THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 11, 1998

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 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.
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)
Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.
Mr.L.R. TOLL, 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. 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 Friday, August 7, 1998.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its last meeting of Friday, August 7, 1998, are not yet circulated. I beg to move that further consideration of the Minutes be postponed.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House then so be it.

PAPERS

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

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 16) Order, 1998.

2. The Insurance (Barbados Light and Power Co. Ltd.) (Self-Insurance Fund) Regulations, 1998.

3. The Insurance (Co-operators General Insurance Company Limited) (Extension) Order, 1998.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 42 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East 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 rest of this day'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. 2 - RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution on the Order Paper which is standing in my name, notice was given of this Resolution on June 10 last year. I indicated to this Honourable House at that time that I wanted to give long notice of the substance of the Resolution which I hoped would trigger a full debate on foreign policy in Barbados. Other Parliamentary Business overtook this debate over the last several months but I am pleased today that the matter has now finally come to debate.

For the convenience and the assistance of Honourable Members and, indeed, all of the Barbadian public, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has prepared a Discussion Paper which is already a document of the House. This Discussion Paper does not represent the Government's policy. What it attempts to do is to outline the global environment in which Barbados finds itself today.

The Discussion Paper, Sir, is meant as my Message at the Foreword points out, to provoke a wider National discussion on how Barbadians see Barbados in a rapidly changing world. I speak not only of Barbadians at home, but of Barbadians abroad as well.

I am hoping for the widest possible public input into the foreign policy which will evolve. We are, Mr. Speaker, on the cuff of a new century. Indeed, as I have said so often in this Chamber we, I believe, are privileged to be on the cuff of a new millennium and as so often happens, if you look back historically as we are coming to the end of a century, a number of matters appear to be coming to closure, coming to good, in some cases, bad resolution. There always seems to be a sense of urgency. Matters which have preoccupied us over several decades appear to come to somehow closure.

We have seen this in the 20th century as well. In the last decade and a half, we have seen on this planet some things which some of us never thought would occur in this century. We have seen the Berlin Wall come down, Mr. Speaker. The new technology allowed us to see people with bare hands clawing it down.

We have seen the Russian Empire disintegrate and reformulate into a host of new countries. At least, a dozen new countries have come into being in Europe over the past 10 to 12 years.

We have seen South Africa finally reject apartheid. I do not know that I thought I would live to see that in the 20th century, and even here in this hemisphere, in the Americas, where Barbados lives, moves and has its being and its destiny, and Haiti, the first black Republic trying to come to terms with a democracy for the first time.

We have seen other things, some people think cataclysmic, occurring in this last decade or two of the 20th century. We have seen a technological revolution which has changed our lives forever, and will continue this very rapid change that it brings about.

We have seen economic relations across the world changing as well, and Barbados is all very much a part and parcel of that.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the world, the globe that we knew when I first came to this House 22 years ago is not the same world in which we have to operate today, and Barbadians who are highly educated people, politically sophisticated people recognise this and I look forward, as I have said, to inputs not only in this debate.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the Heads of all of our Missions abroad are in Barbados at this time. We endeavour to bring them home every other year for major consultations. This debate, fortunately, is coming at a time when they are here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a whole new globalised international economy. Barbados, in my judgment, has

sought to put itself in a position so that in the early 21st century we will not find ourselves behind the game, so to speak. At an early time, about three years ago, we took a conscious and a very deliberate decision to review all of our trading arrangements and, to that end, we have a national negotiating team which is headed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is not now in his seat.

This committee, Mr. Speaker, is looking at all of our trading arrangements, not only the old traditional trading partnerships with which we grew up but it is looking to new arrangements as well.

As we speak, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Atlantic right here in CARICOM we are engaged in a process of amending the Treaty of Chaguaramas which founded CARICOM. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, shares the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee which is hoping to usher in at a very soon date a single market and economy. We are hoping that at the next meeting of Caricom Heads that this will become a reality. I think all Honourable Members are aware that this process is requiring a series of protocols to be put in place in order that the Caricom Caribbean, in a manner of speaking, will be in a position to deal with the fact that the world has already - it is not waiting for the year 2000 - divided itself up into major trading blocs. We are recognising in Barbados that we cannot any longer look to special and preferential arrangements, to concessionary arrangements in the way in which we trade and do business. Those days are gone. We are now in the age of reciprocity, that is how it is described. We are in the world now of the WTO, the World Trade Organisation. 11 35a.m.

It is believed by some that the World Trade Organisation in the early 21st Century may well overtake United Nations as the most important organisation in the world. When that organisation held its first ministerial meeting in December of 1996, particularly those Ministers from the developing world came away from the meeting in a state of shock. I do not think that anyone had properly contemplated and properly understood all that would flow from the World Trade Organisation and the way in which it would change our lives, and very quickly.

In a way it is our misfortune and our fortune too that the first test for the world in the world in respect of the World Trade Organisation had important implications for us here in the Caribbean. I think all Barbadians are aware of what has transpired in recent years in respect of bananas. Although Barbados is not a banana producing country, we show great solidarity with those countries of the Caribbean particularly in the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States and on the Central American mainland who are major producers of bananas. That has been instructive for us because I think it has pulled us up short at an early time so that we have an understanding beyond any other of what the reality of global competition will be in the early 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that a whole new global environment is evolving. It is critical that Barbados should find its place within it, find its place within CARICOM and that CARICOM should also find its place within it. It is clear to me that we can no longer think of our traditional trading partners. We have got to look to every niche that it is possible for us to carve out, to etch out in anyway and every trading bloc wherever it may be.

