicians alone but their efforts have also extended to pleas from churches, from community groups and from youth groups as you yourself know, Sir, because you have, from your own experience channelled a number of those instructions through to these organisations to improve the quality of life of those people in St. Michael Central particularly, Sir, I know from my own experience with you in the Hill Road, Bank Hall, Bush Hall areas. For that they are very, very grateful, Sir.

Sir, the question of being able to provide these opportunities for people in their communities cannot simply be the subject of partisan political debate. I, therefore, am a little disheartened at what I have heard today coining from the Opposition who have failed to recognise that it has been the efforts of successive Governments in this country and we have been fortunate as a people that those persons who have entered public life recognise that the personal improvement of persons in this country matters. It is not simply about Government delivering services or fulfilling a mandate by spending the money that has been provided for them in the Estimates of Expenditure.

I believe, Sir, that Barbados will continue to be stronger if we can ensure that the spirit that has caused us to put people at the centre of our governance of this country can continue, and that they will seek to make a partisan political issue about the provision of basic services to people in this country, is the day that we will follow the unfortunate role that has been followed by some of our neighbours within the region.

There is an interesting article written by Mr. Hadlock Brewster that was written on a comparative analysis between the development of Barbados and Jamaica during this century. The most significant point made in that report is that it was the investment and social practices in Barbados that has contributed significantly to our development - primarily education and to a lesser extent health care have contributed significantly to the development of this country and to the fact that we can be viewed as one of the top developing countries in the world in respect of our human social development index. I believe that is something that we should be proud of but merely having attained that status cannot allow us to ignore the fact that from our own experience there are persons and families that still need that particular level of additional assistance to move from the positions where they are to a position where they can provide for themselves.

Three generations ago there was very little difference between all of us in this country in terms of what services and what access to wealth we had in this country. The majority of us came from the same place, to use a

phrase of Black Stalin. We have had the opportunity to ensure that thousands have been able to rise above those circumstances. The effort and the crusade to continue cannot stop, if anything on the eve of the millennium, we must redouble our efforts to remove this type of poverty from our landscape.

I, therefore, believe, Sir, that the specific targeting at an individual level within the context of the programming delivered by the Government through the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission and supplemented by the Social Sectors Ministries are critical in ensuring that we can develop these programmes. Barbados' size, Mr. Speaker, gives us a competitive advantage in the fight against poverty. It is simply a question of being able to target the substantial resources that are available to us to those persons who are truly in need of it in order to rise above their circumstances.

Over the course of the last month, Mr. Speaker, I established a committee within the Ministry of Education chaired by Senator Forde to be a standing committee for provision of social services to children within schools. The reason for doing that, Sir, is very often a particular social services agency will go and deliver a service to a family without knowing that another social services agency has been delivering services to that family for some time. Day in and day out, we spend a substantial amount of our time within the Ministry of Education dealing with just social problems at the individual level. There is abuse within the family, there is nobody in the household working and there are four or five children there and they are not getting nutrition because of their inability to have access to funds to be able to provide properly for the diet of the children. A whole host of things like alcoholism being suffered by one of the parents. All of those types of things come before us on a daily basis.

When you see a boy or girl being suspended or being expelled invariably when we take the time to sit down and I am happy to say that from the Chief Education Officer right back down, from myself and the Parliamentary Secretary that on a daily basis we meet with children and parents trying to see how we can improve things and invariably what is required does not come from within the Ministry of Education alone but is available within the context of Government's provision of social services.

I am saying that Barbados is small enough for us to be able to target those persons and to be able to lift those persons out of their circumstance of poverty as well as target those who may even be working but their commitments outstretch what they are earning and they become known as the "working poor". We can help these persons better be able to meet their commitments.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that if we can help persons to provide for themselves that at the end of the day it is not about them being grateful to a politician, it is about their capacity to provide for themselves. There is the old saying that it is better to teach a man how to fish than to give him a fish. If we can deal with a family, if we have a child who is giving trouble and that child is referred to the committee chaired by Senator Forde who incidentally sits in the Juvenile Court at least twice a month to be able to allow us to see where the problems are coming within the school system. Then we can call in the families, we can sit down with them and determine what is really the crux of the problem.

Up to this morning we had one child whose mother is an alcoholic who was being abusive at school all the time at sixteen years old and initially the school's reaction was to superannuate and send home the boy because he is sixteen. But the boy is a bright boy, there are problems in the household and we are determined that we need to get counselling for the mother as well as to get her access to some form of training to be able to get a job that is long term rather than serving here and there as she has been doing. That is the type of thing we hope that this Committee chaired by Senator Forde who, if I may say so, is perhaps one of the best and most natural social workers that I have ever met in my life in terms of the level of care that she administers toward the persons that she deals with. That Committee can deal systematically with a lot of the problems that we face in the country. 4.55 p.m.

The whole motivation behind youth affairs programmes too, Mr. Speaker, was the same thing. If we divide Barbados into 32 cells, and the Youth Commissioner at the level of the community can identify, through his own leg work as well as the school studies that we do every year for those 4 000 or so children who are leaving school that we jpan identify, who really are the critical ones that we need to target to be able to get them into training or to be able to give them access to counselling, if they have an addiction. Unfortunately that is still a problem with some of them in terms of alcohol or substance abuse. To be able to get them into some form of counselling if they are on probation because they have had a run-in with the law. If we can more effectively target them instead of having to deal with 1 000 at a time if we can deliver the social services that are there. There is nothing wrong with the quality of our social services. It is a question of being able to target those who truly need and in targeting that there should be a holistic approach.

If the Welfare Department is dealing with them and the Child Care Board is also dealing with them, the Officer should not be dealing with them in isolation, there

should be a coordinated approach. If there is a church that they go to, the priest from that church should also be brought in to be able to sit down and work. For example, how shall we move this family from a position where they are now dysfunctional to a position where they can provide for themselves?

I believe, Sir, that this is the type of programming that we need to support in respect of our social services and hopefully through the Social Investment Fund it will only assist in helping Government to be able to better target those persons who need assistance.

I would never be so arrogant, Mr. Speaker, as to suggest that the only persons who know about poverty or who know where people are suffering are politicians or Members of Parliament. Therefore the network that includes the non governmental organisations, the community groups, the youth groups, the churches are equally important in the capacity of government to be able to provide the funds and the private sector too, because we have been focussing on Government without realising that the private sector has a social responsibility to the development of people in this country. That we can be better able reach these people if this network of groups can also bring forward the individual examples. If we simply manage by cells and manage in small lots then we can meet the needs that are before us in terms of seeking to obliterate poverty in this country.

I also believe, Sir, that the opportunity for enterprise and training are critical in terms of allowing those persons to provide sustainable employment for themselves. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that a lot has been said seeking to criticise Government's efforts at the establishment of five different institutions to provide funding and technical expertise for enterprise development in this country.

I think that on sober reflection, Mr. Speaker, Sir, persons will recognise that those five institutions currently exist where previously none did. More importantly, where there has been an attitude within the commercial banking sector of this country that has simply left the persons out simply because of their station in life or the fact that they did not know somebody to influence somebody to give them a loan or somebody to give them a guarantee to back a loan.

One of the Members on the other side raised the fact that one of these institutions was requiring too many persons to guarantee. I openly agree with the fact that if in truth and in fact they are harassing for two or three people to come forward and back the person then that is ridiculous. What we need is the ability to give those persons a chance. Those persons invariably at the level of risks that we are being

asked to bear are minimal. They simply want an opportunity to be given a chance or somebody to give them access to some credit. I therefore feel, Mr. Speaker, that if the Government can write off funds in the sugar industry, the Government can afford to take a risk with a lot of these persons in this country who cannot go into a bank in Broad Street and get a loan.

Now, the cost of the risk is what our level of subsidies would be for the provision of these persons to get into a position where they become self employed. I want to suggest to you, Sir, that we would be the most surprised persons if we thought that those persons are going to be irresponsible in the loan repayment. These people have come through cultural policies and practices over the course of the last few centuries that have seen them operate in *susus*, that have seen them operate in the precursors to credit unions and all of these things where they had no big set of money but their commitment to repay has been of the highest standard and the highest record. Indeed, Sir, where there has been a genuine inability to pay, they usually come and make arrangements for repayment at a future date.

I believe, Sir, that as a Government, having taken care in large measure to the social needs of these people in this country that we have a moral responsibility to ensure that these categories of persons who cannot otherwise qualify, have access to funds. The funds may be to fix a roof that is leaking. The funds may be able to extend a runner in the back for chickens. The fund may be to be able to set up and buy a little gas stove so that they can fry chicken wings and fish on a Friday night to supplement what they have to be able to take care of themselves. And, all they want, Mr. Speaker, is a chance.

At the other level there are persons who are in more formal small business activities that require access to capital. Now, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I believe the concept of an Enterprise Growth Fund is a good thing. Because, instead of forcing those persons to carry an additional burden in terms of debt, you are giving them access to equity and therefore the capacity to be able to run their business without having to spend all of the money that is taken in servicing debt, allows them to be able to last longer hopefully in their businesses and to make their small business operations more viable in terms of the capacity for long term sustenance and sustainability.

I really applaud the Government's efforts, Sir, in terms of establishment of these five agencies: The Urban Enterprises Fund, the Rural Enterprises Fund, the Micro Enterprise Agency, the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited and of course, the Youth Entrepreneurs Scheme which

not only provides funding, but technical assistance, training and access to membership programmes.

Sir, enterprise at the level of the individual is not the only avenue that this Government is concentrating on in the respect of the reduction of poverty and the encouragement of enterprise within this country. There must be, as we have started to do, a concerted effort for the provision of enterprise opportunities for community-based groups and non-governmental organisations.

I am happy to say, Sir, that we are currently in the process of developing two programmes: one in Bush Hall where we are looking at the provision of a day care centre for single mothers and married mothers, but who, whether they are working or not still need to do things around the house. Because even if you are unemployed and you have three or four children you need the time to be able to take care of business to keep the household running.

Therefore, the provision of day care facilities within the community is critical. But unlike the Leader of the Opposition I believe that communities must be encouraged to sponsor these activities and with assistance from the Government to run the Day Care Centre themselves. I sincerely hope that the project which we will be doing in Bush Hall next to the Community Centre will in fact, be a pilot for those persons who do not believe that it is possible.

We, Sir, are requesting that the Government leases the land at a peppercorn rent and we are helping to raise the funds for the materials. Once those funds are raised to be able to get us off the ground, we are using the labour from within the community, not only to build the Day Care Centre, Mr. Speaker, but indeed to also run it without having to require the Government to provide salaries for persons to run the Centre. How can it work? You may say, "how can I send my child there if I am unemployed?" We will have persons, Mr. Speaker, Sir, who if you are unemployed, instead of having to bring money to pay, you can then come and offer a day or two a week, depending on what they determine. But before you offer that day or two, you go through a programme of training and that is where we tap back into the Government for assistance. So we ask Government only for assistance in the leasing of land at a peppercorn rate and also in the provision of training for the persons who must work with people's children. If you, however, are working and still would like your child to \$o there and you do not have the time to volunteer, then you can pay whatever fee it is per week. 5.05 p.m.

This day care centre would not only be for children but would also be for senior citizens who, for example, are living

in a household where the persons have to go to work but do not want to stay in the house alone by themselves even though home help may be available to them.

As well, the Attorney General and myself are looking at a project in Jackson. Senator Forde, myself and a number of other persons went with representatives of Africa Hall through the gully in Jackson so that we can develop nature trails. That gully actually runs under the highway where we see the cut rock. It is the most amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, that we actually went through some tunnels almost as high as the roof in this Chamber which takes you under the highway across the road to the other side and past Mr. Rayside's quarry. We are looking at the development of a nature trail there for Barbadians and for tourists so that persons within the community can have the opportunity to be able to benefit from earning a living as part and parcel of the enterprise development at a community level.

Africa Hall is an established institution. The persons who constitute Africa Hall all live there in Jackson. They have substantial acreage planted up and down at the bottom of First Avenue, Jackson. And I believe that if we can tie that in with the rehabilitation of the Rio Grande off Jackson Main Road, which the Attorney General has also looked at with me, then we would have the opportunity to be able to provide an outlet also for the sale of souvenirs, for the sale of health foods and a whole host of things that fall naturally within that nature base eco-tourism market. I believe that they will be able to target both long stay tourists as well cruise ship visitors and the support from Government will come in the form of the rehabilitation of Rio Grande just as Government has been proposing with Club Randall in Christ Church and also with assistance to get them off the ground in marketing. Because we realise that for these projects to be successful then there must be the development of the institutional capacity of these non-governmental organisations and that Government may have to hold their hands initially until they reach a point where they finally can be applying for their own grants and getting them automatically and executing them themselves.

These are the types of projects that I believe that this Social Investment Fund can support, that it can go a long way towards further validating the sacrifices and the work of successive Governments over the course of the last 60 years towards broadening the base of access to social and economic opportunity and political rights in this country. I believe that it is not a matter to be subject to political partisanship but it is a matter that each side must recognise the important role that each of our sides have contributed to the effort and that it is that combined effort that has separated Barbados from most developing countries across the world and that it is that combined effort that will cause us to become the smallest developed country in the world.

I look forward, Sir, within my lifetime and certainly within the early part of the 21st century to our being designated as that, not simply because we have politicians who did good work or that we understood governance but because we have truly delivered to the majority of people in this country who will continue to build it up for our benefit and for the benefit of our children to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I enter this debate at a time when I must start by congratulating the Honourable Member who has just sat down because one of the best phrases used by her is when she said it is better to teach a man how to fish than to give him a fish and that is a phrase that I have heard many a time from this side so I am glad that something from this side is travelling over that side.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to agree with her that I have particular problems in dealing with situations that when we are dealing with large industries we tend to be prepared to give concessions and I have said on many occasions in this Assembly that whenever we are discussing the interests of what we call the "big man" in this country we are quite prepared to come in here and give a lot of concessions and whenever we set up something on behalf of the small man we put all types of stumbling blocks in his way.

Imagine we have now set up organisations to allow the small man in this country to be able to borrow money but before the small man can borrow money he must get 3 guarantors. A man can fly in here and he is not called upon to get 3 guarantors to come into this country to borrow money but for a small man to get money in this country institutions set up by Government are asking the small man to find 3 guarantors to borrow money. I am saying it is disgraceful and it should not take this side to have to point out to the Government that that was wrong because from the time the legislation went to Cabinet they should have seen in that legislation that it was faulty and it was too burdensome on the small man and the Cabinet should have removed it at that point in time.

I am saying, Sir, I have another problem. This joint venture capital fund that Government is proposing to set up will never get off the ground because I will tell the small business people in this country that the same way the Government wants to give them funding through the joint venture fund all they have to do to achieve the same object is to give them a loan at zero interest rates and they would achieve the same thing.

The only other benefit is that the businessman will have to understand that he has to repay and it gives him a greater commitment to make his business successful. So all this talk about doing a joint venture on behalf of small people we

have to ignore that and free up the fund so that the small man can get those funds to make use that he can invest those funds in his company or other business and get it off the ground.

If we are going to put the small man in a strangle-hold and tell him we are not prepared to change and that you must set up your business to get involved in joint ventures then you will have a \$2 million fund and what we set up that fund to do you will not achieve.

I am calling on Government today to take that \$2 million and make it a soft loan to the Small Business Association at zero interest rates and you can put in whatever stipulations you want to. You can tell them that you need to audit their books and all that because that is exactly what they want to do. They want to have a certain amount of control and I am telling you, Sir, that if Government puts in that stipulation and frees up that money to borrow that within a week all \$2 million will be borrowed from the Small Business Association and they will be able to expand their business using those funds.

If we are serious about developing small people in this country we must first start by developing where they live. There are too many people in Barbados who have to walk through tracks every day and muddy up their shoes when the Government has over \$200 million in excess funds from VAT.

I am also saying that you must develop the mind of the people first. You cannot encourage people to continue to live in tracks and then expect them to react any different. You must put in those amenities. 5.15p.m.

You must show them that you are prepared to uplift where they live and where they work, and I am calling on Government, Sir, to make sure that the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission do the work that they are supposed to do. Let me give you an example. From the time the Rural Development Commission was set up, I told the Minister of Finance that the amount of money allocated to the Ministry for Rural Development was not enough. It is no surprise to me that today not one single road in St. Lucy has been completed. I am going to tell you why.

I understand the type of pressure that he is under. I understand because when you have so little funds and so many people on your back every Thursday at Cabinet, begging you for roads you expect him to look at the Honourable Member for St. Lucy? I am saying that we have got to negotiate and we are going to negotiate

this evening in here, because we all live in the north, Sir, and when the rain falls it washes to St. James also, and when the tide comes around the North Point, Sir, it comes to St. James, so he has to look after me or the tide will go down the wrong way. He has to look after people of St. Lucy, so he has to tell his comrades at Cabinet that he has to make sure that he has to put some roads in St. Lucy.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is asking me to do the right thing and to go my own way. The people of St. Lucy know that they have the resources already and that they can do it alone. We have talented people, Sir. That is why when I hear the Prime Minister speak about Gall Hill and how he has put in \$500 000 for a project at Gall Hill I have to wonder how can the Honourable Member put \$500 000 in a project in Gall Hill when he knows, Sir, that the bright brains of St. Lucy were able to construct a project at North Stars in the parish of St. Lucy in Crab Hill, using their own resources and all they need right now is about \$40 000 to complete the project. If they complete the project at North Stars, Mr. Speaker, the North Stars group will have a facility where they could now become a NGO in the constituency of St. Lucy where they can now set up a programme where they can repair all the old people's houses within St. Lucy because they have the people who can do the work.

We must first be able to complete that project, and all we are calling upon the Prime Minister, out of the Poverty Alleviation Fund, to just give North Stars only \$40 000, and then we would submit the necessary programme to repair all the old people's houses within St. Lucy. He needs not worry about the poor people not being taken care of, because the North Stars group has shown the capacity and the ability to do things that other groups could not do, and set the right example. So I am calling on the Prime Minister today, Sir, to go back to the Cabinet meeting on next Thursday that is coming, and issue instructions that that beautiful parish of St. Lucy which he knows well, should get the \$40 000 for North Stars, so that they can submit their programme to develop the constituency of St. Lucy.

I am saying, Sir, that if we want to be serious about developing poor people we need to go back and see how the great or the excellent Errol Barrow, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, was able in 1961 to come to this Parliament and decide that free secondary education - a crash programme, Sir, that they were going to be two of the main vehicles that he was going to use to uplift poor people. The same way, Sir, that Mr. Barrow could have done it in 1961 where the resources were not there we can do it now that we have over \$200 million from VAT that we did not budget for.

I am saying, Sir, that the Prime Minister has the resources to come to this House and announce a programme

to look after the interest of poor people. I am going to tell the Prime Minister this, I do not support any programme that sends out cheques for \$350 to people. I feel, Sir, that programme would have gone further if you had gone into each house and employed one more person. I would support a programme like that, not that I am against the people getting \$350.

I support them and I wish that they do what they have to do with it, but it would have served me better if a programme was started, a crash programme, whatever you want to call it and each house that had unemployed persons you selected at least one person because at least, Sir, you would have achieved more. I am saying that this thing about handing out money, Sir, I am not a believer in that. I believe that people must learn to work for what they want and I am a strong supporter, and I feel, Sir, that the time has come where we allocate people, Sir, we allocate a certain amount of money for poor people and we say that this is the way that we are going.

I once said in this Assembly that I would like to see a crash programme in the tourism sector and I want to see the poor people playing a part. I am going to tell you why. Once upon a time, it sounds like a fairy tale, poor people were able to go on the beaches on the West Coast and make a good living, but the days of that are over because the big hoteliers in this country believe that the tourism industry belongs to them. I want to send a warning to them that if they feel within themselves that they can take the whole tourism cake for themselves, they are wrong. You cannot tell me that poor people must behave a particular way to tourists, and then people can fly in here and make all the money and fly right back out. I am totally opposed to that, Mr. Speaker, and I will not support a policy like that.

Poor people must be able to go back to the days where they can sell on the beaches, they can own the jet skis and they can do a lot more. They can even own hotels. The hotel industry does not belong to only people who can fly in here<sup>4</sup> and own hotels. The hotel industry belongs to all of us and we must tell the people who control and behave as if everything that belongs to the hotel industry belongs to them.<sup>^</sup> That is wrong. My brothers and sisters have a right to get benefits from the tourism industry. That is why I will always be opposed to all-inclusive tourism.

That is why, Sir, sometimes you get so much crime in the tourist industry, because there is no freedom anymore, and sometimes what you call crime is not necessarily crime. It is just competitive marketing that you are opposing. I am saying that all-inclusive tourism

might be good for Jamaica but it cannot be good for Barbados, because if you want people to play a part in tourism then they must be able to share in the goodies. What we are seeing, Sir, are large masses of land being cut off from Barbados, Sir, and going as if we are now returning on slave boats. Those days are over.

We must be able to dictate our destiny and the most shocking thing, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew promised me, Sir, that he would have removed some pillars, he would have compulsorily acquired some land in the Sandy Lane area, on the Sandy Lane road, that he would have compulsorily acquired some land to remove some pillars on that road. He has not done it and this morning driving through Sunset Crest, coming down from the cemetery I realised some more have gone up. Yes, and if you doubt me, Sir, take a drive down to the St. James Cemetery and coming down to "99" some bright person has driven some iron stakes in the ground and has the concrete up. If you miss and skid, "braggadown" into the concrete. Sunset Crest is not for us anymore.

They have not only blocked the road in Sunset Crest right now, but the legal 5-metre or 5ft. verge, they are now blocking from us. This is Barbados and we have to come here as parliamentarians and put up with this nonsense, in a country that we call our own. How long can we continue to live in these areas and live in these conditions that where we get commitment from Government that the land would be ours, people are putting concrete barriers to block us. And you ask me to continue to come to this Parliament and sit down and feel happy when my poor people are oppressed? Do not forget, Sir, it is the maids and the gardeners who have to walk up there. Any morning a speeding car comes down you cannot even run to the verge anymore - concrete is there to block them, oh Lord, they are gone right into the cemetery next door. I am saying, Sir, that the same way that they went to Road View, I expect them to be in Sunset Crest tomorrow and I expect that both sections will be compulsorily acquired. Wait, hold on a minute. 5.25p.m.

I am calling on my former parliamentary representative to do something because it is in his constituency. I am talking about the Honourable Member for St. James North and if you want to find out where it is I will carry you because you are my friend. We went to Coleridge & Parry School together so I have to look after you still. Do not mind you are not giving me the roads.

I am saying, Sir, that people must understand that when they come to Barbados they have to come in here and live on the terms we set for them, not they coming in here and dictating things to us. And we have a Government that seems to me that they are not prepared to do anything because I brought this up over two years ago when it happened at

Sandy Lane and now somebody comes in Sunset Crest and is doing the same thing. How am I to feel happy, Sir? It must stop. Let me tell you something, Sir, if it does not stop I will have to take a hack saw and cut them down and then get locked up for them or something because somebody has to set an example in this country.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not want to be a hero. I am protecting the interest of the poor people in this country. I will have to take a hack saw and cut them down because there is no way that any permission should be given for something like that, and no permission could have been given. I am going to carry my friend with me, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South as my legal representative.

We are at a stage, Sir, in this country where we used to brag after 1966 that these fields and hills belonged to us but I am not sure anymore, Sir, that we can brag about that because people are coming in here using their largesse and taking over. It is beyond recall now because they sold it to us and now they are taking it back from us. Can you imagine that, Sir? They brought us here as slaves. They turned around and sold the land to us and now it is being sold back to them. What is going on in this country? We are making a joke.

Can you imagine, Sir, if I put up with this type of nonsense how my son would look at me, Sir? Can you imagine my son growing up 10 years from now, cannot get a piece of land in Barbados what he would say about his Daddy?

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Even, Mr. Speaker, if I could leave land for my son, how about my next door neighbour who cannot leave land for his son? I have to protect that interest.

I am saying, Sir, that in order for us to deal with a Social Investment Fund we first have to go back to basics. The problem with some of us in this country is that we are ashamed sometimes to tell people where we started. We behave as if we started in waterbeds and we do not want anybody to know that we started on the floor. I am not ashamed of that. I do not know about you. I can stand up and be counted, but we have a situation where it must stop.

I am calling on my friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North, to make sure because I heard the Prime Minister in here saying today that in order to develop people you must give them the necessary amenities and the key amenity to developing people happens to be roads so we want some amenities in St. Lucy. Your

department was set up to put roads in St. Lucy so I expect you to deliver. You know we accommodate you every day because you love St. Lucy so I cannot blame you any longer when I do not see roads in St. Lucy. I have to find out why you are not delivering the roads to my people in St. Lucy and I give you until June, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am giving the Honourable Member for St. James North until June to show me that he is committed to the rural part of Barbados or I will have to ask the Prime Minister to remove him because he would not have been delivering the goods. If the Honourable Member by June does not show me a commitment of building roads in rural Barbados, then I will say he would have failed and he knows that St. Lucy is the key to rural and he must deliver.

A next point, Sir. This morning while driving to the beautiful parish of St. Lucy I saw an unfortunate accident right outside the Port St. Charles gate. There was an accident there where a young lady was doing something and it so happened that the car overturned and that young lady was in pain and she could not get an ambulance. The first thing that came to me, Sir, was that we have a St. Joseph Hospital which the Minister of Health refused to open and she has not yet given the people in the North a commitment when she is going to reopen it or sell it to somebody and let them reopen it and we can get an ambulance or something. I am saying, Sir, it is disgraceful to talk about social investment funds when you cannot even deliver a hospital that was opened already.

We, the people in the North, Sir, are accustomed to having an ambulance at our door and we do not have it any more so you cannot tell us about development when we do not even have an ambulance. We need to get back the ambulance in the North and we need to make sure that St. Joseph was open because if you are going to be speaking about rural development then things like hospitals and airports, and I know you all used to laugh at me when I talked about my airport and all of a sudden the whole bandwagon is agreeing with me that an airport must come. I am not a philosopher, Sir.

The next matter, Sir. I was told in this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, that the reason why the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission were being set up were to allow the Ministers to do things quickly. I will tell you something, Sir. My experience is that it is easier to write the Minister of Home Affairs who still happens to be in the "old" part of Government as they would call it, and get something done than to write the "new" part which is supposed to do things much quicker, and I ask myself why?

This excuse that you are setting up rural and urban, I am not begging anymore because it seems to me that I prefer

to go back to the old way than the new way because in the old way you used to get a lot more done. We must ask ourselves whether we are setting up something different, or whether we are setting up what we are told we are setting up because it is clear to me that these new Commissions are not > delivering as fast as they should.

A next important point, Sir. They close down the Barbados Development Bank, one cost, and they open five other institutions, five additional costs. Do you realise, Sir, that when you are in Government that 76% of the cost is normally to pay wages and other bills? Would it not be better to set up one institution with one cost and have all of that other money go to the people so that they can borrow that money?

I would bet you, Sir, that if you were to look at the budget of those five organisations that have been set up you will find that 76% of the cost will go to staff the organisation and cover various expenses whereas if you have one organisation you would have a lot more money to lend to poor people.