We are living, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a multipolar world today. When the Cold War ended there were many in the developing world who were giddy with relief and delight. We thought that all of those monies which were spent on arms and weaponry of the Cold War would be diverted to development aid. That has turned out, Sir, not to be the case. Not that some of that money has not diverted to development aid but not to us in the south and certainly not to us in the Caribbean.

The northern powers have discovered kith and kin in new countries evolving in Eastern Europe which by definition are developing countries and there is a new strategy astride in the world which speaks to the poorest of the poor. By that yardstick Barbados and most of the countries of the Caribbean do not qualify for aid as the poorest of the poor. One does not wish to be invidious and call names and point but it is a fact, an established fact that there is possibly only one country in our part of the world which would qualify and that is Haiti. We are well aware of that because we have done our part in providing technical assistance and giving whatever support we could to our sister country there.

Mr. Speaker, .Sir, what is happening now is that economic competition rather than military and ideological rivalry is now becoming the driving force in the world. In Barbados we know that. We have recognised that there are two powerful contrasting trends which have evolved as we come to the end of the 20th century, globalisation of which everyone speaks and regionalisation.

Mr. Speaker, as the poet said, no man is an island and no island is an entity unto itself. In Barbados we like to think that particularly since independence and since we have had a Ministry of Foreign Affairs that we have done reasonably well. We have no more than nine missions in capitals abroad. We have to cut our coat according to our cloth. We recognise that we have to establish priorities in respect of how we would proceed in this new environment of which I speak and so important and sometime tough decisions will have to be made in respect of these priorities.

Barbados is viewed, Mr. Speaker, as a country which has the possibility as the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister

likes to put it of becoming, in the first decade of the 21st century.... not the first, I believe, but certainly in this corner of the world where we are, a developed small island state. We have that possibility. As Parliamentarians, Sir, we are fully aware that there are many aspects of our profile which when presented give the appearance that we are very much developed in many areas of our endeavour, many areas of our economy. But we also know there are many aspects and many respects in which we are still very much developing. 11.45a.m.

We have, Mr. Speaker, and this is the question that has been put to Barbadians and I pose it now. We have to ask ourselves a series of questions the most important of which is how does Barbados now reposition itself so that we take best advantage of what is available in the world around us.

We have seen major changes over the past several years, Sir. I can remember 20, 25 years ago when the industrial estates of Barbados were dominated by the garment industry. Today that industry has virtually disappeared and it has been replaced by industries dedicated to the new technologies, particularly informatics and there is an interesting phenomenon, Mr. Speaker, Sir, arising out of that. I see it in my constituency on a regular basis and I believe that other Honourable Members do as well. Predominantly women, in the age group between 25 and 55, particularly those in their forties and their fifties who come to us on a very regular basis and point out that they have raised families. In some cases they have bought land, built houses, working as unskilled or semi-skilled persons. They have seen now their jobs in those industrial estates overtaken by their children who have been the beneficiaries of secondary and tertiary education and they find themselves virtually unemployable, having raised families, as they begin to approach middle-age and are looking for the security of a pension of one kind or another.

We have to find ways, Mr. Speaker, Sir, of retooling, or retraining. We have to find ways of making our population one which in short order can redeploy its skills and its energies as markets wax and wane, move away from us, new ones come in to us.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that during the course of this debate it would be found possible for Barbadians to get a better understanding of how the foreign relations, the foreign affairs of Barbados, affect their daily lives. People tend to think that foreign affairs is something that is not the business of everyday life and that it is something which requires tall men in dark suits, a glass in their hand, to be hobnobbing about weighty and high matters of state but, Mr. Speaker, Sir, those days have gone and certainly in the case of Barbados and in the case of this Administration the diplomat is now very much a man and a woman, I am pleased to say. Our diplomats are men and women, Mr. Speaker, in business attire who are out there, not only looking after the interest of Barbadians abroad which will remain part of the fundamental role and function of the diplomat but promoting Barbados as a premier business and leisure destination.

We have gone to a lot of trouble, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this Administration at an early date to bring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a new perspective. It is one to which we have given lip service for many, many years and now it has become a reality. What has occurred over the past 4 years is that the business of foreign affairs or of foreign policy has itself become a business.

We have brought an economic component to the work that we do in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have sought to establish what we call a country team at our Missions abroad, but not only at our Missions abroad but at home as well.

We have, as Honourable Members know, the Barbados Tourism Authority which has established several offices all linked to our missions abroad. Not every mission has a tourism authority office but in the destinations or in the capitals where we look for tourism business they have their offices.

The EIDC also has offices abroad. At our Consulate General in Toronto we have a liaison officer whose role and function requires him to look after the interest of Barbadians who work in the farm labour programme in that country and who are now working in other areas there as well, in the business of care giving with families and so on.

At our Mission in Washington there are different emphasis. Washington monitors the Free Trade Areas of the Americas for us. The Ambassador at Washington is also our Permanent Representative to the Organisation of American States. In Brussels again a different thrust. Traditionally that mission has serviced LOME and has struggled from Brussels to service a number of organisations headquartered at Geneva for us. So that they have different thrusts and the country team is an attempt, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to bring all of the old separate kingdoms together under the leadership of whoever is the head of a mission to more efficiently and more effectively promote Barbados.

Now, even as we speak, Sir, in April of this year there was the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile. At that summit, although we were hoping for a great deal more from it, at that summit the Free Trade Area of the Americas was inaugurated. It is expected that as early as next month the negotiating process will be under way. The countries in this hemisphere have been working for several years now toward this and Barbados is a part of that. Barbados is a very important part of that. We are reviewing

our relationship with Canada and we have a trading relationship known as CARIBCAN. We have the Canada/Caribbean encounters on a regular annual basis and we are looking to Latin America now, Sir, in a way that we have not before. 11.55a.m.

I think we must recognise that whatever may be said about the tigers of the Far East that here in the Americas in my judgment there is going to be a lot of business in the early 21st Century. We are talking of a market of several hundred million. We are talking of a market, Sir, in which we have not even begun to test the waters but we have to make that beginning.

The Andean Pact is known to us. Mercosur, a grouping of four in Latin America which is looking to begin to talk to us as CARICOM and the Central Americans who are now coming together in their own economic grouping and reaching out very much to the Caribbean. I think that the ACS, The Association of Caribbean States, whatever may be said about it has helped to trigger some of that.

So that there is going to be a lot of business, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and a lot of business in the years that are ahead of us and Barbados has looked very carefully at how it positions itself in this hemisphere. Do not let us fool ourselves. This is where our destiny is. We cannot take up these islands and take them anywhere else. The United States is our major trading partner. Canada is a country, which as a fellow Commonwealth country, we have had a long, happy and special relationship which we want to expand in the early 21st Century.

Right here in the Caribbean, we have reached out with our assistance as I have said to Haiti and to Cuba as well. Now I am aware, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Cuba is still a hot topic. We are fresh from the visit of the President of Cuba just a couple of weeks ago. Our relationship with Cuba is not a recent relationship. I think we need to start on that basis when we talk about Cuba. The past 25 years ago Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica and a number of the countries of the Caribbean established diplomatic relations with Cuba. Indeed last year all of us were pleased to celebrate that pact. We have always recognised Cuba as part of the Caribbean. We have allowed differences of language, difference of culture and ethnic differences to separate us for too long and particular in the area of cultural exchange and cultural cooperation. We have been enjoying an excellent relationship with Cuba.

It is only fair to say that at the time of the uprising in Grenada that the relationship, I would venture to suggest, with all of the Caribbean and Cuba cooled as relationships do from time to time, wax and wane. But today, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are very much on a path to strengthening our relationship with that country. There are those who behave as though we ought to put ourselves in a situation where we would want to be dictating to another country how it should conduct its affairs. We would not tolerate that from another country. Indeed as I said, in another place yesterday, I would hate to think that the rest of the world would be judging Barbados in August of 1998 on the state of affairs in Barbados in 1937 or in 1920 or in 1908 or whenever.

The reality of today, Sir, is that Cuba is going to be one of those market places with which we want to be doing business, they with us, we with them. Cuba is part of the wider Caribbean. Cuba is part of the Americas. And in the same way that we would do business with China, with Japan, with whomever, with South Africa, we would do business with Cuba. We have entered into what we are pleased to call constructive engagement with Cuba, as I believe from time to time we will do with other countries in the world as well. Cuba is not unique in this connection. And we feel that persuasive influence, as part of this constructive engagement is more likely to help Cuba to fulfill its destiny as an integrated part of the Caribbean. We feel, and I speak very plainly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I say no different here from what I say every year at the United Nations General Assembly that the trade embargo that the United States has implemented over the past 40 or so years, clearly has not achieved the end that it set out to and we do not believe, and this is true of successive administrations in Barbados, we do not believe that this is the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, here I am speaking about a Barbadgs which has never been afraid to stand up for what it believed in. I can remember as a young girl in the 1950's when our goods produced in South Africa disappeared from the shelves of shops in Barbados. I can remember that, Sir. Barbadians used to like a certain brand of port wine, they used to put it in their Christmas cakes. We used to get spiced peaches in big glass bottles. We used to get big pound tins of jam. Honourable Members around me are talking about Coos products, marzipan and so on and so forth. Of course, this is a generation which does not know of these things, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is saying that he cannot remember but some of us are old enough to remember that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West remembers it well. There were those at that time, Mr. Speaker, Sir, who said that we were going to bring down all kinds of retribution and that it was not a wise thing to do and that it was not our quarrel and so on and so forth. 12.05p.m.

There were those at that time who said that we were going to bring down all kinds of retribution and that it was not a wise thing to do and that it was not our quarrel and so on and so forth, but the principle was well established and

we have stood our ground and we have lived to be vindicated in that dimension.

It is no different with Haiti. It is no different with Cuba and, as I have said, Sir, in the early 21st century, indeed, throughout the 21 st century, the way things change I have no doubt that it will happen again from time to time. So there is no need for us in Barbados to be apologetic about our stance where Cuba is concerned.

I have said that economic competition is going to be the way of the early 21st century and Cuba represents a significant market within the Caribbean and within Latin America and within the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I could say a few words about our - and I am trying to follow now the discussion paper, Barbados and the new International Trading Arrangements. As I have said, the United States is our major trading partner. Within CARICOM, Trinidad and Tobago is our major trading partner. The Free Trade Area of the Americas is going to be very important for us. We made a very early decision in this Administration that NAFTA would not be the way for Barbados. When we considered that Chile with all of its resources was having such difficulty negotiating NAFTA and when we looked at the cost involved, when we looked at the financial and human resources that we would have to put to that task, it just did not seem worth the candle since in the end, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would say, at the end of the day, the free trade area of the Americas would be our goal and so we have directed our energies there.