I am asking the Government to go back to the drawing board and set up one organisation like how they had the BDB and free up more money to the poor people. When they are dealing with rich people, they do not send them through so many organisations so they should not do that to poor people. They need to send poor people to an organisation where the funds are there to be delivered. There is too much bureaucracy. Five different organisations? Why poor people must have five different organisations? The rich people do not have to do that. Why?

We are at a stage, Sir, where we have to ask now whether the Social Investment Fund is going to deliver the goods or whether we are going to be adding to the bureaucracy and it is my honest opinion that all we are doing is adding to the bureaucracy.

A next thing, Sir. We talk a lot about the Public Investment Fund and we have to be very careful. One, we have to ask ourselves where the funds that went into the Public Enterprise Fund came from. It is my opinion that the Public Enterprise Fund came from the sale of capital assets. Now I am getting the impression that those funds are going to pay for current expenditure. I am saying that that is a serious matter because I honestly believe that the Public Enterprise Fund should be invested in such a way as to generate revenue and not to be spent on revenue expenditure. 5.35 p.m.

For a Government that is supposed to have so much money from the VAT, I find it rather surprising that they would have to resort to financing at that level. It tells

me that something is wrong some where. Any good economic planner will tell you that something is wrong. It is my opinion that VAT is delivering the goodies but the expenditure is increasing, it seem to me, faster than planned by Government. This is where I am calling on The Right Honourable Prime Minister to sit down with his economic advisors and make sure he puts in some accountants. He needs to know what is actually going on and he needs to sit down with them to find out why is it that VAT is bringing over \$200 million and yet it appears that the Government has a cash flow problem. I am saying that is my judgement because when you have to tamper with the Public Enterprise Fund to pay current expenditure, something is wrong some where. That is money that you just do not play with. That is serious planning and that is serious funds after you sell the Cement Plant and Heywoods, you are going to just dish out the money like that, *Sir*. Something is wrong and we need to find out from the The Right Honourable Prime Minister what is wrong.

I am calling on the Honourable Member for St. James North to deliver the roads to St. Lucy and I want to congratulate him for delivering a few lights. There are not enough but I am still grateful that he has delivered. *Sir*, the people of St. Lucy would like to get involved in large scale investments, they have the funds but they need the amenities. I do not see why I should be in here begging anybody to put in roads here or there. I expected that roads and street lights would have been something that you get as a norm but I am not seeing that. Politicians have no right to have to come here and beg for roads and lights because every year the Government should allocate 'x' amount of money for roads and light and allocate it per constituency. If we do that, *Sir*, this country will go a lot further.

When you get a situation where one constituency can get eleven roads and St. Lucy cannot get one single tenantry road, something is wrong. It is about time that I go and talk to my people, I have said that already. The time is ripe and if you continue doing it to the people of St. Lucy, I will have to go and talk to my people. They will have to tell me what they want and I am prepared to abide with their ruling. I know that they know that I will represent their interest. In our own way we have been able to develop St. Lucy the way that we want but simple things like street lights, we cannot do and road we cannot get.

I ask you why, *Sir*. Why must we be the ones to suffer when we have delivered. Is it because they sent back a representative against the tide? I would have to believe that that is the reason. If you do not deliver, I can come to any conclusion.

I thank you very much, *Sir*.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that this debate is a very important debate at this time in our history. I also believe that it is non-partisan and that we should see this debate as an opportunity for us to look at areas within our constituency and at how best we can tackle the area of poverty and how this poverty can be, if not totally eradicated, can be solved to some extent.

I am a firm believer, Mr. Speaker, that there will always be the poor in our society. There will always be people in our society who the Government and who persons with the ability to help, should do so. I believe that poverty will exist in many forms. Today we have heard about the absolute poor, structural poor and we have heard about the working poor. All these persons exist in the society but Government has a duty to help. This Government since 1994 has set up agencies by which the poor in our society can be reduced and can be helped.

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the basic things of life, these are necessary. Things like water, housing, electricity and food and to some extent roads. These are some of the things that the Government has put in place by setting up the Rural Enterprise Commission in 1995 and the Urban Development Commission in 1996. These two arms of Government since the inception in 1995 have carried out an important function within our society. The Rural Development Commission has done tremendous work within the rural area, they have installed roads, street lights, they have helped in the enterprise fund where persons who are in need of setting up a basic industry can do so.

I am satisfied that the Rural Enterprises Fund from 1995 has tried to create a more equitable society especially in the rural areas.

When we took office in 1994, Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that the rural area was badly neglected. In fact within my constituency alone, we had over 40 tenantry subsidiary roads that were in grave need of repair. I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that today a number of these country roads were repaired. If you go to an area in my constituency like Golden Ridge in St. George you will see that this road is being addressed. Salters Road is being repaired by the Rural Development Commission. Previous to this there were a number of tracks which were the replica of slavery, which were there for a number of years and were never addressed.

It is a fact that both parties have tried in their efforts to reduce and to help in the tenantry roads. The funds that were allocated over the years were never enough to help address some of these situations. The Rural Development Commission, under the Ministry of Agriculture is trying to address this problem and across Barbados in every constituency roads are being developed, constructed

or improved. We are indeed happy that this commission is doing tremendously well in bringing about a society that persons in Barbados will be proud to be called Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to say that poverty is being addressed within the rural area. In the urban area through the Urban Development Commission a number of enterprises have been set up. The Urban Development Commission only started in 1996 and today they have repaired a number of homes within the St. Michael area. They have done a number of things which were formerly not addressed by the previous administration.

In the area of housing the commission has repaired a number of senior citizens homes. They have addressed this area. A number of persons in St. Michael Central, St. Michael West, St. Michael East and across St. Michael, a number of senior citizens are happy tonight because their homes are being fixed. A number of persons who previously had no homes at all, if you go into these homes you will find derelict buildings. You will find vermin, dirt floors and no roofs. All these things are now being addressed by the Urban Commission. Mr. Speaker, we are happy that this Urban Commission is allowed to function. 5.45 p.m.

If it is allowed to function, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that within a ten-year period that the urban Barbados would be renewed. Today the Right Honourable Prime Minister spoke about the 1 800 house spots which will be seen from the areas in St. Michael that we need to address. Eighteen hundred house spots can be had out of the lands that we have found in St. Michael that is not being used. All these things can be done, but it takes time.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if these matters are properly planned, we can see a modern Barbados. The Urban Commission is also looking not only at the St. Michael's area, but in the outlying areas of Christ Church and St. James which are near to the City. These areas are being addressed and very soon we will see a modern society where persons in those areas will find themselves living above the poverty line.

In the area, Mr. Speaker, of housing, today the Honourable Member for St. Lucy alluded to the fact that a number of things are happening that we are not aware of. When we in the Ministry of Housing come up against a situation where we believe that Barbadians are being unfairly because of persons encroaching on land, we investigate.

The Ministry of Housing on an ongoing basis has been investigating where landowners have been encroaching, where they have blockade, beaches or beach land, we have

tried our best to investigate and wherever possible, the Ministry of Housing has made it publicly clear that we will acquire any land that we believe persons have had access to and are now being denied. So these things are being addressed and we must not allow Barbadians to believe that this Government will sit idly by and allow Barbadians to be trampled by foreigners who come here. This is not the policy of the Government and whenever it came to our attention we have investigated. In fact, in my constituency, one area of land was bought by a foreign agent and a number of persons were put off during the last administration. At this time this matter is being addressed and very soon we will be bringing to Parliament a Resolution to compulsorily acquire that land where persons who were living on this land for years have been denied and have been pelt off. That administration sat idly by and did nothing. We are now in the process of addressing that situation.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this administration has a heart and we will try to address the situation for the poor. In the area of housing what has happened? I understand it was said today, I was not here in my seat, that we are not addressing the case of housing for the poor. Mr. Speaker, the records must be set that the Ministry of Housing had acquired over 3 000 house lots over the last year in 1997. These house lots were not acquired for high income earners. They were acquired for low income earners and they were not acquired only in one part of Barbados, in St. Peter, St. Andrew or St. George but throughout Barbados we have been acquiring lands to help satisfy the needs of poor people.

These lands are not being sold at \$20, \$15 or \$10 per square foot, most of the land is sold at subsidised rates by the National Housing Corporation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have made the point that we will sell the land at \$2.50 or \$2.00 per square foot. We have made a policy that the lands of the National Housing Corporation will be sold between \$2.50 and \$3.00 per square foot. So there is no need to come in here and make people believe that all lands that the Government own are being sold at \$15 or \$20 per square foot and people are acquiring.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, one must say that most of the lands which are being acquired by foreign ventures are now only acquired in one part of Barbados, mainly in the West of Barbados; St. James, St. Peter and may be part of St. Michael. Traditionally within the country area of St. Michael, Christ Church and St. John most Barbadians are still acquiring their land. It is not true to let people believe that the lands in Barbados are going out of the hands of Barbadians.

In terms of housing, terrace units, the records must also be put that by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker, we would have built over 104 terrace units. We have started

44 terrace units at Pondsides. Aready the Deputy Prime Minister has explained what the housing unit at Pondsides will be. We have currently started 20 three-bedroom terrace units at Flat Rock, St. George, 28 at Apes Hill and 20 at Bush Hall in the constituency of St. Michael Central for the poor people. All will be started in this financial year. When you total that figure, Mr. Speaker, we have more than 104 terrace units which will be built by the end of this year.

We have also repaired over 210 house roofs from the National Housing Corporation. All the asbestos roofs in all areas will be changed within the next two years. The programme has started and I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central has also made the point that in his constituency a number of roofs have been changed.

The most important aspect that has happened in housing and Honourable Members must understand is in the loan's department at the National Housing Corporation. We have completely revolutionised the General Workers' Loan Fund. When we came to office, Mr. Speaker, very few people were obtaining loans. In fact, the last Minister of Housing sat down and allowed his Right Honourable Prime Minister to be stranded without spending the money in Housing. We found over \$20 million and we have revolutionised that money.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that most of that money has been spent. In one year, over \$6.2 million were allocated in the General Workers' Housing Loan Fund to 162 persons who were approved for loans. The important thing is that most of the people are not B's or D's or NDP's there are from across Barbados. The Minister or I do not get involved, they come from anywhere in Barbados and are approved. We do not know where they are from but we know the statistics have shown that we have asked the Corporation to lend the money out and to lend it in such a way that persons do not have to have a large sum of money. They are not required to have a bank account and the criteria for loans are not as rigorous as they used to be. We do not ask now for things that were asked for before. You had to have credit worthiness. You had to have a godfather. Today once you have employment whether it is self-employment or you are working at someone and you have the ability to repay the loan, you will obtain a loan. 5.55 p.m.

A number of Barbadians, over 355 Barbadians last year got loans less than \$5 000 and this loan was given to people in less than one week. Persons who applied for less than \$5 000 for repairing their homes, a roof or putting in flooring, for boards to put in a window, were given the loan in less than a week. Never before has this been achieved.

We have taken this money and we did not ask the person who applied for a loan where they were from. We did not ask them to come to us for a letter. Anybody from the constituencies represented by the DLP and the NDP have come and repaired their homes and Barbadians can attest to this that a number of persons are now achieving loans less than \$5 000 in less than a week. It is happening.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, more than \$8 million was loaned out in the course of a year. We have continued to acquire lands not only for housing but for recreation. We have acquired lands throughout Barbados for recreation. It is a policy of this Government that poor people should also enjoy some amenities. We have acquired sporting facilities in St. Michael. In Hill Road we have acquired a hard court for the persons who want to enjoy sport in that area. We have acquired hard courts in the constituency of St. George North. We have acquired a playing field in St. George South. We have done tremendously well in acquiring land across Barbados for sporting activities and we continue to do that.

We have acquired also, Mr. Speaker, a lot of land for road improvement. So the Government continues to provide the opportunity for poor people to rise above poverty but this can only be done if the Government agencies would perform.

We believe that if they are properly managed, if programmes are properly put in place that people will help and the situation will be reduced. The programmes that Government has in store which were outlined today by the Prime Minister and by other Ministers will help reduce poverty in a big way. We believe that through education that poverty can be reduced and a number of Barbadians will have to learn trade. A number of Barbadians will have to learn skills. A number of Barbadians will have to be re-educated in order to find ways and means to rise above poverty.

In the final analysis, despite pelting money at them, despite we help them to repair rooms, despite we do whatever we can, if we do not educate them to understand that they must go hand in hand with Government, at the end of the day, poverty will still be with us.

It must be said that despite the fact that we have more money today than we had before, despite we have the commitment because it seems to me that both sides are committed to the fact that poverty must be reduced we must teach the people themselves to help. People must not be told that they must rely solely and wholly on Government. Government can help but the people themselves must be prepared to go hand in hand to help reduce poverty. It is not fair to say that poverty is here to stay. It is not fair to say that poverty exists in

one particular community and not in another. We are all our brothers' keepers and whatever is done in my constituency will affect yours.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, that a lot is being done in our constituency today but, in the final analysis, we need to provide a society that all Barbadians can enjoy some of the cake, some of what we have earned in this society.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Government's programme will reap success. We believe that if it is allowed to gather roots that all will be done to help provide a society where Barbadians will be proud to be Barbadians. I want to thank you.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised that in the year of Our Lord, 1998, that we should now be addressing the problem of poverty in a manner as if successive governments have not been dealing with the issue of poverty.

I recall a number of people with whom I grew up. They were very poor. The children of maids and single parent families and I have seen these children through free education rise to become doctors, some lawyers, accountants, teachers, business people and various sorts. Sir, that provides for me a great testimony of what poverty alleviation at its very root is all about.

Sir, I have seen many people due to the jobs that they have gained acquire houses for themselves in the new developments that we see in some areas such as Chancery Lane and Baling Park, Lowlands, West Terrace, Kingsland and Wotton. These are the children of the poorest that we have seen in this country. Therefore, when we come to Parliament in the year of Our Lord, 1998 to pretend that we are doing so much for poverty I am amazed. It reminds me of a comment made by the great writer, Frantz Fanon, in the book "Wretched of the Earth" where he said, "to educate the masses politically does not mean and cannot mean making a political speech."

Many of us believe that simply to give a speech is to fool the people that we are doing something ever so great. The people know what they have seen and the people know what really is. It will not be left to any politician who believes that he is some Messiah to tell the people what poverty alleviation is all about.

Sir, as far as this debate goes I see it simply as an exercise in publicity to make people believe somehow that all of a sudden somebody or some group of people are conscious of the poor. It falls in context of what we have been hearing, Sir. The Prime Minister himself said that many people have been made by talking about poor black people.

He said in a speech "false tears about the lot of poor black men could make the river turn to salt." He said, "many political careers were made by people posturing on behalf of the poor". I am not here to decide who is posturing from who is not. 6.05 p.m.

I have seen many poor people in this country, I am old enough, Sir, to have seen many poor people in this country rise to great heights, but what I can tell you, Sir, is that I am not satisfied that as we are about to move into the 21st century in an age where people are beginning to feel the pressure of political involvement that we should find ourselves rubber-stamping a Bill which gives a Minister the power to determine all of the enterprises that will be used, ostensibly, for poverty eradication.

I do not believe, Sir, that we should be at that stage. It reminds me, Sir, of the days of Guyana when we heard a lot about party paramountcy and that kind of thing. I believe, Sir, that we are into an era of participation of the people and any Bill which clearly continues to give that power to one person, or just a few, to me, runs counter from the kind of governance that the people in the Caribbean have been crying out for, and the people in Barbados have been accustomed to, and are demanding.

Sir, I recall with this heroes' matter that people have been crying out for participation of the people to determine who their heroes will be. I am not alluding to any debate. I am talking about what I heard on the call-in programmes. We are into an era of participation, so that any Bill which comes to Parliament should reflect the spirit of participation for which we yearn.

My other reservation about this Bill, Sir, is that it speaks to the inefficiency or incompetence or some such thing of the existing government agencies. By implication it is saying that these agencies are not delivering the goods, they are not efficient, so therefore we have to find another mechanism to do the job. The mechanism in place, what does this mechanism do? This mechanism is such that instead of going through what is supposed usually a non-partisan institution with professionals, we run the risk of even greater political involvement where small committees have large say in the allocation and distribution of resources. So that these funds and these newborn agencies present a situation where a few people can determine the lot of many.

Sir, I wish to quote from a document which was presented in this House today to show that these are not just my views. These are the views of people who were on this working committee. I am speaking of the Government of Barbados UNDP Project to elaborate a poverty eradication plan for Barbados, a Report on National

Consultation 24 - 25 November, 1997. This is what Working Group Three had to say about the operation of the social investment fund. I am quoting from page 28, Sir. They said:

"the problems of operation of a social investment fund was political interference; patronage, use of political mileage."

This is what the document said, I am not making up anything, Sir. Thirdly it said:

"Proper channelling/management of funds."

These were the problems that they foresaw in funds such as this. On the role of state agencies this same committee said that there was inadequate resources for these agencies and they recommended proper co-ordination of the agencies.

On the role of the Urban and Rural Development Commissions they said that:

"there was duplication of services provided by other government departments."

These are the words of a working group in this consultation. In speaking of the environment for employment creation, it said:

"...There was slow growth of employment generation and a high failure rate among micro-businesses."

I want to talk about these micro-businesses. This simply means small businesses. There is a lot of talk about getting involved in small business. It sounds very good, but those who have studied Accounts or Accounting, whichever one you want to call it, those who have studied Economics, would tell you about the problems of economies of scale and such things.

In essence, Sir, there are problems of efficiency associated with small businesses, which normally result in persons overworking themselves, making little money or no money, or being slaves of the lending institutions or to other people who are involved. What we are saying, Sir, is that we have to be very careful when we are suggesting to people that everybody can get into business. Then what do you have in terms of the distribution network? Where are you going to sell your things?

Are the big conglomerates going to give you an "in" instead of their friends? Where the money is to be made? The money is to be made through selling to "big business". Is "big business" going to give a little black boy whom "big business" does not know a chance to get into the "big time"

through accepting their products and services? These are the real issues. These are the fundamental issues that we have to deal with, and not bury our heads in the sand and encourage a man to become involved in an enterprise which would eventually enslave him, and then you walk around and you despise him, and you try to tear him down and look at him as a failure, simply because the system has failed him. These are the realities of life in this country which have to be exposed to people whom we are encouraging to go down that avenue.

Sir, the question is where are the jobs? That is the question we are getting back to. Where are the jobs that have been promised? Sir, I have been told that there were people in this country who know about business very well, and these were the ones who were supposed to lead the direction, the onslaught, to get these new businesses. There was a guy who said that he could not see something with the naked eye some years back. None of us can see where these companies have come from. Where are the people getting employed? So we still come back to the original question, the original issue, where will the jobs come from? Where will the long-term jobs come from? We need to have a discussion on that. This is not something to be discussed by just a few. This is an issue that has to be put on the front burner and we have to understand where these jobs are going to come from. Not asking every little black boy and girl to go out there and risk the last penny he or she has, when the responsibility is a national responsibility to make sure that a job is found for them, because not everyone can be an entrepreneur.

Even the bravest of us have found that being an entrepreneur in this country is one of the hardest things that one can undertake. These are the realities and these are things that we have to understand, that people who have not known about these things, would perhaps believe that it is easy. It is easier said than done. That is why I believe that the team on this Side has been the experience of those who have been involved in all aspects of business that you can think of, and would be able to look realistically at the situation and provide the answers for the 21st century. 6.15p.m.

Sir, I want to quote from another writer on poverty. Many of us who studied at the University of the West Indies will be familiar with the writings of the late George Beckford. In his book "Persistent Poverty" he says that "economic development requires a highly motivated population with progress oriented values directed to the development effort and the social institutions that provide the necessary incentives and rewards."

Sir, I believe that the images must come from above. I believe we need to send a message to our people that they can move from one level and go as far as they

possibly can. But, Sir, sadly I am not seeing that message being sent. When I look across the seas and I look into New York and I look in the Tourist Board office, I see an Irish American woman in charge of a national institution when they are people, poor black boys that grew up with us who have been working in the tourist industry for many years. I am going to call some of their names because I am not doing it pejoratively. I am not questioning their integrity. There are people like Don McCarthy from the Ivy, people like Ignatius Marshall from St. Philip, people like Avril Byer who was involved in arts about here, Irvine Cumberbatch that I worked with at the Tourist Board. We have these people who are trained, who are qualified, who have given results and we can bypass these people who should be people we could look up to and say: "Look how our people have reached so far." But we can bypass them for a white Irish American. What message are we sending to the people who would want to elevate themselves?

When we look again in Germany, Sir, we see the same thing that we can have a man like Carlos Beckles, a poor black boy that we always see on these streets and we can bypass Carlos Beckles and give the job to a white German.

*Aside.*

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: The white is not material. The fact is that she is a non national, that is the issue I am dealing with. Why not Carlos Beckles, a man who has worked for the Tourist Board for so many years but we look for Germans that do not know Baxters Road from Oistins or Bathsheba from Miami. It is a question about sending messages about sovereignty to our people so that our poor will know that they can rise to great heights through education, involvement and through showing that they have the talent to contribute to Barbados. This is what the real poverty alleviation is about.

It is about sending the messages so that the boys around the streets can have hope. How can they have hope when they realise that no matter what you do there is a block against you and there is no explanation why you cannot go any further. That is the real fundamental issue facing this country as we go forward into the 21st century.

When I look at Fairy Valley, Sir, and I see 40 or more people - I have their names here and numbers. When I see these poor people - they made a mistake and put their house the wrong place but I have not heard anyone saying how they will be helped. That is what poverty alleviation is about, helping these poor black people to find a home that did the wrong thing.

*Aside.*

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Do not kill them. Find somewhere for these poor black people to live. That is what poverty eradication is about. It is about housing. It is about jobs. It is about giving the poor black boys on the streets hope by sending the right messages to them, not about > making a political speech. As Frantz Fanon said, educating the masses politically does not mean and cannot mean making a political speech. It is about action. It is about « sending the right messages to our youth so that they know they can have hope. It is about letting them know that when they fail at school because they had a problem at home that there is still hope and that when they go to the "O" Level Institute they will still have somebody to pay their school fees. It is about the Ministry of Education saying do not mind you failed at school, we will give you a second chance. We are going to pay your school fees when you go to the "O" Level Institute which has been going for 27 years conducted by a decent man like the Speaker of the House of Assembly. That is what poverty alleviation is about, giving the man on the street hope to know that even though he left school and he could not find the school fees he would get the school fees to go there.

It is about giving hope to children at private schools to let them know that because they did not pass for Harrison College, Queen's College, St. Michael, the Lodge or Louis Lynch that they still have hope and we will pay their school fees for them and their mother and poor father would not have to do all kinds of things and be bombarded about the school fees. It is about paying school fees for them as well. That is what poverty alleviation is about, Sir, giving hope to every poor black boy on the streets in this country.

Let everyone know they have a chance to get a home of their own. Let them know they can own a piece of land in this country. That is what the real poverty alleviation is about. Letting them know that the distributive network in this country should not be allowed to prevail against the entrepreneurialship. That is what real empowerment is about. These are the issues we need to deal with, not \$350 for somebody. That will not help. You can spend \$350 in a day. Ask the MP for St. James North or the MP for St. Michael East. He will spend \$1 000 in a day so it is not about that.

It is creating the right opportunity for the boys in Gall Hill. It is about looking at their need and their need is about having a football field for themselves and having facilities around the football field that they can really enjoy themselves in the environment they like, not about putting it behind walls. That is what it is about, providing an opportunity for people to do what they really love to do.

It is about creating opportunities for people involved in culture. I went to the Richard Stoute Show on Sunday night at George Street and the talent I saw there

convinced me that we have world class entertainers in Barbados who need to be given hope, who need to be given assistance. It is amazing that Richard Stoute should be holding a show for over 21 years and should not be getting more assistance than he is when all of the great modern-day entertainers have come out of the Richard Stoute show.

If you are talking about uplifting the masses, if you are talking about giving hope to the poor black people you need to look in that area. But what do you see? We turn a blind eye to institutions such as that because they are not in the mainstream of Barbados. We have to make a paradigm, we have to make a shift. We have to understand what the challenges for the 21st century are and we have as a nation to work together. This is not about party politics, this is about co-operating and fighting to ensure that our youth will have hope and fighting to ensure that poverty will not be to the extent that people will resort to crime. That is what it is about. 6.25 p.m.

Sir, it is about ensuring that the Senior Citizens' Home in Vauxhall is built and bush not be allowed to just rest there. It is about time that the Senior Citizens' Home at Vauxhall is restored. That is what it is about.

Sir, the spirit of this Bill might be right on face value but I am saying that what it reflects in terms of the input in the Bill itself does not impress me and that we are really in queue with what the reality of poverty alleviation is all about.

I thank you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a short contribution to this Social Investment Fund Bill and to this present debate.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is really a quality of life debate. I see no reason why we should try to politicise a debate such as this. I firmly believe that any Government which is making attempts to initiate programmes to eradicate the scourge of poverty should be commended. It matters not whether that Government is \*B', 'D' or 'N' but I do believe that as long as you are making an attempt to eradicate the scourge the Government should be commended especially a Government that has put in place institutions such as Rural Development, such as Urban Development and such as the many agencies which you are making accessible to those people who want to conduct business by making credit available to them.

Mr. Speaker, the debate on the Social Development Fund Bill is really about utilisation of public funds for

beneficial social programmes aimed at alleviating poverty. We have been debating all day and I do believe that we need to focus a bit more as to what exactly we are talking about when we speak about poverty and what effect poverty can have on our society.

Studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that many identifiable social ills have links with poverty and deprivation. There are certain consequences that flow from poverty. Drugs, theft and various forms of criminal activities very often have their genesis in poverty. It is a simple matter, Mr. Speaker, of if you do not have, you will look for avenues to get. It is a simple matter that you will go to limits to get some of those things which you do not have.

Mr. Speaker, it is also a fact that poverty brings with it certain attendant psychological problems. People who are immersed in poverty very very often are resentful, they are spiteful, they are antagonistic and they are frustrated. This is the type of thing that we are trying hard to curb.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning the Prime Minister defined poverty as a state of mind. We are trying to rid some of our people of this very damaging state of mind as we try to cope with this every increasing problem of poverty. I do believe that as we try to administer this therapy today we may not see the benefits of it tomorrow. I do believe that we will start to see the benefits of this in about five years time. I believe what we are doing now will have an impact on our social development in another couple of years.

I feel, Sir, that good governance demands that we should try to ensure that people feel themselves part of our society. I believe that we can only speak of the standard of living and that it could only have a meaning when we allow people to know that certain amenities are available to them as well. If we continue to marginalise our people we are going to pay for it very very dearly in a few years time.

Development, I believe, Sir, is about socialisation, it is about our environment and I cannot see how we as a Parliament can try to make political mileage. We are not trying to do this. We are trying to do something which we believe will be for the benefit of all. Earlier the point was made that we are doing this for publicity. As far as I am led to believe it was the Opposition who asked that we televise this debate today. It has nothing to do with our wanting publicity for anything.