On the other side of the Atlantic we have an old partnership in Europe no more than in the United Kingdom but with the European Union. We are about to inaugurate on September 30th negotiations which we are hoping will lead ,to the 5th Lom£ Convention. This is very important for us, not only to the Caribbean, but to the African and Pacific States as well. All the indications are that this convention will not be like the first four conventions.

The WTO will make a difference and there are other imperatives which will make it different as well. The European Union itself is expanding and it is thought will continue to expand. The European Union has today different imperatives which drive it than it did when the first Lome Convention was put in place or even when the second Lome Convention was put in place. Indeed, there has been a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that the ACP, the African Caribbean Pacific States, may look quite different in this fifth convention than it did in the first four.

It is being proposed, Mr. Speaker, that rather than three entities, Africa, Caribbean and Pacific that we may well find the Europeans wishing to negotiate with six entities, four regions within Africa which are the four established African regions and the Caribbean and the Pacific making six.

There are even some who are suggesting that the Europeans may even want to be negotiating free trade areas with the 71 countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States. Even that.

Those are only the trade issues. There are other issues as well to do with political cooperation, to do with services which will be new to this convention in a way that we did not see it with other conventions. We want to engage the private sector's cooperation and the involvement in this fifth convention.

The commodities which were tradition to the first four conventions for us in Barbados rum, sugar and elsewhere in the Caribbean bananas, rice, not so much cocoa in the Caribbean but more in West Africa - all of those special arrangements, all of those preferences to which we have become accustomed will change.

We are seeking to negotiate a phased process for that change. We cannot overnight in the Caribbean move from bananas or sugar to some other sector. It cannot be done overnight. It is a fiscal impossibility. In some islands of the Caribbean and in the Pacific for that matter you will find that there is just one commodity which anchors an economy and many of the countries of the Caribbean - we see it happening already - are beginning to try to diversify around bananas, if that was the one crop, and some may even have to consider diversifying out of bananas or out of sugar as some have already done in the Caribbean.

The way forward as we are already seeing in the Caribbean ih the early 21st century would be services. Already it is true in our economy in Barbados the major sector of our economy is tourism and this is true of many countries in the Caribbean if not all of them. The same is true in the Pacific and the same is true in Africa. Indeed, tourism is expected in the first years of the 21st century to be the largest industry in the world even overtaking advertising. That is a service.

Then we have international financial services and there are other services and goods which have come on tremendously in the last decade or two in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean as well such as cultural services. We must not take for granted what reggae has done in the world. We must not take for granted even what the Reggae Boyz symbolised in the last world cup. We are selling cultural products and we must look now to recognise that there is not only money to be made for those who write and those who compose and those who sing but that it is an industry and-the new technology has combined with these cultural skills which we see a lot of in the Caribbean today to give birth to a new industry. It happened and like so much that has happened to us in the Caribbean we did not even recognise that it was happening. It was like tourism. You wake up one

morning and recognise that there we have this commodity, there we have these goods, there we have this service which is very saleable and of great demand in the world. So we want in the negotiating of this convention to give a much larger priority to services than we have in former conventions. 12.15p.m.

There are other niche markets too, Mr. Speaker. We understand in the Caribbean that with the high level of our education, indeed, what is happening is that we are now reaping the benefits, dividends, some might say, of that massive investment which successive administrations right across the Caribbean have made in the social sectors over the past 37 years, and we have never made an apology for it.

I can remember in an earlier administration in the 1970s and the 1980s, the shibboleths, as I liked to say, the war cries were different then from now. But in those years we were told that we really needed to shore up the productive sectors and we did it, particularly those of us who were under the gun of the IMF and other IFIs which shall be nameless.

We were told that we had to shore up the productive sectors and so many countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific attempted to do so at the cost of the social sectors. It is a happy situation that in Barbados we did not. Even when we sought to shore up our productive sectors we understood that the social sectors were also productive sectors and that we could not hope, without a highly educated population that enjoyed a good quality of life, enjoyed good health, were decently housed, were well trained, we understood that underpinned the productive sectors. So we continued and continued even unto this day to invest heavily in health, education, housing and training. That is what it is about.

We are reaping the dividends now in that Barbadians are able to access niche markets that other developing countries which saw fit to invest in big defence budgets and say to you at the same time: "Well, I cannot afford to put more money in education because we are buying guns," our priorities were different, so that today we can access those niche markets which can give us a good dividend on our investment.

We will continue to do that and that is why in this Administration we have taken the position that we have in respect of secondary and tertiary education. The taxpayers of Barbados continue to underwrite our students and our scholars. That is part of the investment in human capital, and it will continue to be so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Barbados finds itself, and I am hoping that the learned Attorney General would speak to this matter during the course of this debate, together with other countries in the Caribbean, juxtaposed between countries where there is a great demand for illicit drugs and countries which are major producers of the substance of illicit drugs. We have seen in these islands the way in which narco-trafficking, as it is described, can destabilise entire countries. These are small islands.

In my time I have seen a handful of mercenaries on a boat seek to take over an island and convert it to whatever subversive and other usage. This is not something in the history books of the last century. This has happened in our time, and continues to happen today. Barbados, in common with so many of the islands, is a known transshipment point. There is no arky-parky about that. There is no if, but, maybe and perhaps. It is so. And like so may other islands where drug traffickers use nationals in the business of trafficking, buying and selling, some of the business remains on the island.

When I was a Minister of Education, and I am not easily shocked, Mr. Speaker, I remember, that is some 12 or more years ago now, having a report one morning from a very distraught and distressed Head of a Primary School in Barbados to say that before school began one child had come off the playground to whisper to a teacher that another child had marijuana in his shoe.