The Ministry of Community Development has responsibility for implementing some of these programmes under the Welfare Department and the National Assistance

Assistance Board. The Poverty Alleviation Programme has been going quite well and has been very very successful. The most pressure that we get at those agencies from people is in the area of water toilets. There are so many people in Barbados, I do not think that we were quite aware of the numbers until we actually started with this particular Poverty Alleviation Programme and trying to bring water toilet facilities to people. There are a lot of people in Barbados who still use pit toilets. It is all well and good for us to say, let us try and repair this house or give this person a house but the crucial thing very often is that the person has to go outside to that pit toilet. There are some people who will tell you that I prefer you to give me the water toilet than to repair the house.

Some of these pit toilets are in a very deplorable condition. I had to go with the Director for Rural Development to look at a few instances where we wanted to give these people water toilet. Even the very section that you sit on, you had to be careful when you look at it. Mr. Speaker, as I have said there are lots of people and we are just trying to say to them that certain amenities can be available to them as well. 6.35 p.m.

Now another problem which we encounter is that very often we underestimate the true cost of repairing a house. That is when we are doing individual repairs. Repairs tend to cost more than you anticipate that they will cost. You begin to work with one estimate and by the time you finish, Mr. Speaker, you have a figure that is completely out of sync with what you thought it would have been. In other words the cost per unit is usually more than you bargain for.

This arises, Mr. Speaker, because sometimes you go to repair a floor and you realise that far from repairing the floor you have now to change every sleeper. For those of you who know what sleepers are and very often you go to do the siding and then you have to change every possible upright. Sometimes a house looks very good on the outside but that may be far from being the case. The truth of the matter is that once you begin to do work at a person's house, you cannot really and truly leave the person's house and say, "we only came to do the floors" or "we only came to change the sidings." Your conscience tells you that you have to leave this person's house in a habitable condition. This is why I say that you always have to keep spending more per unit than you anticipate.

Then, of course, Mr. Speaker, you get the case where you go to repair the person's house and you realise that this person is a paraplegic or this person is in a wheelchair. But the person never had ramps, handrails and so on, but you cannot leave, seeing that the person is in this condition, you cannot leave without providing these things. As I said, the

programme is quite well under the National Assistance Board and the Welfare Department. But as I said, Sir, this is about human development and even in some cases, and I believe there have been about three dozen instances where you would have gone to houses and you would have realised J that the young lady on whose behalf you are working that -\* this young lady has nine children, but she only has one bedroom. But you have now to put an additional room on. 1

This is what we mean by poverty alleviation. We cannot really and truly say that all we came to do is to tap in this window and leave. This has not been happening. As I said, the programme is working extremely well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel that the choir of this country is singing quite well. We may have a few discords, and I feel that the discordant note that we have might very well be coming from the Parliamentarians on the Other Side, but I must tell them that they are singing completely out of tune because even people that you can identify as saying, "I am sympathetic with the Other Side" are saying "you are doing good work." This has been happening.

Mr. Speaker, the people who benefit from the programme, very often they say, "thanks" especially the older people. Some of them had waited for repairs to their homes for a long, long time and many of them thought that their turn would never come. They said that they had applications in for the house repairs since 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and so on and they thought they would never get assistance. If you want to get their reaction, go and speak to those people who have benefited from the Poverty Alleviation Programme. Go and speak to them and you are going to get their reaction.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the other people in particular are always extremely grateful. I believe, Sir, that those old people were brought up to say "thanks" and they know how to say "thanks" and how to say it graciously and they do that very very often when they get assistance because that graciousness and with that gratitude has characterised their lives from young.

Mr. Speaker, I recall one old person actually telephoning. I know the person was in their 70s or 80s. The person said, "my daughter tell me to call you because you in charge of the National Assistance Board." They really benefited under the Poverty Alleviation Programme administered by the National Assistance Board. She also said, "the Lord gine bless you. Praise the Lord I am not getting wet any longer" those were her words. This is the type of thing that we are doing under the Poverty Alleviation Programme and it thrills your heart and you feel good when somebody tells you "thanks because I am not getting wet anymore," thanks because they realise

that they are not living under the conditions they were living under before. Some of them as I said called me. The Director of the National Assistance Board said that many of them call him. They call and they say "thanks."

When the Officers go around, Mr. Speaker, to do what is called the final check, it is there, Sir, that very often they" tell them, "say thanks for me." Of course, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the programme is working well also means that it is creating more demands, because when a person, living on the same road, in the same street realises that the next door neighbour or the person who lives two or three houses away has got the house repaired, then the person makes an application because that person feels, "it is my turn coming next, it is my turn coming soon." So the fact that it is working well, is creating more and more demands, we are getting more and more applications as is expected. If it was a programme where you were seeing nothing happening but I am saying that it is a fact that the applications are tumbling in for assistance under poverty alleviation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make brief mention of the \$350 rebate. This is something which was genuinely misunderstood by quite a few persons. It was a one-off payment and it was to help cushion the impact of VAT. It was for those persons who were paying the NIS and were actually getting less than \$170 per week.

Now that was \$170 gross. If your gross pay was \$172, you were not entitled to it.

*Asides.*

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Do you want me to repeat that, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy? I said that if you were getting \$170 gross or less than that, you were entitled. If you were getting \$172, you were not entitled. Well, I am a teacher by profession and that is the way which I would have taught a premier standard class.

*Asides.*

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: So, Mr. Speaker, if you were getting \$ 172, you were not entitled. Now some persons who were getting let us say, \$250 per week but had deductions taken out at source and who might have been taking home \$150 thought that they were entitled. But as I said it is the gross and if their gross, being \$250, never matter the deductions, the point is the gross was \$250 and they were not entitled and that caused some misunderstanding.

Mr. Speaker, I recall during the Estimates making the point about the enhancement programme with the Welfare Department and under Poverty Alleviation. And at that stage I drew the example of a young man who was on Welfare and

who had been assisted with a weed whacker and who on his own came off the Welfare. 6.45 p.m.

If I recall, the Honourable Member for St. John tried to trivialise the point and said we come in here talking about a weed whacker. I had used that simply as an example as to what happens. What usually happens is that if you go into a house and you are on the Poverty Alleviation Programme and you realise there is some young person there who can benefit from training, by sending them to the National Training Board and the Welfare Department they can do that and that enhancement programme has been working very well.

We prefer to see you come off welfare than to keep you on welfare. We want to break the cycle of dependency. We think that is crucial because if the numbers continue to grow, as people keep wanting to come on welfare and nobody comes off the programme eventually it is going to fold up. This is a natural consequence. If you have people coming and joining the welfare and nobody steps off at all eventually it is going to be overcrowded and the programme has to fold up. We will have to discontinue it.

As I said, we try therefore to get people to do things for themselves. If we come across people with cooking skills or needlework skills or whatever, we try to put them in the right direction. If they can benefit from training you try to send them to the Training Board. This is a very simple example but we have two instances that I know of where people were turned around, and do you know how they were turned around? They were taught the value of economic fruit trees that they have. They are now doing things that they never thought of. Simple things like that helped to turn them around.

Mr. Speaker, we have referred them to Women in Development and they have been assisted. We do not think that we will win all the battles that we can get people off at the snap of a finger. We do not think so. Of course, we also had the situation and I do not know if you can call it a negative that people who came off that list and who got assistance and who went up there and started to work for themselves did not look back at their families. We have, I believe, no less than half dozen instances where you got the person out of the home, helped the person and the person having got assistance did not look back at the family that they came from. As I say, we may not win all of the battles.

This morning also we had mention of the hostel for battered women and we also mentioned the one for the fire victims. This is going to be managed by the Salvation

Army and another one which is going to be managed by the Business and Professional Women's Club. I do not think that we can continue to trivialise the whole question of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, the records show that there were hundreds of instances of domestic violence cases before the law courts over the last years. As I always say, in the same way that we believe that we should have a hospital for sick people and hurricane shelters when there are hurricanes I believe that since the problem of battered women exists that we should also have a hostel for battered women.

In my capacity as Minister responsible for Women's Affairs I can say that it has my wholehearted support. We need to set up this hostel. We do not realise that very often our society is under stress and very often without realising it it takes a little to trigger off domestic violence sometimes. It exists. You cannot bury your head in the sand like an ostrich any longer. It is a problem that you have to tackle and we are making efforts to tackle it.

The same is true of things like fire victims. A recent survey of the people along Baxters Road show that a few of those who are down there are there because they have lost their homes earlier in fires. Perhaps if we had a system like that we might have saved one or two of those. I do not think really and truly that you can look and say, "hostel for battered women, what? Shelter for fire victims, what? That is about alleviation of poverty?" Well, the classic example is to walk down through Baxters Road at night and ask some of them how come you are here. Some of them will tell you, "I used to have a house. I lost it in a fire."

Mr. Speaker, our attitude toward the NGOs I believe is revolutionary in this country. We are giving NGOs hostels to manage. In other words, take this, this is yours, manage it. Government is not seeking to manage these things any longer. The Business and Professional Women's Club has been doing wonders in the area of battered women and women in crisis.

The Salvation Army has done so much good work in Barbados, the meals programme, the thrift shop, the Christmas hampers. They have at Wotton Child Care and so on. They have done so much good work in Barbados that when they submitted their proposal to us to manage this shelter just going through it you could see it was done by people who had some idea as to where they were going and what they wanted to do for a shelter such as this.

Even the amount of grants that we are making towards NGOs now has virtually tripled from what it used to be. No one can say really that this Government is not doing its best to assist the NGOs.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition's criticisms cannot really mask or try to halt the progress of this Government. As I said, there are a number of success stories where we brought people from out of the darkness and out of the shadows of the last administration into the light. We have done that. Many years from now, Mr. Speaker, when the history of this country is written I would want this administration to be remembered as a Government that had new ideas and possessed a political will to confront poverty head on and a Government that was firmly committed to improving the lot of poor Barbadians, a Government that promoted economic independence, a Government that provided access to credit and resources, a Government that created opportunities for Barbadians and gave Barbadians the strength to seize those opportunities, a Government that tried earnestly to build self confidence and personal development of Barbadians who would otherwise be buried under the weight of poverty. 6.55 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I understand that you want to terminate at this point so I am rising on a point of privilege. During the debate today the Deputy Prime Minister made reference to returning nationals being some of the ones who were sleeping on the streets of Bridgetown. I received two telephone calls.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, I cannot be misquoted.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am just saying that I received two telephone calls by two irate returning nationals from my constituency who were in some doubt as to what the Honourable Member for the City really meant. It is not fair to the returning nationals for a perception to be going out there that they are returning to Barbados and sleeping on the streets.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is what was said today. I am trying to at least give you the opportunity to clarify what was said for the benefit of the returning nationals. Do not let the perception linger out here today. You mean you cannot try to help you all now?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I have given you a little latitude there please, but I am sure you know we do follow the rules and you are clearly out of order.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Okay, as you rule...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir, to clarify what I said. I said that there are among people who are sleeping on the streets of Barbados, some who have returned from institutions in the United Kingdom, in Canada, the United States, who have come back here and found...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. My understanding is that you ruled my intervention as being out of order. I find it difficult how the Honourable Member can then speak on what I interjected on.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is entitled to rise on a point of elucidation to clarify a point. That is according to the rules of the House. Okay, she is clarifying.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I said I wanted to clarify what I said. I want to be very clear on it. Nobody is a larger champion on returning nationals than myself. The FURN came out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when other people were laughing at it, so there is no larger champion of returning nationals than myself; but it is a fact, it has been a fact for many, many years. We have spoken to the Government in the United States. We have spoken to the government in the United Kingdom about the way in which people are just being taken from institutions and sent back here sometimes even without any reference to our missions abroad and so on. We all know that there are people like that in our country. Do not let us pretend about that.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In the City of Bridgetown I take responsibility for people from all over Barbados all the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, please, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in respect of the Social Investment Bill which is before the House, I would like to move that further consideration of that Bill be deferred.

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

*The question that further consideration of this Bill be deferred was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would beg to move that the item Statements by Ministers be recommitted, Sir.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I would just wish to draw to the attention of the Honourable Members the fact that the Government has appointed to the post of Consul General at our Consulate General in Toronto, Miss Kay McConnie. I think Honourable Members are aware that Mr. Errol Humphrey who was seconded from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to be our Consul General at Toronto has now gone back to his home Ministry so to speak, and taken up the post of CEO of the BIDC, thus creating a vacancy at Toronto. I think Honourable Members are also aware, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Canada is our major market in respect of international trade and business and the recent Consul General, Mr. Humphrey, did sterling work there. Canada is also again, happily a growing market in respect of tourism, particularly in maritime provinces and we of course wish to be doing further tourism and international business in the western provinces of Canada.

It is important therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the person who would be appointed to be our Consul General at Toronto be someone who can grasp and quickly carry on the excellent work, particularly in the area of international business which Mr. Humphrey started.

Miss McConnie is a person I would wish to recommend to the House as one eminently suited. She did her Masters in Business Administration at the European University of Belgium where she actually specialised in International Business Management. She did her original Bachelor of Arts at the Eastern Michigan University in the United States of America. Again her specialisation there was international trade. Her work experience is again an experience which I think is excellent preparation for the task before her. She has worked as a consultant to the European Commission at Brussels in Belgium where she conducted projects evaluation of regional development programme in West Africa involving some 16 countries with a budget of 1.5million ECU's. She, most recently in Barbados worked as the Manager of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme which is a very bold initiative taken by the Ministry of Education in recent years in Barbados. I think she has given a wonderful start to that.

Essentially we have here a young person, a bright person, a person with the kind of work experience to continue the fine work that we have at Toronto. I would wish her well in this endeavour. She is currently being briefed and oriented in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is expected to take up her post at the beginning of June.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, order, please.

## QUESTION TIME

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, please let us go to Question time.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, Question No.48.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: To ask the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that there is now no emergency hurricane shelter in the heavily built-up area of Brittons Hill, St. Michael?
- (2) Will the Minister state what repairs and works would have to be carried out in order to reinstate the St. Paul's Primary School as an Emergency Hurricane Shelter?
- (3) Will the Minister state whether he intends to carry out such works and, if so, when and, if such works are not contemplated, what plans, if any, does the Minister have for a hurricane shelter for the Brittons Hill area?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The reply to Question No. 48 is as follows:

- (1) Both the Garrison Secondary School and the Dalkeith Methodist Church are Category 1 hurricane shelters.
- (2) Eighty per cent of the roof at St. Paul's Primary must be replaced including the changes of sheets, rafters and cranks. The coral stone walls need remedial plastering and other rehabilitative work. Significant repairs are required to the windows and doors of the main building in the school's Annex.
- (3) Repairs are earmarked for the summer of 1998.

Mr. SPEAKER: Any supplementaries?

*Asides.*

7.05 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we proceed, please?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: A Supplementary Question, Sir, or a supplementary comment. The Minister has asked me to say "Thanks" but I asked a question. Is the Minister aware that there is now no emergency Hurricane

Shelter in the heavily built-up area of Brittons Hill, St. Michael? The Minister said "No." Maybe he is not aware.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: But the answer should have been "Yes."

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, this is the end of Question Time. I am wishing to call now Private Members' Business, specifically No. 9, in the name of Sir Harold St. John.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 9 - RESOLUTION TO APPOINT A  
COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE  
LAW RELATING TO THE OWNERSHIP  
OF INTERESTS IN LAND IN  
BARBADOS AND TO MAKE  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
THEREON

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I believe, Sir, that \*'e are now at the stage where we can name a committee. I w\uld like to thank Honourable Members for their valuable contributions and their agreement to serve on the committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I would have to put a question to the Leader of the House. Did we pass the Resolution as such?

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: No. I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass, Sir.

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

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

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I propose, from this side, Sir, Your Honour the Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Honourable Member for St. James North, and I find myself in the invidious position of \*proposing the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. So t that constitutes the four on this side, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on this side the persons who will be the Opposition members will be the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is proposed, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would complete the Select Committee.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, I ask that the terms of reference of the Committee be in accordance with the Resolution and that the Committee have full power to send for papers and persons in accordance with the rules.

Mr. SPEAKER: The members proposed for the Committee are: The Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Honourable Member for St. James North, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. If this be the will of the House, then so be it. The Committee is therefore constituted.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it is being suggested that there might be a time frame fixed for the Select Committee to report. Bearing in mind the summer

recess, I would like to suggest possibly on or before October 31, of this year of Our Lord, 1998.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 5, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

*The question that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday, May 5, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 7.15p.m.*

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# THE

# House of Assembly Debates

## (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994-99

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### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Tuesday, May 5, 1998*

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 1998.

#### 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. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., 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)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., 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)

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

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.

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 Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

#### MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, April 21, 1998.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly of Tuesday, April 21, 1998, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR  
THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements prepared by the Accountant General for the month of August 1997.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following papers:

1. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 1997.
2. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados National Bank for the year 1997.
3. Report on the Accounts of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarters ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31, 1997.
4. Value Added Tax (No. 2) Order, 1998.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Instruments Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 85th Session held in Geneva from June 03-09, 1997.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Police Act be read a first time.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that.

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

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on the occasion when we last met the House was debating the Social Investment Bill. It is Government's intention to continue that debate today and to conclude it.

I beg to move that we resume consideration of that Bill, Sir.

Hon. G.W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 3 - TO RESUME THE DEBATE  
ON THE SECOND READING OF THE  
SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND  
BILL, 1998

Mr. SPEAKER: We will now resume debate on Order No. 3.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, when last we met, the Bill to be known as the Social Investment Fund Bill was discussed and the debate ended with some degree of controversy after some unfortunate remarks had been made by the Honourable Member for the City and we sought clarification on those comments. However, I will not belabour that point again because I think that the Honourable Member made some unfortunate comments then about the returning nationals and they will have to do whatever is in their power to correct the perceptions that are brought out. I tried in my best way to have the matter corrected but it was not properly appreciated at the time.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, this country is confronted with a completely new set of economic, social, spiritual and all different kinds of new circumstances. The present Bill before us is another exercise of the present administration to present to the public of Barbados an image that is designed to say to the public that we are good, that this is an impression that we want to create out here and that we are using the tool of the Social Investment Fund legislation to create that impression.

Our Right Honourable Prime Minister indicated in his opening remarks that he was no longer interested in any Member of Parliament nor anybody rising up on the backs of poor black people, that he was tired hearing of people who wanted to explore this notion of representing poor black people. He seemed offended by people who I presume are elected to help people who need help and

not people who have, because what would be the sense in being elected to represent people who have already. The challenge of people when they are elected is to assist those people who traditionally in Barbados are the 'don't haves'. The Prime Minister comments are again strange and on the back of his comments this country was able to pay tribute and to honour on the wishes of the Government lead by the Prime Minister we were able to honour ten heroes, all of whom in some way or other participated in the upliftment and the development of the black masses of people in this country.

I have said that this Barbados Labour Party always want to look good so it was not prudent for them at all to include a white man because they could not risk that.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, this is a debate about a Social Investment Bill which has at its heart the alleviation of poverty. The debate on National Heroes has already passed this House and my friend cannot, even vicariously seek to reflect on that. His remarks are entirely out of order. I ask for Your Honour's ruling in this regard and if you agree that they are out of order, I ask that they be expunged from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East, may I remind you of the Rules. Our debate today deals primarily with the Social Investment Fund Bill and as was stated, the previous debate on heroes has been concluded and according to the Rule 28(4), of which I am sure that you are aware of, I agree that those references that you made at the beginning of your speech be struck from the record and that we proceed on the right track.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I really am being very careful.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like you to be a bit more careful.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is a right that no whites were debated.

Mr. SPEAKER: What does that have to do with our debate.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I do not presuppose what anybody else is going to say. When I am speaking, I want to speak. When the others are speaking, I keep quiet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you will speak but you will follow the Rules of this House.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to break any rules in this House. I am saying in here and I

want to establish my point and I would like the time that is taken away from me with these foolish interventions.  
11.30a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member ...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that my intervention was so proper that the words used by the Honourable Member were expunged from the records, I resent his use of the words foolish interventions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, will you withdraw those words, please and let us move on?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I think you understand the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: No. I do not understand. Will you withdraw the words?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I will withdraw the point about foolish interventions but they are necessary because I listen to other Members and I would like them to listen to me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, we proceed here according to the Rules of the House. A point of order is a part of those rules. So could you proceed please?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Now, I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that that administration did not want to do anything that they believed would have offended them or that would create any difficulty for them out there in the public domain so they are very careful in whatever they do. They do not want to offend but the Right Honourable Prime Minister who in his opening remarks indicated that he did not want to have anything to do with this talk about black men and piggy-backing on poor black people and so forth presides over a Government that wants to take this country back down the road from whence those same people that we recently honoured brought us from. I will establish that during my presentation.

This Prime Minister of accountability, of transparency, this Prime Minister who is Mr. Goodall to everybody, inflicted the heaviest doses of taxes in recent time on the people of Barbados and now seeks to throw token appreciation back to the people of Barbados.

Sir, I am not sure if by your recent ruling I am able to speak about a hero now or not because from my understanding of your ruling, I can no longer speak about heroes. I cannot even mention their names.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you are aware of the rules. The Chair does not make the rules.

You are aware of the rules and the Chair is not saying that you might not make a reference. There is a difference when you make a reference.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Now, Sir, I would like to refer to the significant work that was done by Sir Grantley Adams. During a difficult period in our development, Sir Grantley Adams was able to establish himself as a hero in the minds of Barbadian people with his work with regard to the organisation of the sugar workers and with regard to his being part of the process that saw people being able to vote. A significant role and I recognise him as a hero.

Development in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, goes from stage to stage. Sir Grantley Adams left the scene and was replaced by the Right Excellent, now deceased, Errol Walton Barrow. Errol Barrow's role was very clear. He wanted to move Barbados beyond the realms of the sugar industry through education, through a re-arrangement of the infrastructure and the Democratic Labour Party was formed to create a new development for the mass base of people in this country, another hero, Mr. Speaker. I do not know why they get so concerned. All of us knew that implementing the new infrastructure was never going to be easy.

Independence? The frustration, the worry, the wonder, all of us would have wondered, how are we going to achieve it, based on what? I am submitting it was based on vision, vision of a Democratic Labour Party that sought to move the masses of people in this country beyond a sugar cane field or handouts from the colonial masters as we understood it at the time.

We knew it was never going to be easy. The new infrastructure called for a re-arranging of the educational programme which were resisted by the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party was formed and one of the primary objectives of the Democratic Labour Party was to implement an educational programme that would have created new opportunities for people to develop into a different type of employment so we do not have to be forever and ever cutting canes and working in the cane fields.

This is a profound point because, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the development of Barbados over 100 years or 150 years, 150 years from now our children and our children's children will find themselves in a Barbados that when they have achieved the objectives of education, housing, motor cars, good health standards, or whatever they need to make their lives, they then find themselves with a different set of priorities of where do I go from here. I have to have a set of opportunities before me now,

one hundred years from now, but I will not be able to do anything about it because a Barbados Labour Party in the 1990's allowed this country to drift out of the hands of the masses of the people and we would have done a complete disservice to the organised and proper development of Barbados.

This has nothing, Mr. Speaker, to do with creating any jobs for anybody to look good. The Barbados Labour Party are in a mad scramble to patch up here, to patch up there just to look good. A job for what? A job for whom? Does it matter who is in Parliament? Does it matter who is the Prime Minister? What is important is the development of the people in this country and we have to look at our development, not over a one or a 5-year period because Governments will come and go. We have to look at development and understand what we are inheriting and what we are going to leave behind. We have a strange phenomenon because we try to create a new infrastructure, started by our early heroes. We brought them to a ceremony, honoured them. As soon as we honoured them we let loose all kinds of laser beams here, there, everywhere. When the laser beams had finished 9 were down and one remained standing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Laser beams were down or heroes?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: When the laser beams. Phew, phew. Nine heroes were down, one remained standing and the one that remained standing must have said, 'has Barbados gone mad\* meaning what is this show all about.

A gentleman recently sang here, Peabo, I do not follow the artists. He sang a song, "A brand new world", because what we in fact had to create in Barbados was a brand new world for the mass base of people in this country. But what we have is a spectacle where people are trying to 'collyfox' the mass base of people with all kinds of gimmickry including a Bill that is brought before this House.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: A point of order, Sir. According to the Standing Orders of the House, Honourable Members must speak in the English language. The Honourable Member used a word, Sir, that I am not sure it appears in the Oxford Dictionary and certainly the reporters would not be able to spell it. It might assist if he would spell it for them, Sir, and then explain what it means. It might be dialect, Sir. I do not know if it is dialect he is using but it is a new word he used.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: My understanding of a modern Barbados is that if you are able to communicate and the person understands what you have said then you have communicated and it is an English expression that

is understood in Barbados. When I say I 'collyfox' you, every single Barbadian out there understands 'collyfox' except the Members over that Side. 11.40a.m.

So, Mr. Speaker it is important for me to make this point that we had to create a new infrastructure which was triggered primarily by Errol Walton Barrow. We had education, training and creation of jobs where we made sure that people went into certain establishments where they could not go into before. Housing was improved. Clothing was improved. Our health institutions were improved. Roads and transportation were improved. And, advanced technology came into being. Errol Barrow gave us dignity, independence and self pride that we have to build on today, but do you not dream of a Barbados that was developed and built by us? Do you not dream of it? What is the purpose of us in here if we cannot dream and see down the road that Barbados really should be preserved for us Barbadians?

What is the point in the quick fix to make a Government look good? A quick fix just for a return of the Government for what? You will quick fix and then destroy the future of millions of Barbadians in years to come for one foolish mistake.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes in life you make one foolish mistake and you pay for it forever and ever. If this country makes one single mistake as we are doing, going into the 21st Century, then our children and grandchildren will regret it. We are involved in this confusion...

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point you are making?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am building to it. ...where we are able now to take this Bill, which is a minute portion of what we have taken from the people of Barbados and give it back to them as if we are doing something for them.

This is purely a Bill designed to ensure that the Right Honourable Prime Minister keeps his job because he prayed for a job and for what? He needs to go and look for work.

*Asides.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: What is the point, Mr. Speaker, somebody praying for a job...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I am sure you do not want to take the debate down to that kind of level, please? Just let us keep it at a very professional level, please?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that it cannot be about serving yourself. It is about serving the masses of people in this country. That is what our objective must be. What is important, looking good? Sir, many people are complaining about the \$6.7 million that was spent on one week over celebrations.

*Asides.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Dazzling music...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I have been giving you a lot of latitude and you did say that you are building up to the Social Investment Bill, but you are taking a little time to get there. You have not been saying anything relating to the Bill. Are you still getting to the point?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that it takes time and I am not dealing with any quick fix to this situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you know you have limited time.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am making the point - and I have my time properly mapped out and I have documented the seven minutes that I have been robbed of. But I am going to make this point again, Mr. Speaker, because I know they like to interrupt me, but I am going to start fresh and make the point again, \$6.7 million blew up in a week celebrating. When the music stopped the lights went down, the lasers were switched off, and the people got back in their homes, the water has been cut off. The lights have been cut off. The gas has been turned off. The telephone has gone. The house still wants repairs. No rent money. No money to cover basic foods. The children cannot go to school. Pensioners are struggling. Mr. Blackman, my dear beloved father from Government Hill - a man that raised me-In 1994...

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Prescod? He does not even know what...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please? You are out of order. Please continue orderly.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: In here? You have a pensioner who is disabled and in 1994 when I was doing a road near to his house, we were voted out of office and I was not able to complete it. But, do you know that this Government refused to build a simple ramp for Mr. Blackman because the workers who were sent there asked him who he is supporting and he said, "but Johnny Tudor is like my

son," and they refused to give him any assistance. There are many other stories where the pensioners of this country are struggling on a daily basis. They have taken on responsibilities of children and grandchildren and you have a Government talking about they are a caring Government and that they are bringing these Bills to create an impression that they are acting in the interest of the masses in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I despise when people are playing games with me. I like my development to be structured. I am not a perfect person. I make my mistakes and I expect people to help me through them. I do not expect any miracles. But you have pensioners who are struggling to survive. Mr. Speaker, you know and I know, and the Minister of Health who has gone because she knew that I was getting to her, knows that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was in total chaos after all the music died down and the laser was switched off. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was still in chaos. Doctors are disgruntled and there is nowhere to put garbage. There is still a whole set of confusion with Mangrove and Greenland. Up to now the Government cannot make up their minds what they are going to do about the situation with the garbage in this country. This is a totally confused administration. Just here, just there, do that here, do that there, just to look good, for what, to keep that kind of an administration in office?

Our roads have pot holes galore, except in a few new districts that are emerging. Mr. Denis Kellman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would tell you about them. I have begged them to finish some roads in Haggatt Hall and St. Barnabas and they would not pay me any attention and \$6.7 million can be blown in a week. My God.

Mr. Speaker, they set up the Urban Development Commission and do you understand that with the Urban Development Commission the rates of return on repairing houses are two per year? In my constituency there are 230 houses that need repairing. So based on the rate of the Government, it would take the Government 115 years to assist the people in my constituency. At a time when they are blowing money and spending money... money that they have raked out of the pockets of the people in this country with the introduction of VAT. Sir, in my constituency there are small people of a church group who were trying to build a community church and this Government took away their land and then they come into this House of Assembly with tokenism to talk about the Social Investment Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you understand why I am angry and why I feel grieved that we have to be going through this kind of difficulty. This 15% VAT in everybody's chest, including mine, an asthmatic! Even the dead people did not get away. Do you know how many

families now are struggling because when you die there is VAT on the coffin and on the turn-out? We can take up a whole set of money and just *dazzle* it and feel good and believe that because we put on all those lights - bup-bup-bup! Like the Gulf War. Nine down, one up and you think that you all are going to walk back into the House of Assembly because of that foolishness. 11.50a.m.

You see, the style that they have adopted is to -1 use that word "collyfox" advisedly. A nice word - "collyfox".

A form of taxation was introduced in this country by way of indirect tax - consumption taxes, stamp duty and most recently the VAT. So the people do not realise that they are not seeing the lash coming up front but they feel it many weeks or months after it has been applied. That is why I do not like indirect taxation. I like when you state precisely what developmental plans you have, you extract what money you have to take from society so that when we are creating the infrastructure that Errol Barrow dreamed of we are able then to understand that all of us have a part to play in it. The people in Barbados who volunteered an 8% cut in this country, in my opinion, are real heroes because in an independent Barbados they did not seek to solve the problem by way of begging outsiders. They forfeited 8% of their salary for the betterment of this country that everybody in Barbados is now benefiting from and the Government wants to take the praise.

There is no praise for you all. This is a serious developmental work that calls for planning and restructuring but you all come in here with a lot of PR games. Where is your philosophy? Where do you stand? On what ground?

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party spoke about an agricultural plan. They like, coming out of the Adams era, the whole notion of sugar. They said that they would assist in the development of the industry by recreating the volume. Do you know, Sir, that sugar in 1998 in this country has declined by over 100 000 tonnes in production of the actual sugar? They talk about a great administration. Where is it?

We did systematic planning. I did systematic planning when I was the Minister. I understood the message. That is why I would always be a member of the Democratic Labour Party because the Democratic Labour Party wanted to take away the indignity of having to work in a sugar cane field *ad infinitum* so that we could create a working environment in which today we can boast of graduates. I saw members being honoured in St. Peter and I feel good about that because it means that we have come out of the cane fields and our people are rising. I am not vexed about that. It is the Democratic Labour Party's work.

When we were in Government through a difficult period, and don't you find it passing strange that during a difficult period the Democratic Labour Party was still able to build infrastructures like Sherbourne Centre? Now that things are rosy not one thing you can point out. Think about it!

Mr. Speaker, when in 1994 I was the Minister of Labour, I did some profound work in a short time to develop a training programme that would see a systematic programme put in place, the Technical, Vocational and Educational Training with negotiations with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We negotiated a programme. Here was the report of 1996, Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Training which is fundamental because this whole view, the level of planning that was involved in the development and the restructuring of the economy so that we would be able to train and prepare people so that they can continue a dignified form of living rather than having to be waiting on any hand-out from any Government. It is insulting.

The Report at page 3-1 will not read the entire report but it is a document of this House. Miss Schneidman is the officer with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This is what the Report said in 1996 two years after the change of Government:

"Miss Schneidman expressed concerns about delays in the implementation of the Project generally and more specifically, the lack of progress in the TVET Council since its establishment in 1994."

The Chairman pointed out that the reason was that there was a change of government in 1994 and that resulted in a re-negotiation of the original IBRD which is the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development project "which would have resulted in new time frames".

So by the change of Government the process that had been set in place by the Democratic Labour Party has now been delayed 4 years. We can translate that to almost everything that has happened in this Government. What was the point in changing a government? But you know what did it? Confusion and the type of laser type politics that confuses the minds of people because if right-thinking Barbadians, black and white, understand the role that we have to play as developers then this Bill must be seen in the light in which it was brought to Parliament, as nothing more than a PR exercise and the sooner the Prime Minister calls an election and gets this country back on the right track this country would be doomed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I had originally proposed to move straight into the policy considerations which would have informed the bringing of

this Bill before this Honourable House but in view of the sentiments just expressed I feel driven to rebut a number of things that were just said coming from the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Early in his presentation, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East made bold to say that the Right Honourable Prime Minister suggested that too many people had tried to champion the cause of poor, black people in Barbados.

I believe that the spirit in which the Right Honourable Prime Minister made his observation was where the Right Honourable Prime Minister suggested that many self-centred persons have hypocritically set out to pretend that they were the only ones who had any truck for poor, black people. I want to correct that misconception which emanated from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

I would also want to say that when the Honourable Member for St. Michael East talked about people not being able to pay their rents, people being in penury, people suffering, he took my mind back to the period 1991-1994 when precisely what he was saying was the norm of the day.

If you were to go back down memory lane and reflect on what had happened to this our lovely country between 1991 and 1994 you would have known that lay-offs and cuts and the abandonment of projects and heavy taxation and budget after budget...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading. He seems to suggest that the only time that people were unable to pay their rents was during the period of 1991 to 1994. Sir, that period has gone. Along the way of any infrastructural development there would be hiccups. That period has gone. I was referring to this week after the show last week. I am in 1998. I do not want to go back to 1991 because I cannot recover it. I am talking about now. If the Honourable Member can only go back to those days to seek what he wants to suggest then something is wrong.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on the Floor of Parliament Members are free to debate and if one Member says X and the other says that he wants to say Y the rules of the Honourable House permit such. 12.00 noon.

When the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was talking about people not being able to pay their rent, people not being able to pay their mortgage, people burdened by poverty, I distinctly as an Honourable Member of this House remembered the period 1991-1994 when such was the norm in this country. Where is the Honourable Member living now because things in this country have

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so improved in the last four years that Barbadians in their numbers are thankful for the leadership and management which the Honourable Member for St. Peter is offering this country.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East also talked about VAT. I remember, Mr. Speaker, being in this Honourable House when the VAT debate came and all sides supported VAT. We have it on record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. I would like to disagree with the statement made by the Honourable Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: You seem to have lost your voice, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is right, Sir. I never supported VAT so do not say all Sides and all Members. I never did.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I said that all sides supported VAT. The Parliamentary record will show that the debate that occurred in here on VAT was a debate in which many Honourable Members were of the view that the time had come to reform our taxation system and I do not recall any divide. I do not recall any one member voting in this Honourable House against the VAT.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that a VAT had been proposed by the outgoing Administration that demitted office in 1994 and that VAT, if it had ever been implemented, would have been different from what we implemented with more pressure on the people of Barbados ensuing but I guess people would want to say that is a matter of speculation because they were not given the opportunity to implement it.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East also is saying that Barbados' sugar has declined radically in recent times. Cuba at its peak would normally produce 9 million tonnes of sugar. This year Cuba is down 3 million tonnes, despite heavy Government regulations and such like. Throughout the entirety of the African, Caribbean, Pacific States total sugar production is down by 15 percent.

We had in Barbados in 1994 a serious drought. We had the lowest rainfall for 20 years occurring in 1997. The phenomenon called El Nino badly affected not only sugar agriculture but other forms of agriculture in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I felt driven to respond to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who, unfortunately, has walked out. I will conclude dealing with him by saying that he suggested that when his Side was in power they did a lot

of glorious things and he mentioned one specific achievement. He mentioned Sherbourne. We could respond to his submission that the Sherbourne project was their outstanding achievement by mentioning just a few of what we have done.

I could mention that we have built the Ignatius Byer School, the Hilda Skeene School. I could mention that the Ministry of Education headquarters had been abandoned by the last Administration and we finished it. I could say right now, Mr. Speaker, that there is a construction boom in response to what the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was saying.

Mr. Speaker, having responded to the very unfortunate diatribe of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who made what, in my view, is easily the worst speech I have ever heard on the Floor of this Honourable House, I want to say that when we go back...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I did not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member but he said that the Honourable Member made the worst speech. I was here for a very long time, Sir, and it is among the better speeches I have heard. The Honourable Member must not try to run down somebody else. Let him get on with his speech.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the rules of this House do not address the whole question of hypocrisy as practised by Members out of a sense of partisanship and more in a jocular sense than in any general and real sense. I would like to see the day come, Mr. Speaker, when the Standing Orders of this House address the question of hypocrisy. The Honourable Member could not have been serious when he said that was the best speech he had ever heard unless he is in the same frame of mind as the last Member who spoke, a sick frame of mind.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I draw to Your Honour's attention that the Honourable Member by inference is calling me a hypocrite which is contrary to the rules. The Honourable Member by inference believing that using clever language could hide it said that he is looking forward to the day when there are rules for hypocrisy and then immediately drew attention to this Honourable Member. I draw it to Your Honour's attention. I object to that, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, if the rules of this House as clearly constituted do not permit me to call the Honourable Member a hypocrite, I will respectfully withdraw the use of the word "hypocrite" and say that there need to be rules to deal with the misguided.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the speech coming from the Right Honourable Prime Minister clearly indicated that even though Barbados has made significant progress down through the years that much remains to be done for the unfortunate persons in our number who through no fault of their own have suffered the effects of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I recall in a debate in this Honourable House when I was in Opposition indicating that there were segments within Barbados where people were very, very poor and a member from the Opposition side suggested that international institutions had treated Barbados as a very wealthy place. No doubt the international institutions, Mr. Speaker, would have been looking at macro-economic measures like the size of the GDP, the size of the per capita income and such like, but a person living in a one-apartment house which is in need of repair on a low income who finds it difficult to feed her children is not going to be impressed by any macro-economic measures that suggest that rising per capita income and rising GDP are signs that her condition is a good one.

Mr. Speaker, over time there has been considerable controversy on the question as to the nature of poverty and even as to the measures of poverty. Without going into these things, Mr. Speaker, what struck me in support of what the Right Honourable Prime Minister was saying in respect of the effect of poverty on self-esteem was an article I came across, and with your permission I shall just highlight it briefly for purposes of the debate. It is an article I came across that indicates quite clearly that the Right Honourable Prime Minister was right when he said that poverty at its worst goes to self-esteem.

A man called Os£ar Lewis, Mr. Speaker, suggested that where poverty becomes endemic and where poverty is not treated, a culture of poverty can arise and that if that culture of poverty is not tackled then it can become a design for living for the unfortunate. Lewis said that at the individual level, the major characteristics of the culture of poverty are a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependence and inferiority, of strong present-time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification, a sense of resignation and a sense of fatalism. And he was saying that at the family level life for the poor, poor, poor is characterised by free or loose unions, a high incidence of abandonment of mothers and children, a trend toward mother-centred families, *et cetera*.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that when the Right Honourable Prime Minister says that poverty goes with self-esteem he was correct because a truly poor people are a people who are going to be unable to make their material ends meet, and when not being able to make these material ends meet are going to end up feeling very terrible and horrible about themselves.

I want to posit the question whether a poor people, Mr. Speaker, can really be a free people. And when we consider what the effects of poverty can be in terms of hunger, illness, in terms of inclining the very poor to be tempted to go into crime, in terms of the self-perpetuating nature of the malady, I am minded that there were those in this country who saw a strong nexus between freeing the people physically and freeing the people from suffering. The Right Excellent Bussa not only fought for freedom of people from slavery, he fought for a freedom of them where they would be able to actualise themselves, would be able to live in a regime that offered them the opportunity to progress in life and such like. 12.10p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who argue that even in stratified societies that once there is equality of opportunity that that is enough. We in Barbados would have seen equality of opportunity to a number of things and yet even though in theory we have this equality of opportunity we still have sharp divisions in society. We still have, despite the talk of equality of opportunity, we have those who have not benefitted, notwithstanding the fact, that there has been equality of opportunity. The same people suffer to a point, Mr. Speaker, when they either retreated from taking part in ordinary living or they felt so badly about themselves that sometimes they even lost control of their minds.

I would want at this point in time to highlight the efforts of two institutions that were non-political and that would have done a tremendous amount towards the relief of poverty. There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, when one considers the effects of the great depression of the 1930s and then the subsequent efforts of the Barbados Workers' Union under the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the Right Excellent Sir Frank Walcott, when the efforts of the Barbados Labour Party towards heeding the condition of the working class are taken into account, they would have done a lot towards improving the material well-being of their people. I shudder to think what could have happened in Barbados were it not for the grand efforts of the Barbados Family Planning Association who to this day is doing an outstanding job in helping control our population so that this poverty that we are looking at will not go completely out of control.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side have noticed in Barbados a struggle and a veritable grabbling for scarce resources by large numbers of poor people. Over the last 40 years we would have seen a drift from rural Barbados to what I call metropolitan Barbados in St. Michael and Christ Church. In fact, if you take a population count of the whole population of St. Michael and Christ Church, you will no doubt encounter the figure of about 130 000 people or more living in these two parishes simply because, in the rush away from rural Barbados in search of opportunity

in metropolitan Barbados, people came down to town more or less to seek opportunity.

The result was that large amounts of rural communities were to some extent depleted. The result too was that metropolitan St. Michael and Christ Church became overcrowded. In fact St. Michael, Mr. Speaker, had come to a stage where politically it was necessary to change the system of representation of St. Michael from two to eleven some years ago. Talking about St. Michael, I was recently lamenting the fact that even though St. Michael would have achieved a remarkable amount of progress over time that the progress seemed to have been slowing down as greater and greater pressure was being put on the resources of St. Michael.

I was in a little debate with a girl called Sony, a boy called Sam, a girl called Cheryl and another girl called Kathy. They told me that I was wrong to think that the type of development that I claimed should have been occurring in St. Michael was not occurring. I asked them where they came from and they told me at first that they were not keen to tell me where they came from but they told me that they were very ably represented by their representative who had done a tremendous amount in terms of assistance of people through the National Assistance Board, through the Urban Development Commission, they told me that places in a place called St. Michael Central like Bedford Avenue, Walker Avenue and Waterford were given attention.

*Asides.*

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: In a place called St. Michael Central. Four young people arguing with me about the type of representation they are getting. They were arguing with me at Folkestone at a barbecue on Saturday night. They told me that they were proud to say that once again St. Michael especially St. Michael Central is benefitting from Government assistance. They told me that they expected recreational facilities in Hill Road and in Bush Hall. They told me too that a lot more houses have been repaired in Waterford than they expected could have happened and they told me that it all boiled down to able and outstanding representation by their Member of Parliament the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, whoever he is. The Honourable Member for St. James North was there with Sony and Cheryl and Sam and Kathy at that barbecue.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is permitted to say who is the representative.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I was of the view, Mr. Speaker, that an Honourable Member on the Floor of the House could not easily name a person including the

Speaker. I did not know the rules of this Honourable House would permit me to say that Mr. Ishmael Roett had done such for St. Michael Central.

*Asides.*

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we in this Honourable House would have come here in 1994,...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is giving the impression that he is the Minister of Urban Development when in truth he is the Minister of Rural Development.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we created a programme called Rural Development where we indicated that we would link roads into villages by adequate lighting and improved cross country transportation where we would construct new tenantry roads and repair existing ones, where we would create the Rural Enterprises Fund to assist in the financing of projects.

Mr. Speaker, I shall briefly look at a number of things that are pertinent to the Rural Development programme. We found that when we surveyed rural Barbados that they had still, despite the relative modernity of times, a situation where rural Barbados cried out for the development of its infrastructure. Shortly, I shall give you instances of actual developments that have occurred. We found, Mr. Speaker, that there was a hue and a cry out there in rural Barbados for improved infrastructure.

We also found too, Mr. Speaker, that there was a hue and a cry for improving the sanitation of the rural poor. We also saw too that we had come to an era in Barbados when persons were speaking about economic enfranchisement and those persons had very clear ideas of what they saw as economic enfranchisement. As a result of this new spirit of economic enfranchisement which had captured the imagination of Barbadians, which Barbadians are not only speaking about but which Barbadians are going to use as the basis for further involvement of the poor and business in Barbados. We created as a result the Rural Enterprises Fund.

Before coming to the Fund, Mr. Speaker, we through the Rural Development programme have so far installed over 905 lights in rural Barbados with a further 905 to come. I remember the Honourable Member for St. John on the last occasion on which he spoke mentioning that agencies in Government were virtually competing with each other to do things. When he said so I said to myself, he obviously believes in centralisation, he does not

believe that a system of decentralisation that permits a number of agencies, not to compete against each other, Mr. Speaker, but to so fast-track progress as to allow Barbadians to rightly get what they want.

We have so far done 905 lights through the Rural Development programme and a further 905 will be installed as soon as possible. We have not only installed them, Mr. Speaker, in areas traditionally supported by the Barbados Labour Party but I am sure that St. John is going to get in excess of 70 lights within the next year hopefully. St. Philip also and members throughout rural Barbados can take note that we are not going to be dismissive of their needs. 12.20p.m.

If the Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants me to give way and if he wants to speak truthfully he can rise now and say how many he got in the last 4 to 6 months. He got some too, Mr. Speaker. St. Lucy is going to get no fewer than 104 of which I am sure a good 30 or so could have been done already.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to roads we have so far fixed a number of roads. We have dealt with Edgumbe in St. Philip, Forty-Acres in St. Thomas, Content in St. Thomas. We are hoping to push the project at Monroe, St. George. We have also, Mr. Speaker, almost revolutionised Benn Hill in St. Peter. We shall be paying attention to Parris Hill in St. Joseph in the foreseeable future. We have already done Ginger Works in St. Joseph. We have done Thicketts. We are to do Thornbury Hill, Carters and some more. Moncreiffe, St. Philip will also be coming. I have in mind to do 2 in St. Lucy, one of which will be in Pie Corner and in the foreseeable future, Salters, Golden Ridge, Ashbury, Hopewell should be coming on stream.

Mr. Speaker, we also have been very concerned about the fact that as the twenty-first century approaches we still have one of the strongest smells of poverty in Barbados. When I say that we still have one of the strongest smells of poverty in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, I mean that notwithstanding the substantial progress we as a people of Barbados have made we still have this spectre in Barbados of the dry pit culture and we in the Rural Development Commission are doing our utmost to ensure that gradually this culture is rid of. Because of resources we would not be able to do everybody's house at the same time. In fact what we have been doing, Mr. Speaker, is where we have been encountering instances not only of the need for water-borne facilities but of the need to fix up, what people call the shedroof and the back part of the house, we would not only install and leave it there, where the house craves repairs we would do it. This, Mr. Speaker, always increases costs. We have been mindful of the plight of these people and we are

doing our utmost, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that as the twenty-first century approaches that these signs and vestiges of poverty are tackled.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to speak briefly of the Rural Enterprise Fund. In the last 10 years or so we have seen ordinary Barbadians in this country demonstrate that they are no longer going to be satisfied or contented with being hewers of wood and drawers of water. We therefore have ordinary Barbadians who are sufficiently enterprising and sufficiently ambitious who do not want to be ordinary employees of a boss but who either want to be self-employed or who want to be their own black entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, in consequence of that spirit of enterprise which is prevailing in Barbados and also in rural Barbados we have organised for the benefit of rural people a system of funding where seed capital can be made available to them so that they can get what it takes to commence business.

All too often 30 and 40 years ago we would encounter a bright young girl or a bright young boy with an idea but no capacity to satisfy the commercial institutions in Bridgetown, no affinity to demonstrate either the sophistication or the so-called 3 or 4 C's that the commercial institutions were looking for in these people. Through a governmental agency we have to date invested and assisted with poultry and animal production, with catering, vending, ceramics, vegetable production, general agriculture, arts and crafts, cosmetology, dress-making, fishing and other areas of activity. In all we have so far spent over \$600 000 and we expect to spend more in the future. In fact this financial year we are going to get an additional \$1 million to finance small businesses. We are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of rural Barbadians have kept with what they recognise to be within their limits.

I know a young lady who told me that she wanted to set up a poultry business and that in her estimation she did not need any more than \$15 000. She therefore was satisfied and content with \$15 000 and she made a success of the thing especially because she had a very sound marketing plan in place.

I also know, Mr. Speaker, of a girl who was unemployed. She went to a so-called newer Secondary School, 4 certificates, could not easily find a job out there in the job market. She borrowed \$7 000 to set up a business where she was making garments for people and she also became a beneficiary out of the Rural Enterprise Fund.

We therefore, Mr. Speaker, in considering the whole question of poverty do not see any one line of approach as being good enough or being wholesome enough to

tackle the line of poverty. The Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow would have used training and education as particular means towards helping to address the problem of poverty on the grounds that education has a way of leading one out of ignorance and that if ignorance and poverty are often on equal terms then if you can lead people out of poverty you would automatically also lead them out of ignorance. That is just one aspect of the whole business. There are people who have been educated who have remained poor. We therefore have as a Parliament to continually devise ways and means, programmes and policies such as what we have before us today to continue this whole question of poverty.

I was heartened, Mr. Speaker, when I heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister indicate quite clearly that already he was turning over in his mind a policy by which he would want some day soon to ensure that those below the poverty line do not pay taxes of any kind. Already in Barbados we have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where persons who work for \$15 000 or less per annum do not pay PA YE taxes. The Right Honourable Prime Minister has correctly, in my view, recognised that even when people are forgiven from paying direct taxes that the indirect taxation regime can so operate that a person on a very slender income can find him or herself barely able to make ends meet but more often than not, unable to make ends meet.

Politicians on the Floor of this House on all sides would tell you that in their interaction with their constituents they do actually come across people who are below the poverty line, people who are sometimes well educated, people who mean well, people who are law abiding, but they often cannot make ends meet and therefore any policy that the Right Honourable Prime Minister is proposing by way of the relief from taxation of the poorest segments of the community must be welcomed.

I have grown, Mr. Speaker, to see that the Prime Minister can be trusted, to see that he is a man whose credibility is strong and to know that once he has that as a major policy initiative for the future he is going to implement it and knowing his anxiety to get on with the business of Government I am sure he is going to be giving it his fullest attention in the hope to have such a programme introduced within a speedy time.

Permit me to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the whole tone and theme of the speech of the Right Honourable Prime Minister identified a particular social problem in Barbados, namely the problem of poverty. He reached the conclusion that even though there are classes in Barbados which have done well, he reached the conclusion that even though the economy is growing, even though our foreign reserves are growing, even though we have kept down our overdraft to the Central Bank, that these achievements by

themselves and of themselves without more, will offer no relief to the poor. Bearing in mind then, that the Prime Minister rejected macro-economic variables and macro-economic measures as true pointers to the plight of people at the micro level, we must congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, for having had the foresight and courage to tackle head on, a problem that must not be permitted to persist. 12.30p.m.

In the same way, Mr. Speaker, that constituents from St. Michael Central have come to trust their representative and have come to see him deliver, we on this side have seen our leader do his utmost to demonstrate a quality leadership and a quality management of this country where I am sure today, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, Barbadians as a whole are totally satisfied.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East said that we are looking to give the Right Honourable Prime Minister, a Prime Ministerial job. Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that based upon his record he deserves to be Prime Minister again. He has done his utmost to bring a quality of life to Barbadians that they certainly were not experiencing between 1991 and 1994 and if the Honourable Member for St. Michael East...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I said nothing about that. I said that the Right Honourable Prime Minister in trying to identify... he said he was tired of all this black talk. He said he was only looking for a black man with \$2 million. I did not praise the Right Honourable Prime Minister. You did not hear me say that.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: He is misleading the House, Mr. Speaker. I never said that the Right Honourable Prime Minister deserves any job. I did not go down that route. The Right Honourable Prime Minister was referring to the fact that he was trying to identify a black man that has \$2 million. I never said that he deserves any job. You should speak about the fishing agreement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, that will be struck from the record.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: What I did hear him say is that the Right Honourable Prime Minister should look for a job. He said so. You said so clearly. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East said that the Right Honourable Prime Minister should look for a job.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I said he should look for a job because I expect him to call the elections soon. I said so.

*Aside.*

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has had a job and he performed well in that job. Sir, even if an election is called tomorrow, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East can have no assurance that he would be Prime Minister. What we want is for the quality leadership that we have seen demonstrated in this country in the last four years to continue.

I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that when the time comes and we all put our cases that the people of Barbados will once again see the true brilliant leadership which the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Member for St. Peter has offered and I will once more endorse him to lead us.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, there has been some mire this morning surrounding what I consider to be perhaps one of the most serious subjects which this House can progress at this point in the history of Barbados. I say so, Sir, because I am not among those who have suddenly discovered that the eradication of poverty should be a number one item on the agenda.

Indeed, Sir, at the very foundation of the fledgling party which I have the honour to lead in Queen's Park in 1989 not 1998, a clear and fundamental statement in our foundation ceremony and I quote,

"The elimination of poverty and the protection of the poor, the young, the old and the disadvantaged shall be abiding concerns of the National Democratic Party and the overriding objectives of our policy."

That is a clear fundamental statement of policy by a political party, in relation to the eradication of poverty that has never, ever been expressed or incorporated in any document of any political party at anytime in the history of Barbados.

Sir, this Bill before us calls for the establishment of a Fund to be known as a Social Investment Fund. To provide for application of resources of the Fund, to support projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty and further calls for such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as will best ensure the attainment of its purposes.