I had the Chief Education Officer join me on another telephone to discuss with the Head how the matter would be dealt with. We did deal with it. Indeed, before the day was over, because of the description that the child gave once pressed, they were able to arrest someone who had been peddling this stuff to primary school children as they walked to school.

I remember being the subject of much criticism in Barbados, I am accustomed to that Mr. Speaker, when I suggested that we needed to upgrade security at all schools in Barbados. We needed to fence schools that those who sold food and drink, and every school has that, should be people who were properly monitored by the staff of the school and they should not be at the gate. You should bring them inside so you knew what you were dealing with because it was the avenue for the trafficking of drugs. I did not want to say that openly to terrorise parents in Barbados, but it is a reality.

We are reaping the dividend of that now, *Mr.* Speaker, and it is not a very good one. It distresses us all greatly when every single day now we can hear that there has been a Shootout, somebody has been shot down. We are now at a place in Barbados where somebody is executed under their own roof. 12.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, all of this is part of what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working collaboratively with the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Defence has to be dealing with. We have got to find, together with these Ministries, together working with other Caribbean countries and non-Caribbean countries too, ways and means to rid Barbados of this. We are seeing a level of violence to which we are not accustomed and to which we do not wish to become accustomed, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

A few months ago the Ministry of Tourism did a pilot survey among visitors to Barbados who were frequent returnees. I think Honourable Members know that Barbados enjoys the highest level of return visits in the Caribbean. Forty percent of people who come to Barbados return again and again and again and again; I do not mean once or twice, there are people who are returning here 16 and 17 years in succession. One of the questions on the questionnaire was: What is it? What is that special thing about Barbados which after your 15th or more visits brings you back again rather than you going to another island or to another part of the world? I would never have guessed it, Mr. Speaker, and there is no Barbadian person to whom I have related this who has been able to guess it at all. But whenever I have related it to Europeans, they get it in one. The answer was security, Mr. Speaker, Sir. That is the usefulness of surveys of this kind. That tells us a very great deal about our tourism product. That tells us that this is an aspect of it which we have to be very jealous of and to guard and to protect. It is what makes us different from other destinations in the world.

The first European to whom I related this, his answer to me was, it has got to be security. I feel safe in Barbados, I can bring my children here. They can run about on the beach here, they meet Barbadian children, they can go and sleep overnight at their home and I have no worry. I can go to a club in Holetown and I can go to a club on the St. Lawrence Gap. All hours of the night I feel safe in Barbados. Whereas in other destinations and some of them in the Caribbean too we are told that people are mugged even on the steps of the hotel before they step onto the streets. This is a very important aspect of what makes Barbados an attractive destination not only for leisure but for business as well. This escalating violence that we see in our community, we have to deal with it and very firmly and very quickly before it does damage to the overall Barbados product which we are seeking to promote abroad. Not to mention the overwhelming fact, Mr. Speaker, that it is doing great damage to our sense of society and our sense of community in Barbados.

It is hard when you recognise that like everything else in the world when this happens in your community, you see it as something self-inflicted. We have to ask ourselves; why are we doing this to ourselves, why are we allowing it to happen? What is the pay day out of this, what is so important that we are prepared now to lay down lives and shed blood in support of this?

If I may move on, Mr. Speaker, to another aspect of life in Barbados which is of great concern to us in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and must inform us all in Barbados particularly now as we approach the early 21st century, that has to do with our physical environment.

Barbados is a small island, fourteen miles by twenty one miles. We are the most easterly, first landfall in the Caribbean out of the Atlantic. I think that Barbadians generally speaking over the past thirty or forty years have a greater sensitivity in respect of our physical environment in terms of the way Barbados looks, the way Barbados smells, the way Barbados keeps itself. We look at our parks, we look at our beaches, not only for the use of visitors because in Barbados what we have is an island which is the total product.

We are not like so many other destinations in the world, Mr. Speaker, Sir, where you have what we call tourism zones or tourism enclaves. We do not have a north coast or islands off Barbados where our tourism product is centred. The whole of Barbados and everything that emanates from it is our product. So the environment that we create for ourselves and then seek to share with visitors is one that we have got to guard very jealously; not only the physical Barbados, this rock as we love to call it...

In the early 21st century, I believe that the marine environment, Mr. Speaker, is going to assume a far larger importance everywhere in the world and particularly for^us here as island communities in the Caribbean. We have to be very mindful of this. There have been a number of series of international meetings dealing with matters to do with the marine environment and the environment generally speaking. We are talking about the air and we are lucky that we have the trade winds coming out of the northeast which cool Barbados and help to disperse air pollution. We are fortunate too that we have the gulf stream which has a much larger function than we like to think at first glance and which helps to move away a certain amount of our marine pollution.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we work very closely and collaboratively with the Ministry of the Environment. Last year at the special session of United Nations, the Minister of Health and the Environment the Honourable Member for St. James South spoke to the importance of small island developing states such as ours. Barbados you will recall, hosted the SIDS conference in 1994. Like so many of the conferences, the major international conferences of the late 1980s and the 1990s where all kinds of positions were taken, pledges were made, promises were made, funds we thought were going to be put

at the disposal of the environment, at the disposal of health, at the disposal of family planning and so many others. That has not come to past, a lot of that development aid as I have said, was diverted away from countries such as ours.