In the context, Sir, of such large and liberal interpretation and construction, I shall frame the main substance of my address today. It also calls for the Fund to receive revenue that is transferred from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. Such funds are voted by Parliament and funds from any other source as the Minister may determine from time to time for the purpose of financing projects and

programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises.

Now, Sir, I believe that it is very important that there should be a clear conceptualisation of the needs of Barbados in terms of social development. Last week - in fact over the past three weeks there has been much debate in this country as to those who are worthy of elevation to national hero status. And what struck me very fundamentally is that it would be noted that it was not those who contributed to economic development or contributed to policies related to economic development primarily, but those people who made significant contributions in terms of the social evolution that has taken place in Barbados from slavery to independence.

That seems to me, Sir, to indicate quite correctly that in the psyche of Barbadians that they fully recognise that the social development of this country has been propelled not primarily by economic considerations, although that is important, but by a multitude of social factors. Therefore, Sir, I believe that the time has come when we should really begin to think in terms of social capital development. In the same way we think in terms of the development of capital projects in relation to buildings, roads and this kind of thing, that not only should we be thinking about it but in our financing of the development of Barbados there should be structured provisions in the Estimates under the heading of "Social Capital Development". I have no doubt whatsoever that particularly between the period 1961 and today that this country's rapid development has been propelled by the catalytic effect which the social services have had particularly in the areas of education, health and other social services, of course.

We in Barbados, Sir, I think have reached a significantly high level of social organisation, because there are those who believe that you can measure the extent of social development of a society by looking simply at the number of organisations outside of Government that exist in that society. If you were to consider the large number, the many thousands of organisations that exist in Barbados that is a pretty good index of the level of social development in Barbados. If you want to cast your mind back to the 1930s and 1940s you would see immediately that few indeed were the levels of organisations in Barbados apart from the Government when you compare with what existed in this country. 12.40p.m.

So that index alone is a very significant indicator of the level of the social development of this country. Sir, I have no doubt that while economic considerations will continue to occupy our minds and rightly so, that the stage has been set in Barbados to give maximum consideration to a multiplicity of social issues.

It is my sincere belief, Sir, and nothing can change my mind about this that the economies all over the world have a built-in tendency to expand as a result of human effort to improve themselves. So long as major errors are not made by Government in particular in the economic management of any country the natural tendency of the economy would be to expand.

In this context, Sir, what are the major issues which should be attracting our attention in the social area in Barbados? I have no doubt, Sir, that the number one issue in Barbados today is still the issue of unemployment and it is important that everyone in this country clearly understands that throughout its history the only time there was full employment in Barbados was under slavery.

Since slavery, despite emancipation, despite all that has happened over the years, we still have this hard core of unemployment in this country and my view is that economic and social policies must be so geared as to deal with the issue of unemployment as a major priority. Then there is the other problem, the problem of the working poor in Barbados.

These issues, Sir, require broad based measures if we are going to deal with them. Slavery was an example of the working poor among other things. People worked and at the end of their working lives they had nothing. If we allow a situation to continue down the years until today where there are people working for levels of wages which are grossly unsatisfactory it shows that for those people they have not made that major leap from slavery of their ancestors to what they should be enjoying in a new Barbados.

That is why I believe that this House has a priority and long before the 21st century must introduce minimum wages legislation to protect the working poor of this country. Then, Sir, there is the issue of housing, and make no mistake about it. Many of the social problems that we have today are the result of inadequate housing in Barbados. A house is not only a matter of bricks and mortar. The conditions under which children are brought up - many sociologists will tell you that one of the problems of young people today is what they are exposed to in homes where there are inadequate facilities for privacy and this kind of thing. Much of the sexual abuse of children occur in such homes.

Unless we deal with the issue of housing and it is not going to be done in the way in which we have been setting about it. For 30 years we have been just trying to cope with a small percentage of the demand for housing. The demand continues to rise and again and again I have said on the Floor of this House that there needs to be a conceptualisation of the total needs of this society for housing and make sure that we embark now on major capital programmes for housing

development for the present and the future. I see this as really meaning the provision of 10 000 house spots and homes over the years ahead.

Apart from that, Sir, I have advocated again and again that in this society there is no place for the elderly living in houses where they do not have indoor toilet facilities and we still have a situation where agencies of the Government would provide homes for the elderly without those amenities, and this must stop.

I can take you, Sir, to the few homes that I have got in St. Michael South Central over the past years and see that homes are still being provided for the elderly and the indigent by the National Assistance, Welfare and so on without any kind of indoor facilities. This is wrong. It sends a wrong message and I am sure that this must constitute a major priority in terms of the social development and in terms of the country and the eradication of poverty.

There are houses in Bridgetown which are not significantly different from what they were in 1937. Sir, I was born a year or so after the riots. I have seen the transformation of Barbados for particular sectors of this society and at the same time I have seen the many thousands that have been left behind. That is why I say that we cannot rely on the belief that if you have economic development, economic growth in the kind of capitalist, conservative economic system which we have chosen in Barbados and throughout the Caribbean by and large particularly now added to that are the consequences and issues related to free trade and globalisation.

My view, Sir, is that unless specific measures are put in place what is going to happen is that you are going to get an intensification of poverty, not an elimination of poverty. Therefore, Sir, it is mandatory. It is essential that a whole range of structures and programmes are put in place if we are going to deal with this problem in the context of the type of development which we have embarked upon and which seems to be generally embraced by the conservative elements in the other political parties, we being the only socialist party in the country today.

The issue of health has been a very important factor in the economic and social development of this country and I am deeply concerned about the rapid deterioration in the health services of Barbados. I am equally concerned about the fact that having conceptualised that the major issue facing education in Barbados is the fact that over 55% of people leaving schools were either uncertificated or uncertifiable, not as having completed their education in a satisfactory way or, in the alternate, many of them cannot read, write or reason.

How are we going to prepare these people to participate in a new services economy if we are not going to put that as the number one issue on the agenda.

Sir, I am a great believer in major social reform for Barbados and I will tell you why. If you look at what happened in education in the 1950s and 1960s whatever public policy was put in place the beneficiaries of that have been largely poor people in the country. Today, Mr. Speaker, the beneficiaries of the education dollar voted by this country are not predominantly the poor people of Barbados any longer. Think about it carefully that whatever structures we have for education at the moment that they are serving a completely different social purpose from the money spent in the 1950s and 1960s on education. 12.50p.m.

What has happened, Sir, is that we have continued to do the same thing year after year, more of the same, trying to do the same thing better and at the same time no one has sat back and said what is the purpose of the education dollar that we are spending. What is the main problem? What needs to be tackled as the highest priority. I say the highest priority must be to ensure that that 50% that leaves our school system in the state in which they are leaving that that situation is turned around. Unless that is turned around, we are going to have a major problem in this society because the jobs of the future will not be jobs for people with that kind of level of education and if they come out of school with that level of education they can hardly be trained thereafter to meet the demands of the new age.

Sir, there are many areas I would have wished to tackle such as our failure, and we need to do this, to make sure that women participate more fully in the totality of life in Barbados and many other areas that I certainly can identify as priority areas. Sir, in that context, I believe that if this Bill fulfils the purpose for which it is outlined and set out here, that this is one small bit toward the area of dealing with the problem of poverty eradication.

But, Sir, there are many other things we can do. For years now I have been trying hard to persuade this House to bring in a new tax regime for small businesses in this country to look at existing businesses that small people do well in. We can create probably another 200, 300 small businesses in the public transport sector overnight at a far lesser cost to the Treasury than the amount of buses we go and buy every three or four years and the subsidies we provide by the House of Assembly here, but that is a separate debate. I am saying there are opportunities in the public transport sector.

Again, I have called on this House to put in place a contractor general and set aside provisions within large

contracts and also give the legislative basis for awarding contracts relating to Government expenditure to small businesses to make sure that there can be no argument as to the legality of so doing.

We are spending over four and a half billion dollars in money this year in Barbados under public expenditure and that should be an important fillip to the generation of small businesses in Barbados but you need the legal framework to set aside contracts. You need even in the context of the large contracts to have some arrangements inside those where a specific amount of work must go to small people.

You would be surprised, Sir, that there is tremendous opportunity there because do not forget that Government expenditure is just a little under half of the Gross Domestic Product of this country at the moment and it can be done if we put in place the contractor general because then that takes the politicians out of it, pass legislation to ensure that it can be lawfully done where a Ministry can say, I have a contract for \$20 000 but I am going to give it to a small man and his business, of course, would be defined in law because it would have to be part of the Income Tax definitions.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Just let me remind the Honourable Member that the Financial Rules were amended last year to allow for the award of contracts up to \$100 000 without going to public tender. In that regard, Ministries have been establishing internal award committees of the technical people. They look for three or four quotations from small people and then make an award. During the Budget last year I read out a long list of small people that my two Ministries had employed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Fair enough, Sir. I agree that we have made some progress in the past and the amendments to the Financial Rules have certainly allowed for a wider scope in that area. I am saying, Sir, this should be a more pervasive thing because the opportunities are there and there is no better opportunity which we can control other than through Government expenditure.

Sir, what has the struggle over the years been about? The political empowerment of the masses? To create political structures so this can lead to the socio and economic development of the people of Barbados? Again, Sir, I do not believe that despite the Urban Commission and the Rural Commission that you are really solving the problems. You need the reintroduction of Local Government in Barbados.

There is adult suffrage and as a result of that the people said, we do not want the form of Local

Government that existed at the time and they swept it away. No problem with that, but Barbadian society has become more complex. You need to empower people at the community levels and we cannot have a situation with the thousands of people privately forming themselves into organisations. Clearly there is a need for those people to be able to move beyond beggar organisations, walking around the place begging companies day after day for this and that. They need to be empowered in their communities, democratically so, and it can only be done through Local Government.

Indeed, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I like to always make sure that I give attribution where it is appropriate, has identified the land tax base of the country as a possible source of the financing of that operation and it seems to make sense to me, Sir.

The next thing is, Sir, that I believe we must have appropriate structures. I am concerned with the operations of the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board. No matter how hard you try with those people you just cannot get anything done and that is the experience of the front bench over there, the back bench over there, the front bench over here and the front bench back here. That has been the overall experience of everybody in this House. I say, Mr. Speaker, the time has come to scrap them. The time has come to establish a separate Ministry where all those disciplines and personnel can be brought together following the recommendation of the Roett Report which you may not have read, Sir, but I would suggest to you, Sir, that you should read it. It is very important that this be done otherwise we are just spinning top in mud.

I can repeat the horror stories not only relating to fire victims. There is one instance I know about right now where one of those agencies went to replace a home for an elderly lady, they removed the lady's home weeks ago, placed a National Assistance Board house there, without any windows or doors and left the old lady for weeks living out of a little board box at the back of the house. These are the kind of inhumanities perpetrated by those Organisations. I strongly believe that if we are going to succeed in dealing with that aspect of poverty eradication in Barbados then we need a new institution under a new Ministry. I have no doubt about that. You cannot change those people and if you cannot change them then you change the structure. It is as simple and straightforward as that. There is not a single person in this Honourable House who can get up and say that he is satisfied with the kind of responses that he gets from those agencies. 1.00p.m.

The next area that I want to deal with is the question of pensions. We have a great opportunity to do something immediately for a lot of people. Those old age pensioners, people who are living solely on an old age pension, I say

increase their pensions, give them a supplementary pension and tell all the other old age pensioners who have income of \$30 000 to \$50 000 a year, we are not going to take away what you are getting now but the increases over the next ten years must go to those old people who have nothing but the old age pension.

We know, Sir, that there is a problem in public financing of pensioners. We know it would be ideal to give it to everybody but we know that that cannot be done. But if you are going to give a substantial increase in pensions to those people who live solely on old age pension then you have to tell the others who have income of \$30 000 to \$40 000 apart from their old age pension to take it easy.

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am telling them to take it easy, Mr. Speaker. I misunderstood the signal.

I have dealt with the issue of the need for minimum wage legislation. I too, like the Honourable Member for St. James North was very pleased to hear the Right Honourable Prime Minister talk of a reversed tax credit to correct the problems relating to the impact of the VAT on the poor. That is the VAT tax credit that I called for last year. Does anyone remember that?

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is the VAT tax credit. One of the things that I am pleased about is that although we are not represented in this House by large numbers...

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I mean the royal 'we'. Nevertheless Sir, in terms of the impact that we have had on policy determination in this country, it has been very significant.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it, we would have played no role in Barbados if that was not the role of a new political party. To be able to look at matters more dispassionately, to look at them more globally, to be free from the shackles of the past and to be able to focus on the present in the future. We have tried in this way and I think that we have made a very significant contribution during this short period of our existence.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on that note of self-congratulation we will suspend for lunch.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.15 p.m.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

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

#### RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I am happy to be given an opportunity to participate in this debate.

Sir, this topic of poverty and poverty alleviation is a very crucial one to all Barbadians. First I would like briefly to talk about my personal experience as far as this whole issue of poverty alleviation is concerned. Sir, poverty in my mind, when I was a young person still at school at the age of 13, I had to leave school and go and work for my family. My mother was a single parent and it was six of us and going to work at a particular firm called the Civic gave me a great deal of experience and a kind of understanding of how to deal with poor people and a further understanding of what this whole question of poverty alleviation is all about.

Sir, when I left the Civic on evenings and returned back to my humble dwellings in Pinelands I would see notices affixed to persons' houses for eviction. In one instance the notice was even placed on my family's home to move. I had experience at a very early age what real poverty is about. What has happened since that time is that notices by successive Governments are still placed on persons' houses in Government estates throughout Barbados to move when they develop arrears.

In recent times, Sir, what has happened is that the National Housing Corporation is now using a more practical approach and in my mind a little more sophistication than previously where they are now distributing final warnings. I think that the staff at the Legal Department in the National Housing Corporation should be complimented for the effort that they are making in trying to reach ordinary Barbadians and trying to deal with this whole question of arrears.

Sir, it brings me to a point, a very very important point. I believe that there are hundreds and hundreds of tenants throughout Barbados who have been living in Government housing estates for well over 20 or 25 years but somehow when this Government had to take precaution to guard the

economy a lot of these people were displaced and in the process they developed housing arrears.

I am asking the present Government that those persons who have developed these arrears over a period of time that conscience and understanding would dictate to the Government that they should waive the arrears of all of those persons living in Government housing estates who would have developed these arrears over the last five to seven years. If we are going to talk about poverty alleviation we cannot have a situation existing where people in Government housing estates are still struggling to pay rent. Similarly how the Canadian Government waived the grant or the debt that was owed by the Barbados Government to them, I am calling on the Barbados Government to waive the arrears for those tenants living in Government housing estates throughout Barbados.

In addition, I am also asking for the waiver of rents for all of those senior citizens living alone in Government housing estates, those persons that are 65 years and over I am saying that possibly from this financial year that Government will consider not letting these people pay one single cent in rent. Those persons that are 65 years and over and living alone. 2.25 p.m.

*Aside.*

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am not talking about putting anything in a manifesto. I am talking about a genuine human concern towards senior citizens in Barbados.

In addition to that, Sir, there is a tragic situation and sometimes it hurts my heart and I suppose the heart of all caring Barbadians when poor people have been handed notices to quit by their landlords and then eventually what happens after going through the whole experience of a court and then in the final analysis to be told that they have to leave these units then what happens, bailiffs come and pull down those houses and place them beside the road and then in a week or two they are put in a dump.

When you really consider it, Sir, it is a heart breaking thing to do. Mr. Speaker, here it is that these poor people would have worked all their lives to put a shelter over their heads and then because of a situation that cannot be avoided their houses are pulled down and placed in the road and then eventually carried and put on a dump. I am saying, Sir, that all of us in this Honourable Chamber have a duty to all citizens in this country. Therefore all I am asking for is that an emergency 1 and scheme be made available to these persons. You will find that the majority of these persons are persons who are renting from

private landlords. I know that the law of this country has a right to protect the landlord but also the tenant. So poverty in my mind, Sir, is also trying and working hand in hand with the National Assistance Board to repair a number of senior citizens homes throughout this country.

Sir, in St. Michael South East, particularly in Haggatt Hall, Salters Tenantry Road, Cutting Road, Pasture Road and part of Pinelands and Wildey there are a great deal of senior citizens in these areas that need house repairs. Sir, when I visit these people I am appalled at the level of poverty that we see existing among our senior citizens. We cannot come into this Chamber all the time and talk about poverty alleviation and do nothing positive to ease this situation. Although, Sir, I recognise that there has been some improvement towards this end but this whole question of dealing with the repairs to senior citizens homes must transcend political boundaries. Therefore as a caring society it is not only the onus of the Government alone but also the private sector to join all of us in this Honourable Chamber to fight this disease and scourge called poverty in this country.

In addition to that, Sir, it is unthinkable that as we go into the twenty-first century that we have a great number of persons in this country, Sir, who do not have access to water-borne facilities, particularly again those marginalised and indigent persons, those senior citizens who are living in our midst.

Sir, I think that our machinery has to move more smoothly and a lot quicker if we are going to try to solve these problems that exist among our senior citizens and those persons that basically cannot help themselves financially.

Sir, there was a time in Barbados, I remember under the Vestry System or what we call the local government system, when the very poor in this country used to go into Queen's Park and line up in a long line to get food. Sir, my family and I were recipients of this process called going into the Park for food. It would probably have saved our lives. Certainly I would never, ever like to see Barbadians return to that system.

At the same time, Sir, the Salvation Army, the Barbados Red Cross and the Pinelands Creative Workshop are doing a wonderful job on weekends of providing a meal on wheels service to our senior citizens and those persons who cannot help themselves. I continue to say in this Honourable Chamber that the care of the elderly cannot be a Monday to Friday exercise. It has to be an all week, 24 hours a day exercise. It has worked in other countries. We have to do a lot more studies and start putting these systems in place.

So I am making a call, if you are going to tackle poverty and tackle it at where it really hurts, in the belly, Sir, then therefore I am calling on Government to set up a national meals on wheels programme where every day of the week, Sir, these senior citizens could be recipients of our national meals on wheels programme. How we can orchestrate it, is simply by merging and fusing the Salvation Army's Programme, the Red Cross and also the Pinelands Creative Workshop's Programme and working hand in hand with Government and certain sectors again of our private community in Barbados, then we could make this programme work. I keep saying and people do not understand when I talk about the development of this country, that it cannot and<sup>v</sup> should not always be measured in dollars and cents, this is what I am talking about. I am talking about partnerships working hand in hand forging links, helping each other, becoming a more caring and sharing society. If this is what we are supposed to do then therefore, Sir, this is what would make us all in this Honourable Chamber good politicians.

Sir, poverty is also years ago sitting in a long queue in Queen's Park for my family to receive \$1.50 a week under the Vestry system. Many marginalised Barbadians in those times lined up in Queens Park to receive \$1.50. Today, Sir, what is happening is that there is a system where the Prime Minister has given \$350.00 to those workers in the lower income brackets but there is a pool of persons who have been left out of this and there are unemployed women, single parents in our community, who have 4 and 5 children with not one single cent of income. They have to wait on some delinquent fathers to support their children and sometimes that comes whenever the father chooses. Sometimes the court system that is in place to collect this money, sometimes these men are smart enough to evade that system. So what happens? You have families with one woman leading this family, 5 children with no real source of income. I am calling on the Right Honourable Prime Minister from today onwards to make that \$350.00 available to those single women with 4 or 5 children so that they too can also benefit.

Sir, we are talking about poverty and when we are talking about poverty we have got to understand what we are talking about. We cannot come into this Honourable Chamber and just indulge in a great deal of verbal horse play all the time. We have got to deal with it.

Poverty, Sir, is also tackling and looking at those young persons who are under the street lights or what I would call on the block liming. Too many of us, when we reach a stage or a certain status in this society keep forgetting where we have come from. If we do that then we have no semblance of where we are or where we are going. Therefore, Sir, I would like to see all of us adopt a programme called operation give back where each of

us who have come out of communities adopt one of our unfortunate brothers and sisters and harness that person's talent. Work along with that young person and develop him, and prepare him if we have to, for the job market. Too much emphasis is placed on Government to do this, Government to do that and there are so many other resources in this country that we should be tapping into.

I tend to believe and I am watching it develop that this society is becoming a very selfish society where those persons who are living in the higher income bracket are forgetting those little ones out there, those small fellows under the street lights that cannot help themselves.

Even you, Sir, if I am permitted to say this, are doing a good job in offering scholarships to poor people from throughout Barbados.

*Aside.*

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I am not getting into that. I am dealing specifically with education and I think he is doing a good job in that sense. But, Sir, until we stop getting into this Chamber and gloating over statistics we could really start being positive with all those young people throughout the housing areas in Barbados who are liming on the block and who are considered to be outcasts and we recognise the problem and start using the big brother approach to it, let us understand then we will start to deal with this whole problem. 2.35 p.m.

Sir, poverty is also watching our old people and young people living in those Government housing estates, Sir, suffering from a disease, if you want to put it that way called asbestosis. I was watching a programme on CNN and saw that greedy businessmen in the United States had taken the homeless persons off the streets and given them work, without any proper attire to go and change asbestos roofs and it is considered very, very dangerous.

If they are thinking about it at that level and the dangers are being exposed on television, Sir, I am saying that the time has come when every single asbestos roof in this country should be changed not only in the housing area by also in our nation's schools. It has to be done as a matter of urgency because now I am even more convinced in my mind that asbestos is a cancer causing agent and something has to be done about it.

Sir, poverty also is looking at the \$1.2 million which has been allocated to the Pinelands Creative Workshop which is again, I always keep saying is a laudable gesture. I will always say that, Sir. If we are going to tackle it, that \$1.2 million cannot serve the entire country. It is a national

programme. I am saying that we should develop empowerment community zones in Barbados. Therefore what will happen is that once we have developed these community empowered zones and we give each functioning council in Barbados that same \$1.2 million for a geographical zone, then therefore we will now begin to tap into dealing with this problem.

Sir, the CBOs, which is the Community-based Organisations in Barbados and NGOs in Barbados those organisations are the most and best equipped to deal with this whole issue of poverty including the churches of Barbados. I am saying that as we go into the 21st century, we have to look at new ways, methods and techniques in dealing with this whole question of poverty. We just cannot come into this Chamber and just talk about it. We have to do something positive about it, Sir.

Poverty is also looking at those youth cultural organisations, Sir, and empowering them. Making them feel proud and positive of their true Barbadianism, Sir, first, by waiving those airline taxes off the ticket so that when 20 or more persons have to travel in a group, it will be more convenient and they will be able to raise that money a lot easier and quicker. Making them feel proud of themselves, Sir, is giving them an ambassadorial status every time they go to represent Barbados to lead this island. That is why I always say that Jamaica is so successful. Again everything does not measure in dollars and cents. It is what you do and how you do it.

Sir, in addition to that, poverty is asking the United States Government in this country to remove that US\$45 that they have imposed on Caribbean Nationals who want to go over to the United States to visit their families - I would keep saying in this Honourable Chamber that we have to do something about it. If we cannot do anything about it because the United States Embassy is on sacred territory and sacred soil, then therefore the tourists arrivals have shown that the Americans are the least among the groups that are coming in. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this Chamber, imposing the same US\$45 on those United States visitors coming into Barbados and then the Government channeling that money into sporting programmes in Barbados and also toward the Poverty Alleviation Fund.

Sir, this morning on my way to this Honourable Chamber, a young man came to me and said, "Ambular" - that is my nickname - "Ambular, I came into this world naked and hungry and things are beginning to get worse." This was a young man. Also, Sir, I was talking to a more intellectual person and he said, "Lashley, I do not fear death, I fear poverty, Sir." Now, I want to say one final thing. It has amazed me that whenever there is a conference on hunger throughout the world and we

are asked to send a delegation to represent this country - furthermore third world countries are asked to send delegations - those delegations are normally made up of politicians and people who get four and five square meals a day and look plump. Sir, how in the name of Jesus Christ...

*Aside.*

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I use it in the positive terms, Jesus Christ I acknowledge God, how in the name of Jesus Christ, Sir, could we have a conference on hunger and send only those persons who get three and four square meals daily. Why we cannot go into the communities and choose a couple of them and send them also to attend these conferences. Those persons will be the best exposed and can really talk about what it means to be hungry.

If I look in this Honourable Chamber, I see a lot of healthy looking gentlemen - well fed, including myself, Sir, the fact is, Sir, when we deal with poverty, we are dealing with a serious situation. So as we go on, I just want to finally say, let us put Barbados first. Let us all collectively work together, NDP, BLP, DLP all of us work together, along with the private sector of this country, who in my mind is still not doing enough...I am in St. Michael South East almost every day. There are just a couple of firms in St. Michael South East on one hand who contribute to the community but others do not contribute and they are benefitting directly and indirectly from the consumerism within this constituency.

Sir, Sunday coming, I will be in Fort George and I will be asking those persons up there to assist us with our Meals on Wheels Programme because we need assistance with this, Sir. I am hoping that when I sit down that most Barbadians listening to me here today will understand what I am saying. Join us, join this Chamber, join the Government, join the NGOs and the CBOs in this country to help us. And as I sit, I just want to be reminded by that young man who came to me and said, "Lashley, I came into this world naked and hungry and things are beginning to get worse."

*Asides.*

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Social Investment Fund Bill brought before this House by the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, when the Barbados Labour Party came to power in September 1994 it was obligated, Sir, that this Party would look at some of the injustices that were metered out to this country before 1994. The Right Honourable Prime Minister has gone about his task and I want to just make a

few points on the Urban Development Commission. This institution which has been put in place by this Government is designed to uplift these people at the lower end of the scale by way of housing, roads, lights and loans to advance themselves. 2.45 p.m.

The Urban Development Commission has done a good job. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East in his contribution talking about repairing 2 houses for the year. He made that revelation when he made his contribution but I think he was misleading the Chamber. I can safely say that the Urban Development Commission has done a fantastic job not only in the St. Michael area.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I said in my constituency in St. Michael East to be precise there are 232 homes that need repairs. Based on the rate at which houses are presently being done, which is 2 per year in my constituency - I am not talking about the whole - it would take the Government 115 years at their rate to repair the houses that need to be repaired.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will not get into any talk with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East concerning that. What he said just now he did not say up front.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. What I repeated just now is precisely what I said before. I do not make mistakes in that regard. That is precisely what I said. I do not know if you misunderstood me to think that I was suggesting that I was blaming the whole Government development. I was dealing with my constituency, not all 28.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, St. Michael East is being serviced by one Trevor Prescod. I think he is doing a very good job of it, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not know one Trevor Prescod. The Honourable Member cannot come into the House of Assembly and speak about individuals who do not exist. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and what he said should be struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us proceed according to the rules of the House.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: As I said, Sir, he is doing a fantastic job in St. Michael East. I want to get back to the Urban Development Commission. I want to show from an example that I know how the UDC is doing

such a good job. A few months ago, only last Sunday, I saw under the Urban Development Commission tenders in the week-end Advocate and Nation newspapers for road works and drainage in certain parts of St. Michael and Christ Church.