It is very important, Mr. Speaker, that we now begin to pay a greater attention to the marine environment around us. I do not know how well we recognise that we live out of the Caribbean sea. We live off the Caribbean sea; we live in the Caribbean sea. In my own opinion, the Caribbean sea is the most threatened sea in the world. There was time when the Mediterranean sea was thought to be the dirtiest sea in the world and a number of anti-pollution measures have been taken over the years to clean that sea. Some have been successful and have been not been.

The Caribbean sea has within it some of the major oil refineries of the world. We do not have too many oil producing countries, just a few. Even Barbados produces one third of its domestic consumption but billions and billions of barrels of oil traverse the Caribbean Sea on a daily basis. We see it but we do not always recognise it for what it is. 12.35p.m.

We are exceedingly lucky, Mr. Speaker, that we have never had a major oil spill in the Caribbean and we need to continue to pray that it never happens because the capacity for damage that such a spill could occasion in the Caribbean is just unthinkable. We could say goodbye to tourism for many, many years. The fishing industry would have a serious blow and the marine environment itself would take scores of years and in some instances, hundreds of years to repair.

Even though we have not had a major oil spill, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is still a lot of oil pollution in this Caribbean Sea. Cruise ships, merchant ships, oil tankers are washing out their bilges in our waters on a daily/nightly basis. It is doing great damage to the marine environment.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that for many years we negotiated the Law of the Sea Convention. The Headquarters of the Law of the Sea, after a great struggle, is in Jamaica and like so many other conventions, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and this concerns us greatly in the Caribbean and particularly so in Barbados, it concerns us that so often many of the developed countries with whom we sat side by side as we negotiated these conventions, these great treaties, these agreements when the day came at the end of the process for acceding and signing and committing some of them have not seen fit to do so.

It does not send a good signal and the United States is a major defaulter in this respect. We saw it with the Law of the Sea. We saw it with the Convention which deals with discrimination against Women. We saw it most recently in respect of a very important initiative taken by the Canadians in respect of ridding the earth of land mines and there are other instances of it.

Indeed, in the Caribbean, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have a lot of difficulty with the United States constantly making the point to us about human rights abuses here and there and everywhere else in the world. I am speaking very frankly in this debate and it is not a secret because I have said it elsewhere as well.

Every single time Prime Minister Arthur or myself have spoken in international fora in respect of Cuba, every single time there is talk of a visit and when there was a visit there is always a diplomatic note on my desk.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg your pardon, the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

This is coming from a country, Mr. Speaker, Sir, which has not acceded to its own human rights conviction. We have a lot of difficulty with this but this is the nature of foreign affairs and we have to negotiate our path as best we can in the kind of diplomatic mine field. It is nothing that we are complaining of. We are simply saying that this is a reality and many countries who are our allies in one connection often turn out not to be our allies in another connection. It is not anything new but it makes it excessively difficult for small island developing states such as ours.

If it is one thing the Right Honourable Prime Minister I hope will speak to is this. He very recently has returned from a mission where he was invited by the Commonwealth Secretariat to Chair a group which would look particularly at the vulnerability of small states. This goes back to discussions which were held during the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October last year when the concept of a vulnerability index was put before the Heads, but in almost every endeavour a case has to be put for small vulnerable, developing economies such as ours. I am pleased to say that Barbados is playing a leading role in that respect.

Let me get back to the marine environment, Mr. Speaker, Sir. In the Caribbean we have learnt to live with hurricanes, with tropical storms. In a small, flat island like Barbados a near miss is as good as a hit because we have no mountains to protect anything and we are first landfall. We are accustomed to volcanic eruption. We are watching now, helplessly as a volcano is destroying an entire island in our Caribbean. We are accustomed to earthquakes, all kinds of natural disasters. We have even become now accustomed to a certain amount of man-made disasters the most recent of which has been a trans-shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean. I have not even mentioned all that industrial sludge that comes down the Mississippi and vomits itself into the Gulf of Mexico and consequently into the northern Caribbean.

There are many other examples of trans-boundary pollution that I can describe, but the one that I am particularly concerned with now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the trans-shipment of nuclear waste.

In a year when a remake of the film Titanic has grossed more than any other movie made and has been seen by people, I am told, 13 and 14 and 15 times I cannot imagine because I found it very disappointing myself, but in a year when the Titanic is No.l on the screen it is very difficult to persuade us in the Caribbean that any ship is unsinkable and yet we are told that these specially designed and specially constructed double hull ships which are carrying nuclear waste across the world, virtually around the world, are unsinkable and that there is never going to be any need for the Caribbean to fear a spill.

Now, the British Foreign Minister and myself came to very high words on this matter in February of this year. It does not mean that we are not enjoying good words otherwise but on this issue we have come to high words. The UK and the Caribbean were having a forum, as it was described, in Nassau in February and I made this point. The nuclear waste comes from Japan in its raw state. It is shipped virtually three quarters of the way around the world, through the Panama Canal that is why Panama will always come to my assistance when I make this point in an international forum - and through the Caribbean on its way to Britain and France where it is processed. It is liquified. It is rendered into glass and then shipped back again. 12.45 p.m.

I suppose, and I am not a scientist, so I have to take the word of the scientist that in its liquified state it is less dangerous than in its raw state. But to get to Britain and France for processing, it has to come in its raw state from Japan. When I asked the question and I really was making a nuisance of myself, without an apology, why it cannot be processed in Japan, I was told that Britain and France are determined that Japan would not have that technology.