I saw work has been tendered for in the newspapers to be done at Yearwood Road, 1 and 2, in Clevedale, Black Rock. I saw tenders for work to be done in Christ Church. I saw tenders for work to be done in Cave Hill. So what I am trying to say, Sir, is that UDC is doing a fantastic job. One tender I know of in St. Michael West Central that road will be starting some time in June and I must give thanks to the UDC for the job they are doing.

The digging of wells is being done in St. Michael West Central. Again, Sir, this is coming under the UDC. As I walk through St. Michael West Central in the St. Stephen's Landing Scheme area, the Spooner's Hill area, Clevedon area, people are stopping me and thanking me for the work of the UDC in house repairs for people. In one area an old man of 86 years of age is having a new house. His house was a shambles when we came to power. Under UDC he has been given a new house. Within a week or two he will get his house to move into.

I know of areas in St. Michael Central where houses are being repaired for people. In one situation I know where one old person has been given a new house to live in. This is the work of Urban Development Commission which is being done under the Social Investment Fund. These are things that are happening under UDC. So I am proud of these things that are being carried out under UDC.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has not gone out there looking for any fame or glory. We are working on behalf of the people of this country. When the Members on the Other Side get up in here they all say we only learnt about poverty in Barbados during a by-election in St. Michael North West. When the Right Honourable Prime Minister went into St. Michael North West he said he did not know that this kind of squalor had existed in St. Michael North West, and we have started to work in there. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West say in here already that he is not going to run and pick behind any Minister to get anything done. I want to tell him that there is a man out there named Mark Williams who is getting work done for the people of St. Michael North West.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please! Please!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is not a person who is without

knowledge of the rules of this House. His position virtually requires him to know what the rules are. He continues over and over again to violate the rules of this House. For example, calling the names of persons. The Honourable Member knows better than that. I submit that Your Honour should draw to the Honourable Member's attention that he should adhere to the rules.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Urban Development Commission to carry out these kinds of programmes that would benefit poor people and uplift these people. Under the Urban Development Commission also there is a programme where people can approach the Commission and borrow money to extend their businesses or open new businesses. I am quite sure that there are people from St. Michael West Central who have benefitted from that programme and they continue to benefit. As I said, I am just making a short intervention and I am giving thanks to the Right Honourable Prime Minister for having the insight to introduce this Social Investment Bill. Thank you.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, with the concept of social investment no enlightened politician or political party can want credibly to find fault for both at the level of what it connotes and the level of what it denotes. The phrase "social investment" represents a qualitative shift of emphasis on things to an emphasis on persons. It recognises, that is, the phrase "social investment", that man has intrinsic worth which should be the target of enlightened social policy. It acknowledges as well that men and women everywhere possess a constellation of talents and abilities and that if these talents and abilities are to be mobilised and pressed into social service that the enlargement of economic opportunity is the only appropriate stimulus.

We on this side of the House have no quarrel with the Government at the conceptual level so far as the concept of social investment is concerned. Social investment has always been a feature of life in Barbados from the dawn of Barbadian history.

What has distinguished social investment programmes from time to time has been what was the applicable definition of society. For example, in the 17th century there were social investment programmes but society was defined as those who owned property and therefore what legislators did was for the benefit almost exclusively of those who owned property and who controlled the economy. There have always been social investment programmes in Barbados. Who has been the society has always been the differentiating feature of these social investment programmes. 2.55 p.m.

Now, this Bill, Mr. Speaker, sets itself the target of creating enterprises, of providing for the application of the resources of the fund to support projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises so that eradication of poverty is an objective of this Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think all will acknowledge that Barbados operates what is called a capitalist system. Barbados is a capitalist society on the periphery of the world economy in the same way that the United States or Japan are capitalist societies at the centre of the world economy. The issues that fall to be determined in discussing this Bill, or indeed one of the issues is whether it is possible to eradicate poverty in a capitalist society for the very simple reason that all the posturings upon which capitalism rests require the existence of the poor.

Capitalism rests, for example, on the principle of cut-throat competition and as long as you have people in a competitive environment, there will necessarily be winners of that competition and losers of that competition. It rests too on a principle of exploitation for how else can the capitalist maximise his profits unless he is able to extract from labour as much as possible for as little as possible. So the Gospel according to capitalism in cut-throat competition and its sacred text is that marriage of profit and exploitation.

Therefore, I do not subscribe to the view that within the context of a capitalist society it is realistic to talk about eradicating poverty at all because eradicating poverty in a capitalist society is tantamount to eradicating capitalism itself. The two things are a contradiction in terms and I think should form no sensible or intelligible part of this debate.

Now, whether one is discussing the eradication of poverty, or the alleviation of poverty, or the reduction of poverty, poverty as a phenomenon, like every other phenomenon under the sun, has a history and poverty in Barbados as well has a history. That history takes us right back to the days of the settlement of Barbados when, in fact, there was a social partnership within the State and the State is always responsible for the social investment. The State is charged with the responsibility of reinvesting the resources of a society for the public good, and there was always a social partnership between the State and the owners of property and the owners of wealth. Because of that social partnership, a large number of people, then called slaves, were the Cinderellas of the Barbados economy.

The social partnership was between capital and the State and it was to break up that social partnership that Right

Excellent Bussa, for example, gave his life because he recognised that as long as that social partnership between the State and capital existed that labour, the down-trodden and the oppressed could have no say or no place in the society.

It was that social partnership against which Right Excellent Sarah Ann Gill fought. It was that social partnership that pressed into service the efforts of Right Excellent Samuel Jackman Prescod and all the Heroes named in Barbados in one way or another, directly or indirectly, fought for the break-up of that social partnership between the State and capital, the State and the owners of properties, the State and those who controlled the wealth in the society.

It is a matter of historical record, Mr. Speaker, that not until that social partnership was broken up, and in this regard mention of the name of Right Excellent Charles Duncan O'Neal fails to be mentioned because it was he who realised that it was not enough to target the breakup of that social partnership in an unplanned and disorganised way but that he had to form institutions that would translate his dream into reality. Hence the formation of the Democratic League, I believe the first political party formed in this century, and the formation of the Barbados Working Men's Association, the first effective trade union formed in this century. Because he understood that the only way in which you could effect genuine social investment in Barbados was if a new relationship was established, a relationship not between the State and those who controlled and owned property but a relationship between the State and the oppressed, the State and labour.

The record now shows that after the disturbances of the 1930s when mass based political parties came into existence and were here to stay, and when the trade union movement was firmly established, that under Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams the first effective social partnership between the State and labour came into existence.

Nobody can deny that since the settlement of Barbados in 1627 labour saw its best days. The poor saw their best days as a result of that partnership established after the Disturbances of the 1930s. The new social partnership between the State and the oppressed, the State and labour, the State and trade unions hence the Protection of Wages Act was passed, Holidays with Pay Act, the Workmen's Compensation, Wages' Councils, a whole panoply of progressive social legislation resulted for the mass of the people of the society as a result of the coming into being of a new social partnership in Barbados between the State controlled by men with a working-class consciousness and the working-class themselves. The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow in his time intensified

and deepened the work of Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams and continued that new social partnership between the State and labour, between the State and the oppressed.

It is a matter of public record that the most enduring poverty alleviation programme this country has ever seen was born out of the work of Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow for he did not adopt a pit toilet concept of poverty in which he gave currency to the view that if you had a pit toilet you were poor but once the pit toilet was replaced you were no longer poor. He did not give currency to the view that if you had a dilapidated chattel house you were poor but if that dilapidated chattel house was repaired you were no longer poor. What he did was to create a larger opportunity for the sons and daughters of the working class of Barbados, confident that once they could dream in ways and about things that their parents could not dream of, that they could in turn relieve a lot of the economic and social distress of their parents and their more depressed relatives. 3.05 p.m.

Barbados is now a story of the success of that programme. The sons and daughters of unpretentious men and women in Barbados, ordinary working-class people dare to dream of becoming engineers and doctors, dare to dream of becoming lawyers and graduate teachers of various categories and to confront the commercial world with confidence because they had marketability, could build homes that would employ working-class labour and could do a whole set of things for their parents and their more depressed relatives who would have made sacrifices in days gone by to make their opportunities possible. That was the most enduring social investment programme ever introduced in Barbados and its full effects have not yet been felt. In fact, the presence of all of us in this Honourable House today is a spin-off of that kind of programme.

The only valid social partnership in Barbados today in terms of effective social investment is that social partnership between the State and the working class. The Barbados Labour Party has an unfortunate history in this regard because by the year 1986, at the end of the Barbados Labour Party's term of office which started in 1976, the Honourable Member for St. George South, not now in his seat, was able to tell the whole country and to claim that his Party had unhinged itself from its philosophical moorings. Those philosophical moorings related back to the work of the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams which reflected themselves in those moorings in that creative relationship between the State and the labour class. What the Honourable Member for St. George South was saying is that relationship had been broken and that as a result the Barbados Labour Party had plummeted to an ignominious defeat, an ignominious rejection by the masses of Barbados.

Today, I make bold to say and it is the experience of all thinking and discerning Barbadians that the Barbados Labour Party has not learnt its lesson and it continues in that odious social partnership between the State and the owners and controllers of wealth in Barbados. There is in this society today a strong feeling based on harsh experience that the Government in power in Barbados today is committed to the cause of the rich and is hostile to the cause of the poor.

What we are discussing today in this Social Investment Fund is basically political symbolism. This Social Investment Fund and this whole Poverty Alleviation exercise is really the Barbados Labour Party's attempt to create the illusion that the party is committed to the cause of the masses when in fact the owners of wealth and the controllers of wealth in Barbados still control the thought patterns of the Barbados Labour Party as a Government in power.

How else do we explain the loud and clamorous noises made by the Honourable Member for the City, regrettably not now in her seat, about the right of men of money to buy up the entire west coast of Barbados as long as they can afford to do so? How else do we explain her rejection of the complaints of the poor, the enlightened poor and the not so enlightened poor in Barbados dismissing them, all of those persons who complained about that tendency in Barbados as either hypocrites, schizophrenics or paranoiacs? How else do we explain that?

This is not a Government speaking for labour or for the oppressed or for the poor. This is a Government that has taken on the idiom of the rich and believes that money should make the mare fly in Barbados. And, if making the mare flies requires ordinary working-class Barbadians to be driven inland while the rich and the powerful control the periphery of the country, hostile strangers from abroad and hostile strangers from here in Barbados, that mind set on the part of the Barbados Labour Party makes nonsense of what we are discussing in this House here today.

I have heard the Government in this House condemned the Honourable Member for St. Michael West for raising legitimate concerns about the fate of the small man in tourism on the excuse that tourism pays the Bill, so you should not criticise what is happening to the small man in Barbados. We cannot be discussing poverty alleviation or poverty reduction or poverty eradication when the Government is speaking with a forked tongue on the issue of the place of the oppressed and the poor, the place of labour in Barbados.

I am not impressed, Mr. Speaker, with all of this talk about a Government with a human face. What the Barbados Labour Party says and what it does are

two completely different things. I continue to contend that the voice of the Barbados Labour Party is the voice of Jacob but its hand is the hand of Esau. What in fact happens on the ground is completely different from the rhetoric which we hear from the Barbados Labour Party politicians.

The Honourable Member for St. James North is right to smile because he knows that this regime speaks with a forked tongue on these issues. He knows that a dingy partisanship has crept into the allocation of the State's resources under the Barbados Labour Party. He stood up today in this House, Mr. Speaker and announced all the achievements of the Rural Development Commission. He was clever enough.... he is no fool, make no mistake about that....he was clever enough to talk about what was happening in St. Philip but was careful not to distinguish between St. Philip North and St. Philip South so that people listening would get the impression that Edgumbe is in St. Philip South or that Thicketts is in St. Philip South or that Moncrieffe is in St. Philip South. He has not told the House that the Rural Development Commission over which he has some control had a dismal record in the constituency of St. Philip South. He has not talked about the failure of the Rural Development Commission, the failure of the Government to address serious road problems in the constituency of St. Philip South. He has not told the country or this House that the road to St. Martin's Church through Foul Bay right through Rices down to Heddings is still in a criminal state of disrepair and that his Rural Development Commission turns a deaf ear to the litanies of the people of St. Philip South on that question.

I am not impressed with all of this. This is political symbolism, it is political impressionism, it is an attempt to create an impression when in fact the reality is that the State in Barbados continues to be controlled by the owners and controllers of wealth in Barbados and that when the State does get around to dealing with the poor at all, the resources at the State's disposal are perversely advocated in favour of Members of the Barbados Labour Party and constituencies represented by the Barbados Labour Party. We are not discussing poverty alleviation. If I could rhapsodise like the Honourable Member for St. Philip North I might be misled into believing that if a woman calls and says, thank God I do not have a pit toilet any more that she is no longer poor, or if she calls to say thanks for replacing the siding boards in my house or the flooring boards as we call them, that she is not poor any more. I know better than that. 3.15p.m.

I know people in St. Philip South, a very small number of people who have benefitted from the generosity of the poverty alleviation committee but they would laugh themselves into a frenzy were they to hear me say in this

debate that because a chattel house has been repaired that they are no longer poor, they are now rich. It is madness.

The issues of poverty go to the very root of the relationship between the State and those who control and own the bulk of the wealth in Barbados. As long as that social partnership exists and I allege and charge that it exists between the Barbados Labour Party and the owners and controllers of wealth in Barbados today, the issue of poverty alleviation is an academic question because the history of Barbados shows that the poor has only got out of the gates, have only had their opportunities enlarged, have only had their condition touched and transformed when there was a social partnership, I call it, between the State and labour. That is what the legacy of Grantley Adams means, that is what the legacy of Errol Barrow means. The legacy of this Government is a reversal of that trend in Barbadian politics. That is what the Honourable Member for St. George South meant when he said in 1986 that the Barbados Labour Party had become unhinged from its philosophical moorings. The only philosophical moorings it knew were the moorings that bound it to the progressive labour policy of Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams and it has not got back there yet. The Barbados Labour Party is now trying to resurrect Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams forgetful of the fact, Mr. Speaker, and Barbadians will not forget this that between 1986 and 1994 or 1995 in March of every year, on the 11th day of March, the anniversary of the death of the late Tom Adams, members of the Barbados Labour Party trekked, went on a pilgrimage to St. Michael Cathedral Church Yard to put flowers on the grave of Tom Adams and Grantley Adams was in the same church yard and nobody paid him any mind at all because he was irrelevant.

These strange attempts to resurrect Grantley Herbert Adams now and to make him central to the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party is that ploy which the politics of manipulation accommodates and we frown on that kind of politics. We stand by the record of the Democratic Labour Party, a record that dared the young of our country to dream, to dream in ways that their parents could not dream, to dream in ways that their grandparents could not dream and to put them in a position where they could do what the Government is now trying to do for their depressed and poor relatives. They did not need any handouts from the Government. They felt empowered by the opportunities created by the DLP and were able to turn the benefits that those opportunities yielded to good effect in looking after their aged relatives and those whom they wished well.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us get away from the word games about poverty alleviation and poverty reduction and poverty eradication. Let us come to the heart of the matter that in a capitalist society like Barbados, capitalist society albeit on the periphery, it is not possible to eradicate poverty without eradicating capitalism itself.

Capitalism needs to be exploited in order for the capitalist to do well. That is the law of capitalism. If it were possible for capitalism to eradicate poverty the United States would have done it already, Britain would have done it already, Germany would have done it already, Japan would have done it already. There are many others who had a head start on us who have not been able to achieve it. Instead of doing that American businessmen leave the security of their prepared positions in the United States and go into Indonesia where labour is cheaper or go into Mexico where it is cheaper because you need the down-trodden, you need the oppressed in order for capitalism to flourish.

So we are not talking about any poverty eradication in a capitalist society like Barbados, what we are talking about is creating a more humane environment for the masses of the people, reconstructing that social partnership between the state and the labouring classes, that social partnership that adorned the politics of Enrol Barrow, that adorned the politics of Grantley Adams after he had been struck down by that bright light on the road to Damascus in the 1930s.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to detain the House anymore on this. I have to reserve some of what I have to say about this Government for political platforms. I do not need the cover of parliamentary privilege to deal with the Barbados Labour Party. I do not like the politics of symbolism, the politics of manipulation. This symbolic manipulation of the masses I reject it with contempt. I feel that while we would serve no useful purpose by voting against this Social Investment Fund Bill we have to see it for what it is, the politics of impressions, the politics of symbolism. What the masses out there call for, the homeless, the unemployed, the working poor, the pensioners of Barbados, those who receive non-contributory pensions and those who receive contributory pensions, what they call for is a politics of substance, a politics that makes humane contact with their condition and that is the politics to which the Democratic Labour Party irrevocably commits itself. I am obliged to you.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, this debate has now occupied the attention of this Chamber for quite a while, going into 2 full days now and a number of views have been expressed. But I think that as the debate winds down it would really be remiss of me if I did not add my voice of support to this Bill. I fully support it as providing yet another avenue of assistance for the poor people of this country.

Listening to the contributions on the Other Side no clear conclusion can be drawn as to whether or not they support this Bill, whether they will vote for it or not but I certainly support it, as I said, because it provides yet another opportunity of assistance for the poor people of Barbados.

This fund now means, Mr. Speaker, that there are about 5 funds now available and accessible by the poor people for assistance and I have never, ever known it to be a valid criticism to say that there are too many funds in existence to provide assistance for the poor people. I will go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that if that is a criticism of the Other Side, which is what it seems to me, when I say that we feel guilty to that criticism and would like in fact to be able to feel guilty every week to the criticism that we are setting up too many funds to assist poor people in Barbados. It cannot be a valid criticism. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that the Democratic Labour Party merely speaks about poverty alleviation and paying attention to poverty, they speak about it, but we on this Side take action to deal with the issue of poverty. That is the difference between the two parties. 3.25 p.m.

It is often said that there is no difference in philosophy between the parties, but that we are the better administrators. That is the general comment made. I really used to accept that as the only difference, but I think now that it is reaching a stage where we are actually having a philosophical divide now between the two parties, when Members can come into this Chamber and speak against and even vote against funds that are being set up to assist the poor people in this country.

This debate really needs to be taken from the level of philosophy and theory into the practical application and the benefits of this policy. I heard some Members spending long portions of their time on that Side about whether you should speak of poverty alleviation, poverty eradication or poverty something else. A man who does not know where his next meal is coming from does not want to hear that sort of philosophy. It does not help him at all. He wants to know that this Government is committed to giving a grant of even if it is \$50 to provide some relief for him to deal with this hardship that he is seeing and living.

Poverty is not about philosophy. It is about cold, hard reality and the way in which Governments are prepared to respond to assist people in their plight *vis-a-vis* poverty. I would hope that we cannot change the contributions made by the other Honourable Members to date but those others who speak, the public of Barbados want to hear that you are dealing with the issue, the hard realities that they are facing and not the theories such as we were just exposed to by the last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

I want this evening, Mr. Speaker, to speak briefly about the Urban Development Commission. I want to put that in some perspective because I am a representative of an urban constituency. I am pleased to see that there has been a recognition that there are certain problems

facing urban communities and that the Urban Development Commission was set up in recognition of the existence of these problems and to deal exclusively with problems facing urban Barbados. What used to happen, Sir, was that urban Barbados had to stand in line with all the other constituencies nationally and by parish and wait until it could fit into the schedule of available resources by the relevant Government agencies. What has happened now, Mr. Speaker, is that a sum of money has been allocated directly to an Urban Development Commission to be spent directly on urban Barbados.

I am happy about that, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure that all Honourable Members on this Side who represent urban constituencies are happy as well. Those on that Side voted against the setting up of the Urban Development Commission. I can understand Members on that Side who represent rural constituencies perhaps not being very enthusiastic about it, but I am really and truly surprised that Members on that Side who represent urban constituencies would have found it possible to vote against the setting up of an Urban Development Commission to deal exclusively with problems in their constituencies.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West talking in here the last time we spoke on this debate two weeks ago, saying that in June this year some programme under this Urban Development Commission was going to kick-off in his constituency. He should be forever ashamed, Mr. Speaker, to know that he would accept funding for his constituents under a programme that he voted against in this Parliament.

*Aside.*

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: St. Michael North West. St. Michael East as well, these are men who voted against the Urban Development Commission when we brought the Bill to Parliament. The Democratic Labour Party voted against it and now they are talking about they would like help under the programme or announcing that programmes should be done in their constituencies. They ought to be ashamed, Mr. Speaker, for having voted against it and are now professing that they wish assistance from this Fund.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member clearly has nothing to say and is wasting the time of Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, make your point of order, please?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I have never voted against anything...if I voted again a Bill in here, I voted against a Bill in principle.

Mr. SPEAKER: The point of order that you are making must relate to what was just said. It has nothing to do with any principle of yours, please? Could you make your point of order, please? What is your point of order? No point of order. Continue please?

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: As I said, Mr. Speaker, they voted against it and they should be ever condemned for having done so. That is what I am saying. They voted against the benefits accruing to their constituents by the vote that they made in this Honourable Chamber.

I am happy, Mr. Speaker, that this Urban Development Commission has been set up because there is a popular misconception that it is only in rural Barbados that you find unpaved or dilapidated roads and tenantry roads and the like. That is a popular misconception, but there are these and other maladies as well in urban Barbados.

I want to look briefly at the question of housing. This is a very very serious problem. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I make bold to say that in my view it is perhaps the most serious problem that Barbados has to deal with at this present time. In my constituency on Wednesday afternoon, I see more people inquiring about housing than they do about jobs. Housing is still the major problem. I can speak with some authority because I represent a constituency that has three Government Housing estates, so I see the problem on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that in an effort, just one initiative in the area...the Ministry of Housing and the Urban Development Commission in particular have already identified a large number of derelict buildings and vacant lots around urban Barbados. I think it is to the tune of some 1 800 derelict buildings and vacant lots with a view of dealing with the problem of housing.

Every effort is going to be made by the Commission to ensure that these derelict buildings and vacant lots are transformed and transferred back into residential properties by ensuring that people can now borrow from a fund, the Urban Enterprises Fund to enable people to buy these properties or the lots or to repair the houses or to construct houses on the various lots around urban Barbados. That is really a commendable initiative because not only is it solving the problem or seeking to address the problem of the shortage of housing by capitalising on derelict buildings or vacant lots unused, but you are also ridding the community of the aspect of squalor by tidying it up and ridding it of those derelict buildings, where, you must admit, some of the more unfortunate, less desirable elements tend to frequent and plan crime and dealing with various undesirable activities. So we are actually serving a two-fold purpose in the Urban Development Commission

in relation to these derelict buildings. That is one aspect that I am pleased to hear.

There is also under the programme, Mr. Speaker, the provision of proper access roads and street lights for urban Barbados as well. Now this is very important to me. It is often felt that politics is about the economy and foreign reserves and so on. Those are important areas and aspects of politics. I do not dispute that, but politics is also about street lights and roads.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West say during the course of the by-election in his constituency that the sum total of his contribution to politics is not to be measured by whether or not he could provide street lights for his constituents. I heard someone else too, I do not remember on which side of this House the person was speaking, making the same point about street lights. But I am not ashamed to say that I have found myself at the base poles in St. Michael North, taking numbers off poles and sending them in to the relevant authorities with a view to having the issue addressed. I see that as part of my representation of St. Michael North. 3.35 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. If the Honourable Member is complaining of not having enough work to do as a Minister that he has to go and read poles, then he has to explain it carefully to the House. He is saying that he does not have enough work as a Minister...

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, in some cases I have been quite pleased and satisfied. In other cases, I have been not so pleased and somewhat disappointed in the speed of the response to having the lights put in place but I believe, and I do it, because no programme can claim to be successful if it does not take into account the safety of people in any community. Safety and security are important matters and no programme can claim to be successful if it does not take that into account.

There are a number of areas around many constituencies that are desolate and that is a fact. There are certain areas where residents, primarily women, find themselves the brunt of attack and some are even raped. That is why I am pleased to see that street lights have been installed among other places in St. Michael North, certainly, along what I call the Queen's College Road, that street lights have been installed which was a grave area of concern. I would just urge now that the street lighting continue one or two street lights up in the area of the bus stop outside the entrance to Husbands New Development where the area has

proven to be fairly problematic. That problem has been somewhat addressed since my efforts have resulted in having a Transport Board bus go into Husbands New Development so that it is no longer always necessary for the residents to come and stand outside to catch the bus at the bus stop where the area tends to be a bit dangerous.

In the same way, I have managed to get Transport Board buses to run up St. Stephen's Hill through Phillips Road and through Well Gap and through Eden Lodge as well. I am pleased about that. That alleviates the problem but I still think that street lighting is a major aspect of any programme of any Government initiative.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of roads, and I stick to my guns, that politics also includes roads and street lights, in relation to roads, there are a number of areas in urban Barbados where roads are in a very bad state, where some roads in fact are even non-existing. There is an area called Phillips Road, St. Stephen's Hill, an area where houses are now landlocked. If a crisis, God forbid, should ever develop in that area and someone takes ill in certain parts and you had to get an ambulance or fire service truck in, they simply cannot access certain houses in Phillips Road, St. Stephen's Hill.

This programme of the Urban Development Commission is intended to address that problem where we are going to ensure now that we are providing access roads to all houses across urban Barbados. The roads in St. Stephen's Hill, apart from where there are roads, there are some that are so bad and the last administration had failed to address the problem where even the residents got together and bought some material to try to fix the roads themselves and just wanted a little barbed green poured on top of it. The last administration refused to do that and as a result all the marl got washed away and all the expense that was incurred for the marl was just washed away. I recently had a tour with the Urban Development Commission of that area and it has now been decided that the area has to be virtually reconfigured, so bad *has* been the neglect of that area over the years.

These are some of the matters as well as some roads in other parts of St. Michael North - Well Gap, Small Land, Forde's Land. All these are areas that have roads that need urgent attention. I am confident that having toured the area with the Urban Development Commission and the residents having seen me through there with the Urban Development Commission are probably expecting now that the Urban Development Commission will respond as quickly as possible to these problems. The representative has done his part and they are now looking to the Urban Development Commission to come and play its part.

Of course, you recognise that all these roads cannot be fixed at the same time and all the work cannot be

done right away but we are confidently expecting some urgency now that the Urban Development Commission has been set up to deal exclusively with the problems of urban Barbados. These are some of the points that I wanted to make.

Mr. Speaker, I was very concerned about the direction of the debate. Members on that Side seemed to want to stay in the realm of philosophy and theory. To a man who has to consider where his next meal is going to come from such considerations really do not bear any relevance whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, I thought with your kind permission that I would intervene briefly to make the few points which I have made. Thank you.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance for bringing this Social Investment Bill. It is a Bill which has far-reaching effects across this country. Because of this Bill we now have the Rural and Urban Development Commissions which obviously will do the work which formerly was done by local Government. Certainly, in Christ Church the people are very happy. It would appear to me when I hear some of the Members from the Other Side speak that they give the impression that this Bill will do nothing for the people of Barbados. It is a God-send to the ordinary people of this country.

I can say that in my constituency of Christ Church East Central, starting from the North, I had an experience where 2 people whom I have known for 45 years who worked in the agricultural industry and now are old and unable to maintain their homes and this Bill came along the correct time whereby those two old people in St. David's Village were able to get their homes repaired and certainly get their telephone bills and their water bills paid.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the people who worked previously in this country and worked so hard to make us the present ones feel comfortable, we should always find legislation to put them at ease. Looking at my notes I realise the Prime Minister said that 24 homes were repaired in Christ Church and certainly my mathematics tells me that if there are 5 constituencies in Christ Church I should have at least 5, but I can say today that I got 4, but I am not complaining.

There are so many things that this legislation has done for me that I will now go on to explain in detail what this Social Investment Bill has done. In Christ Church there is a local school by the name of Water Street Boys' School. It was in existence probably from the 19th century and throughout time that school never had playing facilities. At present there are 600 children attending that school and at lunch time they have to play on a little concrete strip 15x15 square feet to accommodate 600 children.

Because of this Bill, and certainly because of the work that was done by a previous MP in that area where land was made available for building in the Wotton area, I was fortunate enough to get some land transferred from the Ministry of Housing for a local playing field at the Water Street Boys' School.

We had some problems here. To the back of the school there is a water course and in Bajan language there was a pond and over the last 6 months as MP for the area I travelled all over Christ Church begging for loads of marl, loads of rock, rubbish to pull the pond up to get it to a required level. I am happy to report that since I have done that over the last 6 months money was made available for a contractor to come in and now create a beautiful playing field. 3.45 p.m.

We know there is a watercourse and it would appear that some people in the Christ Church area decided to agitate by getting a local person from Water Street to write a letter to the Prime Minister saying that because I was going to get a playing field for the boys it would have flooded away the whole of Water Street. I played it safe. I made sure I called in the engineers from MCW and they directed me. Today, as I speak, the contracts are there and in the very near future the boys of Water Street Boys' School and the surrounding area would be happy to see that those 600 children would have a playing area.

I was amazed only two weeks ago, and you are going to laugh at this. I was doing some house to house campaigning in the Kingsland area because the term has started. Knocking at the door, a little boy came to the door and he said: "Mummy, the man who is building the playing field at Water Street School is out here to you." That is one project.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. CARTER: I am just saying what the little boy said. Little children do not tell lies.

Over the past few months I know for a fact I got some stick from the Leader of the Opposition when I talked about the Gall Hill Project. I can report to this House now that a contractor was selected last week. I can say to the people of Gall Hill and the surrounding areas that within two weeks the project at Gall Hill will be started. I am so happy for this piece of legislation whereby money could be made available. This is a project which would be used as a special project for all of Barbados.

I remember the words of the Prime Minister when I approached him in relation to getting Club Randall rebuilt.

He said to me: "You have to be innovative." I went back and came up with a plan, not only that we wanted a dance hall, but we wanted a situation in Gall Hill where we could have 11 small businesses built there on the ground floor and the dance floor would be the first floor.

We are going to make sure that with those 11 small businesses we would not have nine people doing the same thing. In doing our process of elimination we made sure that there is an existing mini-mart there. We will have at least two fish fries because we know that at weekends Oistins is bursting at its seams and I do not want the old people from Gall Hill and Lodge Road to be walking down Oistins Hill and cannot get back up so they can stop at Gall Hill and have some of the fish fry there. There will also be leather craft. Over the years the Rastas have worked very hard with their leather craft there and they wanted somewhere where they could display their leather goods. We are making sure that they will participate in that area.

There was a young man over the years who sold vegetables and fruit in the area and because of certain problems that existed within the area he was forced to move from that area by the Police. I am glad to report that that same young man who waited and waited will now have a stall whereby he can continue to do his small business in that area.

There is also a person who is doing some work in her own home making clothing. I am making sure that person will have somewhere where she can have her clothes put on sale for the general public.

Probably, most important, there is a young girl who had to do her hairdressing under the trees in the area. I am happy to say that young lady now will have a hairdressing salon.

Lastly, there will be a variety shop which, of course, will sell everything and the people from the area in general will have that privilege not only to have shops, not only to have the restoration of the dance hall, and people in my age group would be able to tell you that we all started our dancing at Gall Hill. I believe and I overheard once the former Prime Minister said he has had a piece at Gall Hill, but I did not see him there.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. CARTER: You attended! It was not a crime to make your first steps at Club Randall. It was a blessing. I am just trying to point out that this Social Investment Fund Bill is doing a lot for, certainly, the rural areas and we know that the urban areas are also benefitting significantly from this.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. CARTER: Gall Hill, Christ Church not Gall Hill, St. John.

It is a known fact that the Bayer Pride of Gall Hill is probably the best football club in this country and for a long while they were unable to have a home of their own. Only three weeks ago I visited a piece of land at Cane Vale which was not really being used. We decided we would speak to the owners and having spoken to them it would appear they will urgently hand over the land to the Government where the Bayer Pride of Gall Hill could have a home of their own.

I was very specific in telling them at the time that there was a certain amount of money available this year and that the first phase of the programme we will get the actual playing field ready. In the next phase, which would be a year down the road, we will then get a pavilion for them and a hard court. All in all, you can see the people of Water Street, Gall Hill, the areas where a lot of poor people live, are going to benefit significantly from this Bill.

Unfortunately, but I can say fortunately too, because of the big expansion of the gas works that is going on in the Kingsland, Water Street, Lodge Road, vVotton area, it means that all the roads that are really in need of repair will have to go on hold because the pipes are running day after day. It would make no sense doing the roads in that area but I can assure the people of that area that after the gas has been laid the roads then will be repaired. With this Bill one can see that the people in Christ Church, not the people in St. Philip South, as the Member was trying to make people believe that this Bill is not far-reaching, but the people in that area obviously are happy people and we will continue to help.

Now, lighting was a very important thing and I am happy also to say that because of this Bill the people of the Water Street area, the Lodge Road area and the Kingsland area actually thanked me for my work in getting lights into the area. As I speak, I am only talking about the southern side of my constituency.

In the North we are still waiting for lights in Edey Village and Frere Pilgrim. We are still waiting for lights in Sheraton. Only quite recently I handed a document to the CEO of the Rural Development Commission asking for lights in the area of Kingsland and Sheraton. There is no doubt in my mind, the way the CEO is working I believe I will get in line and my turn will come too because I can say that he is a fair man. He is working methodically and everybody is getting piece of the pie. I can say that because as I look around other constituencies I realise that they are also getting.

All in all, quite recently a group of people in the St. Patrick's area sent me a letter asking for improvement in the road that runs from Lower Greys to St. Patricks. It is a fact that that road is heavily used and it is slightly narrow and big oil trucks use that road frequently. At night when you are on that road you have to be very very careful or you may run off the road. I was informed that in the very near future something will be done on that part of the constituency so that one will become one of the good roads. All in all I commend The Right Honourable Prime Minister for bringing this Bill and as I look around I can see that people in general are really enjoying what is happening. 3.55 p.m.

We talk about pits. In the late 40s when you had a pit toilet it was a big thing but this is the 90s and everybody needs to have a water toilet. We are making sure that most Barbadians would have the privilege to have such facilities. All in all I can say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is moving along smoothly. I shall continue to work for the people of Christ Church East Central and certainly I am one of the Members of Parliament in this House of Assembly that when the time comes I can look the people in their eyes and say, this is what the Barbados Labour Party has done for you and certainly in Christ Church East Central I can say I worked hard and feverishly to make sure that things happen in this constituency.

I thank you.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I rise to make my contribution in this debate and I wish to make it clear from the outset that when I speak in this Chamber I speak on behalf of the people of St. Michael South as well as the people of Barbados. I have a constituency and a nationwide responsibility and I will try to measure what I say bearing in mind those two responsibilities. I hope that as the legal wizard has put it in this Social Investment Fund Act, the legal wizard from St. Thomas is appealing to us to give this Act such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as would best ensure the attainment of its purposes. I hope, Sir, that in like ways my speech would be given such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation as would best ensure the attainment of its purposes.

Let me start by saying so that I may get it out of the way that the people of Barbados aspire their hopes and they yearn as they have done down through the centuries for improvement. That is what life is all about. We want to make ourselves better off not worse off. In so doing, they may look at the exploits and the deeds of those who have gone before in order to get encouragement and to find those models and examples that would lead them forward.

My hero, Sir, I have one and that is Jehovah God. That is my hero. Apart from that, Sir, I believe that we have had very illustrious men and women who have adorned the political, economic, social and cultural life and we should give them that praise and give them their due merit for their contribution. When all of the ceremonials have passed, the people of St. Michael South whom I represent still want to know when their roads will be reinstated. They still want to know when the laser beams will provide illumination where they are no street lights. Those are the fundamental questions that they are interested in.

One Minister indicated that this was about 'nuts and bolts'. The people of St. Michael South want to know that when all of these ceremonials take place in that constituency of St. Michael South that they still have the everyday problem of their lights, of the roads, all of them in a very bad state of disrepair and no urgent need apparently demonstrated yet in getting them reinstated.

Having made that point, let me pass on and say that in a debate such as this one I think we have to lay out the premises on which we stand. This is a very important debate, at least on this side we consider it so. We are talking about reduction of poverty, alleviation of poverty or even some talk about the eradication of poverty. I believe that that latter objective of the eradication of poverty has not been attained anywhere on earth so far and I do not expect to see it in my lifetime. Although I believe that if we aspire we may be able to get along the road and to improve conditions and to reduce poverty or alleviate poverty. 4.05 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that all Barbadians should have access to opportunities to live a fulfilling and rewarding life. I believe that is the birthright that the illustrious men and women have bequeathed to us and that everyone in this society, irrespective of their gender, their race, their creed or of any other adventitious factor should have access to the opportunities to live a rewarding and fulfilling life.

I believe, Sir, that we are all different. We have different endowments. I think you, Sir, although you are well endowed, the O' level Institute and giving scholarships out of this endowment, I am well aware of that. We are all differently endowed. We all have different qualifications. We are all different in our physical make-up but I believe, Sir, that those differences should not prevent us from aspiring and from having the opportunities to achieve.

Now this is very important if we are to have equality of opportunity because without that equality of opportunity we will be enshrining inequalities in our society, rich and poor. If there are obstacles in the way of persons born

with privilege it is the duty of the State, it is the duty of parliamentarians if they believe in equality of opportunity to seek to level the playing field, not by bringing everyone down to, I am never sure what to call it, Sir, the lowest common denominator or the highest common factor, I am not sure, Sir. But you want to get equality of opportunity and this idea of the State performing only a minimal role, that is not how we are going to achieve this good society in Barbados if we are to alleviate poverty.

We have to provide good education, good health facilities, adequate recreation and above all a sound economy because we are not going to reduce or alleviate or eradicate poverty unless we have a sound economy and these are the things that we have to think about.

There is no one in this society who should go to sleep hungry at night. No one in this society who should not have a roof over his or her head and no one in this society should be without those basic health and educational facilities which will ensure that they have a chance too in the land of their birth.

Now, we cannot tolerate undue differentials in this society. It depends on where you are starting from and what is your social philosophy and your commitment to growth and development in the country. For me I say where I stand and this is where I hope that we will be able to bridge the divide and to say that we cannot tolerate vast inequalities in this society. We have to work. Put our heads together where it is in the national interest to achieve it.

Now we cannot do this by seeking to create the impression that the alleviation of poverty started yesterday, that it is the invention of one particular group and that we will not be able to achieve it or we can only achieve it if it is under the direction of one set of elites. The first thing we have to do in this country if we wish to alleviate poverty is to accept the facts of our situation and to move forward on the basis of a common outlook and a common ground.

Sir, if we are to level with the people of Barbados we must say that the alleviation of poverty started a long time ago and I am not interested in erecting the themes for any one administration or another administration. That is not my task, Sir. My task is to set the background as correctly as I see it and to look at the measures which we have to implement in order to ensure that whatever social investment we make that it is for the benefit and good of the country for removing those obstacles to which I have made reference.

Let us think, Sir. From about 1625 until 1966...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: 1625 Settlement. 1627 actual settlement. But from the end of the first quarter of the 17th Century until 1966 Barbados was a colonial territory. That is the colonial period in our history and from 1966 until the present time, some 32 years, Sir, we have been independent. But in the colonial period itself, arising out of the Revolution of the 1920s and 1930s some attention was focussed on the social and economic ills facing the country. Sometimes we forget, Sir, that in the 1930s we had the position in the world of global depression and then the riots came. And, at that level arising out of those disturbances attention was focussed on the political, the social and the economic transformation and change in Barbados. 4.15 p.m.

Therefore, I believe, Sir, in the 1940s the Social Welfare System was first established. But in the 1940s, and if you are setting up a social welfare system or a social welfare department you are dealing with poverty, we had our first Minister of Education in the 1950s. He was the late Sir Grantley Adams. I believe he was the first Minister of Education...The Right Excellent.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, from that beginning we have constructed an educational system that has sought to democratise education by providing educational opportunities both at the state level and at the private level, a field in which you, Sir, have given very outstanding service. We need that because unless we have an educational system we cannot alleviate poverty. We need that kind of training and that kind of exposure in order to have our young people exposed not only to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes of those who have gone before, but giving them the techniques and the approaches that would make them creative and imaginative to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Similarly, Sir, we have the almshouses. Over time those were developed into improved institutions to care for the sick and the elderly. That also is part of a programme for the alleviation of poverty. We can continue in that particular vein and when we look, even at the constitutional provisions, because how we govern ourselves is also part of the national effort to alleviate poverty. Those of us who have the privilege and the fortune to be elected into this Chamber, have to work hard, not only in terms of thinking about the problems that face our constituents and the people of Barbados generally, we have to find the measures that can help to remove or to solve those problems. And that is what the leaders of this country have been seeking to do.

I do not wish to put this debate into any fore-shortened perspective. I wish to take a large view of

the social, cultural and economic movements in this country. Sir, it is with a certain amount of diffidence that I indicate that this particular measure that we are dealing with will depend not only on how efficiently we run our own economy. If we wish to create enterprises, and this is what this Bill says it is about - the creation of enterprises that will help to reduce poverty - if we wish to do that we have to run an efficient economy. And that has been an effort that has been made in this country over many years.

I, myself, Sir, served on the Inter-American Development Bank as the Governor for Barbados. We are hoping to borrow money from the Inter-American Development Bank. That is what I believe, Sir, I do not know if it was said. But we may wish to borrow money from that source. We cannot alleviate or eradicate poverty on our own in Barbados unless there is a radical change of the social attitudes of people. I, myself, believe that there is enough in this country for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. But who else will go along with my view on this? Those who have wish to preserve their own position and what they have, and want more.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph knows that well. We need that, so unless we have change in social attitude, we cannot do it on our own. I believe it is the institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank that we will have to look to. Have we said how much we are going to them to borrow under this? Because the legislation states that the funds for the Social Investment Fund come from sums provided by Parliament or from other sources which the Right Honourable Prime Minister or Minister of Finance may approve from time to time.

I suspect, although I have not been told, that we have to go to the Inter-American Development Bank. I was the Governor for Barbados on that bank for many years, Sir, and we had both in the seventh replenishment of those funds and the eighth replenishment of those funds for the Inter-American Development Bank to consider the policy considerations that should apply to those replenishments.

I spent many nights without sleep, on a Committee working through all night in order to work out these policy problems and options. We succeeded in the seventh replenishment, Sir, and also created the Multilateral Investment Fund called the MIF. 4.25 p.m.

In 1992 or 1993, Barbados agreed to join that Fund because of the benefits that might accrue with Government, private sector and the social partners working together. One of the policy areas that we agreed upon - 1 was the Governor

- and at that time I was being accused of travelling too much when I was working to get set up for Barbados funds from which Barbados would benefit. I was representing not only Barbados but also the Caribbean group of English speaking countries on the Committee of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank.

We were working out those policy issues. We wanted to set up a fund - let me refer to my notes. In terms of the 8th replenishment, I indicated the new capital and I am quoting from a speech I made as a member of the Board of Governors of that particular body.

"The new capital will be required to rehabilitate infrastructure, to improve the skills, attitudes and aptitudes of our human resources, to secure productive investment and to effect a more just and equitable distribution of the wealth created, including the alleviation of poverty not only in individual countries but among countries as well."

What I am really indicating, Sir, is that this whole issue of the alleviation of poverty is not something that has just started. It has a history and we should be told the history. We should not make believe that this is something that has just been created out of a genius of some creator but realise that there is a history and a background to this and that successive governments have been seeking to deal with this scourge in our social and economic and cultural relations.

Let us understand it, Sir. As I said, I was not speaking only for Barbados. I was representing the English speaking countries in that particular capacity. I do not have to seek to indicate that I created anything. I did not create the Bank. I did not create the Multilateral Investment Fund but I was a team player and I continue to be a team player. Look at my buddy here.

But we all have to work together.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: There are a lot of people who want my job.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chair was not too clear as to whom you were referring to as your buddy.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I see a lot of people who would like my job as well, Sir. We will work together. Sir, I think we will go right in this country. I think I have said enough to set the background and the basis against which this particular debate must be viewed. The measures that we have to introduce must be such that focus on dealing with the issues that can alleviate poverty. We cannot do it by handouts. That cannot solve the problem

of poverty, scarcity, dearth, any of those descriptions. We have to focus on sound policies.

I should add that when the Multilateral Investment Fund was established it was established against a background that sound economic policies would be pursued and it was established against the background that we can only achieve growth if we run our existing economy efficiently and if we tried to push outwards the boundaries of our production possibilities.

I, for one, will be voting for this particular measure because I believe that the alleviation of poverty has been a national objective in Barbados for many years in spite of the fact that we have not defined poverty in Barbados. We have not set out officially any poverty line that I am aware of as a member of this House so there is a lot of work to be done, not just grandstanding, but a lot of serious research and a lot of practical work has to be done. Who are the poor?

It is no point saying that this is not a theoretical debate. That separation between theory and practice I thought went out with Noah's Ark but we are still hearing it being propounded. We have to do that, and then we have to find the appropriate means and measures. That is the work that we have to do. We are not excluding anyone. This should be a society of inclusion. We want to bring everybody into this effort.

We, on this side, will support this measure but we are not going to be blinded by the theatricals that surround it. What we are going to be guided by is what is in the best interests of Barbadians and the residents of Barbados. We from this side, hopefully, and in all humility, the next Government of Barbados will be working in order to continue the development of this objective of the alleviation or reduction of poverty in Barbados. 4.35 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow on the very significant contribution made by my Honourable colleague on my left. I was just going through some of the documents of the distinguished organisation which we have the honour to represent and on the pages of one of the documents, I saw a large number of photographs and it struck me that all had gone except the two of us.

We are still here, Sir, because the principles which we have to defend and represent are forever. They were established some 40 plus years ago within the bosom of a number of stalwarts who committed themselves to precisely what is being put forward to the people of Barbados as something new, stalwarts who in the middle of the 1950s determined that it was necessary for a new dawn to appear in Barbados precisely to start the process of the elimination, eradication and the alleviation of poverty.

For many of the people of Barbados today, indeed last week, many of them asked me what is happening. Why are we having a broadcast? What are we going to be discussing? What is new? I said to them, "Well, in some ways it is strange that as I had said on the Floor of this House that we had just had a debate in which we essayed to legislate the National Heroes of our country and we had not considered it desirable to promulgate to the people through the communication techniques that are now available to us, our stand, our position, our admiration of those National Heroes whom we were legislating, but that debate having passed as an almost unimportant issue in this most important institution of our land, we would subsequently have a debate that would be broadcast." They asked me in the words of the song which we used to raise sometimes: "Tell me what's happening, what's all the fuss?" I said to them: "The Barbados Labour Party has rediscovered poverty."

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, when this Bill was to have been first debated some months ago, it was the Opposition Democratic Labour Party that asked for the debate on this Bill to be televised.

Mr. Speaker, you are in a position to confirm or deny what I have said. This is no public relations exercise on the part of the Barbados Labour Party. We have tried to cooperate with the Other Side as much as possible when they want debates broadcast and we agreed we would accede to their request for broadcast on this occasion. I do not wish the record distorted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, one as learned as the Attorney General would not himself distort while seeking to avoid distortions. The fact is that Your Honour will be able to say that both sides asked for this debate to be televised and it was some substantial time before the National Heroes Bill and therefore what I am saying is not an attempt to give any impression.

It is a statement of fact that the people of this country wondered after this Bill had been placed on the Order Paper some considerable time ago when the VAT was choking people and it was considered important that if we were going to have a Social Investment Fund in the context of the VAT that it ought to be broadcast but the people were not told that. The people are hardly told anything and it is in that context that the people raised the question: "What is happening?" What is the fuss about especially since you had come to this House to establish for the first time 10 National Heroes and not a dog barked except in here with four people upstairs and a policeman and so the people correctly asked the question. "Why are we debating this Social Investment Fund Bill on television?" That is

the only point I am making, Sir, and I wanted to raise that question. You yourself will find that your record will show that both sides, because Your Honour announced that both sides had asked for the debate. The point I wish to make has nothing to do with that.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are checking the record, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sure, Sir, that as has happened in the past you are going to find that this Honourable Member does not assay to speak to the Speaker on matters of this kind unless he has the facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: But surely, Honourable Member, both sides had asked. That is clear in my mind. Do we need to belabour that point?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not belabouring it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would think that if both sides had asked both sides wanted it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I was not discussing what both sides wanted. I was discussing what the people wanted. I was discussing that the people were then asking because this debate came more than a month after both sides had asked and it came after we had had the National Heroes debate. My position is that people had asked me, these are facts, what is it we are discussing that is so important that it had to be broadcast and advertised when we had the National Heroes debate and that had not been broadcast or advertised.

Sir, since the Honourable Member on that side raised the question about public relations, I will now give my opinion which is what I gave to some of the people, that the reason why this debate would be broadcast was because it had been asked for and Your Honour had already ruled on it so it was a *fait accompli*. The reason why the National Heroes debate might not have been broadcast was not because the Government did not think it was important.

It did not fall within the purview of the public relations programme designed for the 28th. That is why it was not broadcast because the 28th was supposed to be a massive day that was to be the beginning of a new dawn, the beginning of the transportation into the millennium. It was supposed to be the threshold from which the Honourable Member who just happens to be born on the same day...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Attorney General. The Honourable Member, the Attorney General and the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams were born on the same date, Sir. That is only incidental. I think the overall public relations programme designed for April 28 did not allow for

the broadcast of the National Heroes debate just in case that debate may have interfered with the smooth programming of the public relations exercise.

I did not intend to address that particular issue, Sir, because my time does not afford me the luxury of addressing that issue which I shall do elsewhere at the appropriate time. The point I want to make is that the alleviation of poverty must never be seen in this country as something that has emerged recently. 4.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I took the trouble to go on the Internet and I first pulled up Social Investment Fund and I found that there are 6 313 matches for poverty alleviation. Those who use the Internet know what that means. Then I took the trouble to find out about Social Investment Fund and I found that there were 569 for Social Investment Fund. That means that there are 569 Social Investment Funds in the rest of the world.

When we come to discuss a Bill to create a Social Investment Fund we can discuss it on its merits but we must not have any projections or suggestions as have been done by one of the fledgling Ministers on the Other Side who suggested that this was some new divide. As one of the Members said, it would imply that this would separate the philosophical sameness which some people had attributed to both parties.

The fact is that like the fashion designers every two years or so design clothes and tell the women of the world, these are the new clothes that you will wear, the international agencies, every five years or so have a number of catch phrases into which they pour old soup. They take some old soup and pour it into some new vessels and they call them by some catch phrase. Social Investment Fund is such an agency.

I will give you an example. There is a Social Investment Fund in Jamaica. There is Honduran Social Investment Fund. There is a Social Investment Fund in Bolivia. There is a Social Investment Fund in the World Bank Participation Source Book. There is a source book and Chapter 4 of the source book give the enabling environment, the legal issues and they ask a number of questions. They set out a source book for what constitute a Social Investment Fund.

The truth is that Social Investment Funds have been just one of the mechanisms by which the international agencies who determine how the small amounts of money which are meted out to individual countries after five years of discussions as to how they are going to get some loans. They give frameworks as to how these funds may be

set out. In some instances, for example, there are projects which allow people to borrow money without going through some of the red tape. I will give you some examples of those, Sir.

Gambia is probably one of the poorest and smallest African countries. They have a Social Investment Fund, it is called the Gambian Public Works and Employment Project. There is an Ethiopian Social and Rehabilitation Development Fund Project. There is the Guatemala Social Investment Fund. There is the Mexico Decentralisation and Regional Development Project. There is the Indian National Cataract Blindness Control Project.

Mr. Speaker, the Mexico Municipal Fund Programme, the Mexico Decentralisation and Regional Development Project, the Zambian Social Recovery Project. Mr. Speaker, I will give you a couple more. The Uganda Alleviation of Poverty and Social Cost of Adjustment Project, the Guyana Health Nutrition Water and Sanitation Project, the Mexico Municipal Fund Programme, the Colombian Integrated Rural Development Project, the Ethiopian Social and Rehabilitation Development Fund, the Egypt Resource Management Project. All of these, Sir, are Social Investment Funds.

When those Members of the Barbados Labour Party Government who do not take the trouble to discover what is going on in the world... This does not apply to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is fully seized of these matters. He is so far ahead of that which he leads that there is a chasm between the two.

Look at the Ministers, that is why they cannot come in here and defend their portfolios and positions *per se*. They have constantly to refer to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's leadership. What they need is a presidential system. That is what your Cabinet needs, a presidential system. They have a leader who would be able to pick his choice of Cabinet from anywhere else because left to the leader himself, I am almost certain now in my own head, that not one of them would make the Cabinet. What we have work with what we have. Look at them, Sir, not a single one in their chair and we are discussing a matter which each of them sought to say that is fundamental, the Social Investment Fund. The Social Investment Fund is important. The Prime Minister himself had to come in, I think as a matter of courtesy but also because he realises that I am about to speak about matters which the ordinary citizens will understand because I speak clearly. His Ministers are a waste of time. All of them generally speaking. The Prime Minister will agree with me. If the system allowed him to do that he would get up and agree with me, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I have the fullest, utter, comprehensive confidence in my Ministers.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West said that he wished it was a presidential Government. Were there one, Sir, he certainly could not be in my Cabinet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I take that point, Sir. The Prime Minister and I are agreeing completely that I could never be in his Cabinet. I choose very carefully what kinds of Cabinet I would go in. I choose that very carefully.

I am not going to get involved in a little 'tit for tat'. I just wanted to make the point because heavy weather was made of this innovative approach which was coming. This is really to allow some institutions to be able to get their funding without difficulty. That is what the Social Investment Fund was designed for.

This Prime Minister had twisted it slightly to give some legitimacy to two administrative bastards which have been created in this country. One called the Rural Development Commission and arising out of that....

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, administrative bastards. That mean that their legitimacy is questionable.

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I can curse the fund. I feel free to curse them because I had cursed them when they were being created - the Rural Development Fund. And after that was created from this Floor, I asked the question if there is going to be an Urban Development Fund and the Minister of Education, quick as she usually is to answer almost any query that comes up said that we will have an Urban Development Fund and true to form the Attorney General fashioned an Urban Development Commission.