It is very important that it is sorted out. Only recently, we have seen nuclear testings in India and Pakistan. When the Indian High Commissioner called upon me just a few days ago, maybe a couple of weeks at most, one of the subjects that we discussed was the fact that India and Pakistan had come to this pass. One of the first questions I asked him was, how do you dispose of your nuclear waste in India and he could not answer. It is not something that people think about, but we have to think about it in the Caribbean. And it is not only nuclear waste, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is all kinds of other chemical and other hazardous waste. There are ships with their hulls full, drifting around the world actually looking for a location where they may dump. We had a scare here several years ago in the Caribbean where some Caribbean islands were said to be considering accepting hazardous waste for a huge sum of money.

We have to get out there and protest with as loud a voice as possible. Every single time we have this shipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean, it is a major secret. We have to depend on Greenpeace or some other agency to whisper to us that it is happening. So that even if there were mitigating steps, if there was some kind of preventive machinery that we could put in place, we would not even know. But every time it has happened, at the level of the Heads in the Caribbean, protest has been made.

Now we want to determine the Caribbean to be a zone of peace. We want in that connection that the Caribbean should be a nuclear free zone. Our livelihood in tourism depends on it. Our livelihood in fisheries depends on it and our very physical environment depends on it.

Do you see those reefs out there, Mr. Speaker, Sir? they are what protect us from the Atlantic Ocean. If we did not have the reefs, there would not be a Barbados. We would have been submerged already. A lot of the reefs are dead. Scientists are busy at work trying to discover ways and means as to how they could resuscitate life or how they could get new corals perhaps to grow on our reefs. These are the hugh barrier reefs that protect us in the Caribbean.

We do not need chemical, nuclear or any other kind pf hazardous waste to further destroy this aspect of our marine environment. These are important matters, Sir, which cannot be argtied to conclusion here in Barbados. I know that I am speaking to the converted. I cannot think of a single Barbadian at home or abroad, who would not agree with what I am saying about the need to protect our marine environment and we need in the early 21st Century to work our marine environment in a way that we have not in the past. We have not begun to plunge the depths of it.

We catch a few red fish, a few yellow fin tuna which we ship to the United States and to other metropolitan centres to the tables of restaurants where this kind of sea food is in high demand. We eat it ourselves. We have seen in our lifetime flying fish catches decline. Sea eggs have now disappeared. The Minister of the Environment, I hope, when she speaks in this debate will speak of measures that are being taken now to resuscitate sea egg gathering as an industry.

Nowhere else in the world that I know of do,people eat white sea egg as a delicacy or as a food in the way that Barbadians do. I know that in Japan and other places in the Far East the black sea egg is eaten as a delicacy. Some people suggest that part of the reason why people even in other parts of the Caribbean do not eat the white sea egg is because they do not know any better, but it is most delicious. It is a traditional food which we look forward to every September and October together with a little avocado and beans. It has got to be an ambrosia of Barbados. Now, no sea eggs.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Oh, yes. Other countries have sea eggs. The restaurants in Barbados where they serve sea eggs are importing them out of the Grenadines and other parts of the Caribbean.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Flying Fish too. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is not now in his seat, he is presently chairing a special committee set up here. He is sitting in another seat, but he is in the Chamber. He is sitting elsewhere in the Chamber, but he is very much here, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. But he chairs a committee which is now in the process of looking at the limitation of Barbados' marine boundaries. It may sound complicated, it may sound abstruse, but it has very great importance for us here in Barbados. We have an exclusive economic zone and it is called economic because there are economic benefits to be gained from it, these benefits which we cannot begin to exploit yet, but we have an exclusive economic zone like every other country of 200 miles. But we know that between Barbados and St. Vincent going due West, off the West Coast of Barbados, it is 99 miles. Just over 100 miles from St. Lucia. So very important technical work has to be done and a great deal of it has already been done, so that we can demarcate or delimit as we say, where our boundaries are.

In another millennium, may be the fourth millennium for all we know, or maybe this one that is nearly upon us now, the third millennium, these boundaries are going to assume a far larger importance than they do today. Already the process is underway. People are minding the sea. People are farming the sea and Barbados has to put its boundaries in place in order that it can successfully begin to follow suit. So that this is an important aspect of work which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to be engaged in because many of these matters cannot be argued in Barbados, they have to be argued out and negotiated in the larger CARICOM and sometimes at the international level. 12.55 p.m.

If I might say, Mr. Speaker, a few words about what is now known as FURN. We established in Barbados a Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals a few years ago. Some of these nationals who are coming to settle in Barbados are taking early retirement and some of them are coming now well in advance of retirement. Some whole families are coming. These are Barbadians who have taken a decision to relocate here. They are bringing skills many of which are badly needed in Barbados. They are bringing capital. They are bringing the tools of their trade. They are bringing new ideas. They are bringing a wealth of experience.

I would venture to suggest that every service organisation in Barbados - the Kiwanis, the Lions, the Soroptimists, the Business and Professional Women have all been the immediate beneficiaries of skills and experience brought by returning nationals. They have gone with great commitment to the assistance of many NGOs as well, PAREDOS, the Child Care Board, the Children's Development Centre have all benefitted from contact in other countries and from the experience, strategies, ideas that returning nationals bring.

It concerned us greatly that Barbadians did not always seem to be welcoming, especially of those who were returning from the United Kingdom. I would like to think that that attitude is changing and a number of organisations - I think there are in excess of 15 clubs of one kind or another - came together last year in a function at Sherbourne which I was invited to attend and did attend and I was completely impressed with the number of associations that have been formed with a view to continue to give to Barbados.