Sir, I heard Honourable Members saying how Your Honour's constituency is a beneficiary of the Urban Development Commission. I apologise to Your Honour if anything that I say might cast any aspersions on your constituency. Mr. Speaker, it should be required of every Government that they give accountability for expenditure of small sums that do not pass through the institution that has been created. 4.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, everything that the Urban Development Commission is doing and the Rural Development Commission is doing we have an institution that has already been created to do it. We heard a Minister get up in here today and the sum total of his contribution was that there were going to be some 905 lights given to the rural part of Barbados. That is a Minister of the Crown who is paid a full time salary and the sum total of

his contribution is that there are going to be 905 lights in the rural development area. I say in passing, Sir, that there is discrimination because the people of Peterkins have been trying for 4 years to get 2 lights, but that is just by the way.

The Member who got up here as a Minister and talked about the 905 lights, we have a Ministry of Transport and Works for which the Estimates will show a substantial amount of the taxpayers money allocated. Either the Ministry of Transport and Works should be shut down or that section of it that is responsible for administering 250 000 people, a mere hamlet in most countries for administrative purposes. We have a Ministry of Transport and Works with a Minister who is not now in his place and it is just as well as if he was here, Sir. That Minister has with him two Permanent Secretaries, a riffle of top level employees, a Chief Technical Officer and now we have to get a Rural Development Commission to put in lights in St. John and St. Peter and St. Thomas.

There was a time, Sir, when I could have said St. John only or I could have said St. Peter and St. Thomas. They were like a tag team. The opening batting was St. Peter, St. Peter, St. Peter, St. Thomas. St. Peter, St. Peter, St. Peter, St. Thomas. And then of course somebody decided we have to vary it slightly and they have started moving beyond those two parishes. But the fact that we have to get a Rural Development Commission to implement what a Ministry of Transport and Works is supposed to do is a clear indication of what precisely is going wrong with this administration.

The Minister of Agriculture takes one position, for example, on the development of land in rural areas because St. Peter is a rural area. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and Minister of a number of other things, Sir, takes an opposite position on the development of land in the same rural area, to wit, Speightstown and the surrounding areas. Those 2 positions I am sure the Prime Minister is going to reconcile in due course. As he has done, he will come like Sir Galahad to the rescue when his Ministers get into difficulty he feels that he is able to come and give us the half smile and make a statement and say, well you know after all and everybody would say, give him a break, Sir, which is precisely what he is trying to do, in passing, Sir, with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. But I believe both of them, Sir. I believe both Prime Ministers. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and the Prime Minister of Barbados are both Prime Ministers, Sir, and I believe both of them. That is just in passing, Sir.

The point is that here we have a Minister responsible for agriculture who now has rural development as part of his portfolio and he needs a rural commission to carry that out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you how poverty was alleviated in Barbados. Mr. Speaker in 1961 a Government

came to power in this country and decided that notwithstanding what had gone before, what this country needed...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am at your disposal.

Mr. SPEAKER: We still have to hear the Honourable Member, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to Your Honour. The Honourable Member who is attempting to heckle me, Sir, is a master on crash programmes, Sir, and I have no doubt he will get up and give us a full dissertation on crash programmes, aided and abetted by the Prime Minister who would be able to tell us about the Honourable Member's crash programmes.

The point I am making, Sir, is that what we did in the 1960s and the 1970s is to take Barbadians who had not had that experience before and move them out of one realm and put them into an entirely different realm. Even the Honourable Members on that Side will have to admit that the whole concept of poverty alleviation was aided and abetted completely by the provision of jobs.

This country saw for the first time people getting an entirely different kind of sustainable job. It saw for the first time that education would be made available at all levels in this country without reference to the ability to pay, that health care would have a paradigm from simply providing for simplex approaches and we would move into the concept of providing entire and holistic health care for the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, social poverty is the combination of unemployment and under-employment, of economic poverty, a low level of education, poor housing, poor sanitation, malnutrition, ill-health, social apathy and above all the consequent lack of will and initiative to make changes for the better. With the coming of a Government that had the vision to go beyond the *status quo* in the sixties and the seventies we were able to transform this country, to give this country a sense of vision, not only at the level of Government but at the level of the household, at the level of the individual. People began to realise that there were no horizons that they could not reach, that they could not cross, and that is when poverty started to be alleviated in this country.

The fact that education and health are still the main planks of the alleviation of poverty cannot be gainsaid and the way in which poverty can be alleviated, if it can

be, must still revolve around the provision of sound education and proper health care.

I want to dwell for a moment on the provision of proper health care. It is accepted now, Sir, it is trite knowledge that a country that is healthy is a country that is out of poverty or moving out of poverty and for some time we in Barbados had dared to believe that we had reached the level where we were emerging into that arena of providing health care.

In recent times I have been coming to the conclusion reluctantly that the Government has either abandoned the concept or has lost its way. Sir, how a country treats its elderly is always symptomatic of how that country perceives itself. I go to the Geriatric Hospital in Barbados at least once every two weeks. I recall when I had responsibility for the Ministry of Health that I was able to persuade the Cabinet of the day to spend substantial sums of money on that institution because it was symptomatic of how we felt and how we believed our people should feel about those who have made a significant contribution to the growth and development of our country. Those who have been working both physically and mentally to make us into what we are. 5.05 p.m.

It was not difficult to persuade my colleagues, Sir, because we shared a common philosophy in this regard and in many respects there were some who thought we were spending too much money on the facilities. I have noticed, and I invite the Right Honourable Prime Minister to visit himself because since he has to run almost all the portfolios, I might as well talk to him, to go visit the Geriatric Hospital and see the degradation that has come into that institution. See the windows dropping off. We put in place a recreation centre which was to provide, in the last days of these citizens of Barbados, these genuine heroes an opportunity to live a dignified life. Imagine, Sir, that I had to agree that every word written by a columnist in the newspaper just four or five weeks ago about the plight of the elderly as they go into our institutions, I found myself agreeing with a heavy heart that she was accurate.

That is not a matter of political aggrandizement. That is not a matter that pleases me. I would prefer, Sir, to know that the Government has continued the work and is doing such a brilliant job. I really would prefer that, because I believe that health is not an area that ought to be part of the political football game. I must tell you, Sir, that I cannot accept that we are in the process of alleviating poverty, that we are seeking genuinely to have poverty removed from our society, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central likes to say, and yet when I look at the attitudes of the decision makers for those among us whose lot falls, that they have to be part of what we call public assistance, the attitude which one sees displays with them suggest to me that they are not regarded as people who ought to be treated with

dignity. And I invite the Government to re-examine and revisit what has been happening with regard to health care in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member conclude please?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I sought to suggest that poverty is not going to be alleviated because of any single act or any single piece of legislation. I sought to suggest that there is a continuum which must be prosecuted with energy and only when that continuum is prosecuted wholeheartedly, can we - all of us - believe that there is hope that by the next century we would have made a dent in the removal of poverty in this country.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all Members wishing to speak in the debate have already done so, so I would rise to wind up the debate. This has been a long and interesting debate, but I can afford to be succinct and brief in my response.

At the very outset of my presentation, I indicated that there are a number of fields that have been elevated to a high level of intellectual delights and titillation. One such field, Sir, is women's affairs and another field is a matter pertaining to poverty. You will find, Mr. Speaker, that internationally, regionally and even locally a large number of conferences, symposia and workshops and a massive number of reports have been prepared, because the approach of those who want to espouse high-mindedness is to treat those issues as intellectual issues and so it is with women's affairs.

Thousands and thousands of symposia, Mr. Speaker, millions and millions of dollars spent, thousands and thousands, Sir, of conferences, countless thousands of reports, but the women of the world continue to struggle in the face of massive discrimination.

Similarly, Sir, the field of poverty has become one that has become an exercise for the intellectual titillation of those who love those kinds of occupations. I remember when I was at Harrison we did a poem called "Howards End" written by E. M. Foster. And the theme of that book, Sir, is that the time for telegram and anger has passed. The time, Sir, for the conferences, consultations and reports has passed and it is now right for us to deal in a direct and serious way with the problems of poor people. I only connect the passion and the pros of life and in every respect, Sir, this is what this is about.

We are connecting the passion of the intellectual exercise of poverty, Sir, with the pros of getting the

job done. I set this debate as I set my winding up in the context of the fact that we have had 40 years of independent social engineering. We have had the national consultations. We have had the special studies by the Inter-American Development Bank and the others, Mr. Speaker. We have had all kinds of discourses about the nature of poverty and who are the poor and what we should do about the poor, but the time for action is now.

This debate, Sir, was to give the House the benefit of a detailed analysis of the precise means by which the Government seeks to address the issues of poverty in our time.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Members who have spoken from this Side for recognising that there is a comprehensive and coherent approach being followed by this administration. It is not only comprehensive and coherent, but it is also credible.

The Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme is not only creditable only because it has elicited the support of Members of the Government side, Sir, but across Barbados, Mr. Speaker, there are a large number of non-governmental institutions which are involved in the process of assisting the Government in carrying out its Poverty Alleviation Programme.

In winding up this debate, Sir, I want to thank all Members on this side who have spoken in this debate and have sought to bring clarity and enlightenment to the Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme. Perhaps I should put the matter succinctly in this nutshell. Poverty in an opened, progressive, democratic society is a result of the systemic failure of mainstream economic and social policies. By and large in an opened, democratic, progressive society, by and large the mainstream economic and social policies will meet the needs of the broad masses of the people. 5.15p.m.

By and large, our educational policies will cater to the educational needs of the broad mass of the people. By and large, our health care policies and programmes whether public or private will cater to the broad mass of the people. By and large, our employment policies will cater to about 80% to 90% of the needs of the labour force but there will be that core of the society who will not be touched by the mainstream economic and social policies and we need poverty eradication programmes at each stage of our development to complement economic mainstream policy because, despite the best will in the world, mainstream economic and social policies will not touch everybody for the better.

There is no point, Mr. Speaker, in saying that X was done and therefore poverty eradication programmes were put

in place. At each time period in human history in an open progressive democratic society you will find that the mainstream policies will have about them an aspect of systemic failure and therefore you will need extraordinary measures to stop those people who should have been the beneficiaries of the opportunity of the mainstream policy from falling through the cracks.

Poverty eradication policies from era to era must be seen, if properly conceptualised, as an important supplement to our mainstream economic policies, our mainstream educational policies, our mainstream health policies, our mainstream welfare policies to target precisely those people who are being left behind and to save them from falling through the cracks.

Our poverty eradication policies have been conceptualised with that perspective in mind. I can understand why the Democratic Labour Party comes to a debate of this character facing the difficulties that it faces. First is an ideological problem on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party. The DLP in a matter like this is a victim of its own propaganda and its own implicit theorising.

The Democratic Labour Party has built a large part of its political base in this country by convincing itself and its members and seeking to convince the general public that the Barbados Labour Party does not like black people, that the Barbados Labour Party is anti-poor, that we are anti-progressive and therefore it has a difficulty in reconciling its image of the Barbados Labour Party with progressive policies, enlightened programmes and things which collide precisely with the propaganda that they have put out.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Right Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Right Honourable Member is suggesting that the Democratic Labour Party has spent time doing that which he articulated. I think the Right Honourable Member is wrong to give the House that impression. The Democratic Labour Party has not had to spend any time articulating or convincing anybody of that which has always been obvious.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that might be a confession coming from the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party with the confusion in the Democratic Labour Party but in the wider society of Barbados part of the propaganda continuously put out by the Democratic Labour Party is that the Barbados Labour Party is opposed to small people, it is opposed to black people, it is in the pockets of the big man. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, whenever there is a programme, a set of policies such as this that are intended to address precisely the problems of poor people in Barbados you can expect from the DLP the rhetoric, the nonsense, that this is a delusion and things of this kind.

Sir, we can therefore in this debate discount over 95% of the nonsense that has come from the Democratic Labour Party for what it is - clap-trap intended to mislead the public about the true nature of the programmes being put in place by the Government.

The second problem faced by the Democratic Labour Party was in a way a problem that the Democratic Labour Party's leader himself alluded to, that in these matters the Democratic Labour Party has lost its way and has lost its way for some time. The most significant statement made on the Opposition side in this entire debate was the statement by the leader of the Democratic Labour Party that the only poverty eradication programme in the history of Barbados was the programme that took place in the early 1960s. That, Sir, was an important confession by a person who was a member of a DLP Cabinet when he wrote off 7 years of DLP recent experience as wasted years, years where there was no attempt made whatsoever to come into contact with the problems of poverty in this country.

It is reflected as well in the fact, as I said in my introduction, that you will examine the DLP manifesto, the most recent manifesto, and you will see no reference whatsoever to issues related to poverty in this country or no coherent programme to deal with this scourge of modern Barbados.

I am saying, Sir, that the DLP has lost its way. It has lost its philosophical mores and I am not therefore surprised at all by the tone and the temper of the contributions which have come from the Other Side. The Other Side have not put forward any alternatives to what the Government has proposed. They are not in the position to say that the programmes conceived of to deal with poverty at the community level, at the individual level, to deal with poverty by a broad-based up-welling of support for enterprise. They are not in a position to say that those programmes are ill conceived.

Sir, I am not going to address one by one the statements on the Other Side but there was one presentation that was outstanding by reason of its offensiveness which has to be responded to.

Mr. Speaker, in this House the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is in fact an Honourable Member and his behaviour is that of an Honourable Member but outside of this Parliament from time to time we have seen him get involved in antics which ring richly of hypocrisy and charlatanism.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Let us have it out tit for tat. If you want to fight, let me know. I am ready for you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, will you take your seat, please?

Honourable Member according to the rules of the House you cannot refer to a Member's behaviour as hypocritical. So could you withdraw and let us move on?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about outside Parliament. We recently saw him go to the Hospital to take advantage very vulgarly of a part-dispute between the hospital doctors.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker,...

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise, Sir?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Right Honourable Member is indicating that I went and got involved in a matter in a very vulgar manner. Sir, I happen to be an asthmatic. I go to the Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I was in the QEH Casualty as a patient.

Mr. SPEAKER: You were having an attack then?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I was having a slight attack and I go to the nebulizer. When I was there I was verbally assaulted by persons in the Casualty who were genuinely offended by what was taking place at the Hospital. I did not go there in a vulgar sense but the Prime Minister has to do everything to that level...

Mr. SPEAKER: You have given the explanation as to why you were there.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: People genuinely prayed with me for the upliftment of Barbados but you want to reduce it to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please! Honourable Member, you would not want to have an attack now. Will you take your seat please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we heard in this debate an attempt in a very sensational way to discredit the attempt by this administration to bring into proper public focus the role of the nation builders of this country. It was led by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who tried to cast the impression that in one week, and I am using his words very carefully, \$6.7 million were spent on the celebration of our National Heroes Day.

Sir, I want to say that Barbadians of all walks of life feel with a sense of pride that the acknowledgment of our national heroes is something that is uplifting. I do feel, Sir, that they are also of the view that the recognition paid

by way of public celebration to the work and worth of our national heroes was done with good taste and with a sense of occasion that did not convey any extravagance or public opulence but was done in a manner that was uplifting and to the credit of the country. 5.25 p.m.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that as far as I am concerned, the recognition of our National Heroes is a matter that is as important in the building of this country as the policies to build a strong economy, or the policies to create an effective social order. Our sense of our worth as a people, our appreciation of our identity, our recognition of our heritage, our appreciation of the legacy of those who have built this society are crucial aspects of national liberation and are integral aspects of our efforts to forge in this country a society that has progressive instincts driving to its development.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, do not, and will not apologise for the measures introduced by this Administration to make the acknowledgement of our National Heroes a fundamental part of our development of this society. Sir, I deprecate those who will now come and wish for sensational political reasons to vulgarise the efforts by...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member must be consistent. I well recall when the Honourable Member was in the Opposition.

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

*Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the attempt to uplift our National Heroes, the attempt to set appropriate role models before the eyes of the young people of Barbados is an important aspect in our national development and in our understanding of what is needed to build a strong society. Those who will come now and try to put that exercise in nation building in the kind of context in which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East sought to do today without a shred of evidence and knowing as he was speaking that he was misleading this House...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I have to rise on a point of order again. The Honourable Member cannot speak in that kind of tone in here. The Honourable Member himself, his own reputation is tarnished because the way how he represents people in an offhanded manner...

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

*Asides.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: He is representing Julian Rogers in an offhanded manner. That is how you represent Barbadians?

Mr. SPEAKER: But that is no point of order. The Honourable Member, please take your seat. A point of order must relate to what has just been said.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, a charge has been made by an Honourable Member of this House that the Government spent \$6.7 million on the celebration of our National Heroes in a week. That is a number that was snatched out of a hat without a single shred of evidence.

I am saying as well, Mr. Speaker, that it is part of an effort to try to put Government's intention of focussing on the role of our National Heroes in a political light that would cause the public to want to discredit the effort as a waste of money rather than to focus on the positive aspects of it, which is where the focus of the country should be located, and that is why the House should deprecate what was done today.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is casting aspersions and questioning the motives of an Honourable Member who, in the course of his speech, based on information which he genuinely believed to be valid, because of the source from which the information came, that during the week in question a sum of money was spent. The Honourable Member cannot now say the words which he just said, I submit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us proceed. I proceed based on what I have been allowing all day because I have sat here and heard references to policy relating to symbolism, elusions and all kinds of things. I did not stop any Members and asked for any kind of proof. A Member is now, of course, suggesting that one Member made a reference to a figure and he has no proof. The Chair has not been asking for any proof so could you proceed, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I believe the information pertaining to the expenditure on the entire celebration of the National Heroes over the entire course of the celebrations, and not just the one week, Sir, is now being assembled. No person, therefore, has access to the information. Therefore, for any person to come to this House and to put as a fact on the record of this House that \$6.7 million was spent in a week is an outrageous act, a totally outrageous act.

Mr. Speaker, I have access to the provisional information which suggests that less than \$1 million was spent but it is still provisional information. I am not yet in a position to give it to the House. But, Sir,

a Member would cast an important event designed to help build this nation in such a new mode of public sensationalism by causing the public to want to disrespect the work of the Government in this particular matter by bringing to the House very outrageously misleading information that he knew even when he was speaking, Sir, was misleading information.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is a disgraceful thing because the Press is intended to pick up "Government spends \$6.7 million on the celebration of National Heroes Week in Barbados" when in point of fact, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is not in a position to tell us where that information has come from or any evidence to the contrary. It is a disgraceful...

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I make bold to say that I will not at all apologise for the money that was very well spent.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I believe in all seriousness that the track record of the Prime Minister...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. A point of order must be a point raised relating to what has just been said so make your point of order or sit down, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member must be aware first of all that I will not be able to disclose my sources.

*Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.*

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please! I do not feel that we need to belabour this point. The point you are making, you have mentioned in your speech a figure. The Honourable Prime Minister is saying that he cannot give the exact figures as yet because everything is still being computed, but the Honourable Prime Minister is saying that it is less than \$1 million. Could we proceed, please? 5.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I want to go further. This is a very serious matter because it goes to the integrity of the debate of this House. A Member can come to

this House and just throw out a number and it will be picked up by the public and the Press and put in the most sensational manner. We are speaking, Sir, in my view, about something that I feel is fundamental to the building of this nation. The recognition of our national heroes and the appropriate public ceremonies to recognise their worth. I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is unconscionable for the celebration of the work and worth of our national heroes to be wrapped in the kind of public controversy that the Opposition seems now to be about to want to wrap it in by including into the public discourse fanciful information and information without foundation pertaining to the cost of the celebration.

I also want to say that no public official who has a responsibility for collecting or collating any of the information about the cost of the celebration was approached by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. I have checked today, Sir, and no public official responsible for collecting or collating the cost of the celebration was approached by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Therefore, I am saying as a matter of record in this House that that number that was given by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was a number that was not drawn from any consultation with anybody who has the responsibility for these numbers.

I will leave the Honourable Member for St. Michael East with this one thought. A large number of the people of this country who have been put recently in conditions of poverty are people who might have been employed sometimes for seven years and then were severed. They found that wicked and unscrupulous employers refused to pay those persons who had laboured in their vineyard for a long time their severance. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it would do well if we would pay the Devil his due.

I want, Sir, against that background to commend this Bill to the House and to move that it be read a second time.

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

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.*

COMMITTEE Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The House is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1 to 10 were called and passed.*

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

*On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Social Investment Fund Act, 1998.*

ORDER NO. 8 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A  
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN  
THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF  
LAND AT COUNTRY ROAD, ST. MICHAEL

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of properties that are occupied by the National Housing Corporation for which the Corporation has been trying to obtain title during the past few months. This particular property is one such property. It is the property which is presently occupied by the offices of the National Housing Corporation at Country Road.

The area became vested in the Crown by virtue of Section 3 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Cap. 225. Prior to this Act, the land was conveyed to the Executive Committee on March 31, 1953. The site was acquired from the Callenders in the early 1950s to provide accommodation for the Housing Board and later the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority was succeeded by the National Housing Corporation on this site. From the time of its acquisition, therefore, this site has been associated with the Government's formal involvement in the coordination of the housing sector in Barbados. This Resolution seeks to correct the inadvertence in having the property vested in the National Housing Corporation.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. Hon.

R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As Your Honour is fully aware this area of Country Road borders my constituency. I believe it is on the City side next to the property already owned by the Government. I want to take this opportunity to ask the Honourable Minister what progress is being made in the project that will see the redevelopment of the Country Road area along with the Passage Road area. I think this is part of the total inner Bridgetown development. Clearly I am not raising any objections or any difficulties. Some of the citizens are not clear where we are and if the Minister could give us some idea as to what stage we are at in terms of the project. 5.45 p.m.

Also some of my constituents are becoming concerned because of the discussions which were held. When Mr. R. D. S. Goodridge was the Permanent Secretary, there were certain understandings which we had with regard to the persons who had to be relocated and resited. Since Mr. Goodridge has left we have come to feel that undertakings given by him in good faith are about to be repudiated. Now, I will not conclude that until I receive better information but there is a level of anxiety which is descending upon some of the constituents who have received word via the informal network that their relocation will now be in a different part of St. Michael as compared with what they were given to understand. If the Minister is not able to reveal delicate information at this point, I will understand that but to the point that he can assist me in my representation of those two points I would truly appreciate it.

Since we are on Country Road and Passage Road runs on from Country Road, I wonder if the Minister is able to say, notwithstanding the development, whether we might expect that a road leading to the pavilion at the bottom of Passage Road, which is now very heavily used by the people from Country Road and the Garden Land and the people on the City side. It is a very difficult proposition to get the vehicles near to the pavilion because they have to cross a property which the Honourable Member must be aware of. I am not seeking to make a debate of this. I am just asking the question because given the present situation I have no doubt we will get a chance to debate this in more detail but I would appreciate some answers from the Minister.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Honourable Member is referring to the Bridgetown Road Project. I am not so sure what assurances he had been referring to when he mentioned that the former Permanent Secretary, Goodridge, had given certain undertakings on behalf of Government at the town meetings which we held with respect to that project.

That project is ongoing. The actual construction of the road has not started. We have had one or two problems with respect to the pre-qualification of the contractors. We have gone back out to tender again due to certain requirements of the IDB. It is hoped that we would be in a position to start the formal construction some time in September.

I believe the Honourable Member is referring to those relocations which have to be done along the area of Passage Road. The Division of Public Works has already constructed 11 houses to resite those persons who have been worst affected. We are in the process of making the final allocations to those 11 persons and he could rest assured that all of those parties who have been badly affected will be taken care of.

We were somewhat short of space in order to complete more houses for further acquisitions. We had looked at a site in Tweedside Road which has been acquired by Government for the Ministry of Education but the Ministry of Education they are not so sure when or whether they would be able to proceed with that project. Quite recently we have been looking at a project in the Country Road area, the area which is the same area where the Rudder School was. We are hoping to have a housing project on that particular site. It is about 6 acres, the area in Passage Road next to the YWCA. I think that is the area where we were going to put the Judicial Centre. Since then Government has decided on an alternative location for the Judicial Centre which would be in the White Park Road compound, near the Home Centre. This land will be available. It is approximately 6 acres and we are hoping that we would be able to have a few single units and a few terrace units in that particular area.

The problem in the St. Michael area unless those people who live in the City area opt to live outside of the St. Michael area, we do not have enough land in the surrounding areas but we are looking to do the relocations in that area. It is just a project at this time.

With respect to the road leading to the Pavilion, I do not recall a formal request being made for a road to the Pavilion but this is a normal project which will be undertaken after, rather than before, the by-pass road is completed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member would give way, Sir, I would like to suggest to the Honourable Member that in view of the development which is coming that it would be desirable to acquire all of that property that runs aback of the 11 houses which would embrace what is now the 'O'Level Institute. I believe that it would be desirable for Government to acquire that entire area as part of the Urban Re-development Project. I offer that as a consideration bearing in mind that there would have to be a proper replacement for the very August educational institution which is embraced by the 'O' Level Institute. But the property itself would go some way toward integrating the two neighbourhoods of Strathclyde and the area going out to the end of Passage Road and the bond which is there. If that whole area could be acquired and developed it would change the character of that area considerably.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: This is a suggestion which I am hearing for the first time but in keeping with our policy it is normal for the parliamentary representative to assist Government in such exercises and I would hope that the Honourable Member would assist Government with any such acquisition in case we decide to do so.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF LAND AT FARMERS, ST. THOMAS, CONSTANT, COTTAGE AND GROVES PLANTATIONS ST. GEORGE, IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: MT. Speaker, we have already had a full debate on this particular Resolution when the property was acquired by Government. This Resolution simply seeks to vest the property in the National Housing Corporation.

Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate that at Farmers this is just stage one of an acquisition which we are doing in order to accommodate persons who have been affected by land slippage. There have been serious cases of land slippage in the St. Andrew area. The situation is becoming a little bit more acute now that outside is somewhat dry and it is hoped that we would be able to accommodate about 15 of the most serious persons within the next month or so.

At Constant we are hoping to have an additional 38 lots and at Cottage and Groves 132 lots to accommodate those persons who have been affected by the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 5.55 p.m.*

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT LANCASTER, ST. JAMES FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is the second part of an acquisition in the Waterhall, Dean Town area. We have already had a debate with respect to an earlier acquisition which we did in this area. You would have recalled too that at one stage we had agreed to acquire a parcel of land at Baywoods, St. James. Subsequently we realised that it would have been a little bit more costly

to acquire that particular land, than if we had acquired the land which is next to that particular parcel of land.

The area of land at Waterhall already has a tenantry on it and we are acquiring the tenantry lands together with additional lands to accommodate other persons who have been affected by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. We are also hoping that the larger area of 35.3 acres will be part of the overall Dean Town area where we are hoping that we would be able to satisfy the needs of many perspective house owners who would want to purchase their house spots.

The acquisition at Lancaster, 7.9 acres, is also part of this process. It is hoped that in the next acquisition we would be able to complete the whole process of the acquisitions in that area in order to complete the lands to be acquired in the Dean Town area.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this concludes Government Business for today and I beg to move that this House do adjourn until Tuesday, May 19, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 6.00 p.m.*

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