These are people who by their remittances, and in an earlier generation I can remember when it was a line item. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South who is listening very intently once said in a debate on this Floor when we were talking about this kind of matter that he remembered as a boy when the postman came and families bought ground, built houses, educated and clothed children out of those remittances. I remember that too. Whole families depended on that. It is a syndrome which we do not see so much in Barbados today but there are other parts -of the Caribbean where we have now what are called "barrel children".

We think we see barrels of foodstuff and clothes, books and so on coming back to Barbados? It is a whole industry in the United Kingdom and out of the United States and there are entire villages in other countries of the Caribbean where they virtually live off of remittances. In the Northern Caribbean that is something which is still very popular where a member of a family will go off to another neigbouring island - the British and US Virgin Islands are famous for this - and find work to make a living and support the family back home.

These returning nationals have made a massive contribution, a highly significant contribution to the Barbados that we know today and we have to recognise that they are very much Barbadians. These are not aliens. These are people who have gone abroad as they themselves will tell you with a little cardboard suitcase and today they are coming back with containers. In a manner of speaking, Sir, they have made their fortune and Barbados can be a part of that,

I did not realise that I had gotten to the hour, Mr. Speaker, Sir. This perhaps might be a useful juncture for the suspension.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon for further consideration. I expect that I will continue.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon 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 the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before the Suspension, I was speaking of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals that we have established here in Barbados. I am satisfied that it was a good investment. There has been excellent response to it and, as I have tried to point out, Barbados is reaping the benefit of it.

Barbados and the Caribbean, Mr. Speaker, most Barbadians will assume that they know all that there is to know about Barbados and the Caribbean. I believe that others who will speak in this debate and both sides of the House will speak to the subject of CARICOM, the Association of Caribbean States which is the wider Caribbean, those countries touched by the Caribbean Sea, our bridge into Latin America, so to speak.

I have no doubt that the Right Honourable Prime Minister will speak of the initiative which he has taken in respect of the OECS, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, and our wish to have, what I suppose could be described as maybe at the beginning a non-political confederal type relationship. We have to be very cognisant of the fact that the OECS is an important market for us.

You will observe, Mr. Speaker, that we come back to the economics that underpin the foreign relations of Barbados at this time. Barbados and its relationship within the Americas, I believe that I have touched upon that enough. I believe other Honourable Members will want to speak to specific aspects of that, particularly the fact that we are now looking to Central America and, in fact, Latin America on the whole to see again how we may expand our trading, cultural and other horizons so that we fully become part of what I believe in this new millennium will be referred to more and more the Americas. That is where we are.

In respect of North America, the FTAA is important. Barbados is very much engaged in the negotiating process. We have had to order our priorities. The Summit of the Americas, and particularly the first Summit and the FTAA process has formed a huge network of committees, task forces, working groups of one kind or another, addressing a broad range of issues and it is just physically impossible for a small country like Barbados to service all of them.

The Canadians, the Americans, are able to put hundreds of officers at the stroke of a pen to work in these areas. We cannot. So within CARICOM we have apportioned to specific countries specific tasks.

In respect of Barbados at the national level we have decided on which will be our priorities and where we will expend our financial, human and other resources where we think it is in our most immediate and in our best interest.

There is a great deal more I could say about that, Mr. Speaker, but it is difficult to say it all in one speech at such a massive debate. I hope that from time to time during the debate I might be able to address other specific issues that may arise.

In respect of Europe, I have made reference to the engagement now in the LOME process. The regional negotiating machinery is quite separate and distinct from our national negotiating machinery.

The ^CARICOM region has put together a regional negotiating group which is headed by Sir Shridath Ramphal. That group is carrying the Caribbean interest in the negotiating process on both sides of the Atlantic, now in the FTAA, on this side of the Atlantic, and at LOME on the other side.

It is, of course engaged in other trading negotiations as well, not the least of which has to do with CARICOM itself. Of course the CARICOM Secretariat which is headquartered in Guyana is actively engaged on all of these fronts as well. So I think it is fair to say that the Caribbean is putting its very best foot forward. It has reached into the diaspora. It has reached into universities, banks, colleges, wherever the best skills and brains are to be found. We have either bought in, borrowed in, begged, whatever skills we need to help us put our case in this negotiating process.

It will not be an easy case to put, particularly in respect of the European negotiations when you consider that we have to try to work as hard as we can in tandem with the

Africans and with the Pacific Islanders whose imperatives are not always the same as ours. They often are but they are not the same as ours, it is really and truly a very complex task.

The Barbados Mission at Brussels traditionally had this as its focal point servicing LOME for us, but there are a number of international organisations which are headquartered at Geneva, and although Geneva might be a car ride away, a hop, a jump and a skip from Brussels, we are operating with a minuscule staff in that Embassy. The World Trade Organisation is headquartered in Geneva, so is the World Health Organisation, so is the International Labour Organisation, so is WIPO and a whole host of others which have important implications for all of these negotiations and for other matters in which we are presently engaged.

It has been such a difficult task for Brussels to cover LOME, so to speak, and also service these organisations that we have taken very recently, I think, an important decision that we should now establish an Embassy at Geneva. In this connection, we have just a few weeks ago despatched an officer, one who is skilled in the language and who is experienced, to sort out the situation, so to speak.

Geneva is a complex city in its own way in respect of these organisations and how they carry on their business. There is the fact that Geneva is a horrendously expensive city, just as Brussels is, so costs have to be a factor. You cannot establish an embassy overnight. There are a number of considerations which would be occupying our attention for the next several months as we pursue this, but we found it necessary to put an officer there, not only to be looking at how best we should proceed because the OECS are also interested in sharing premises and services with us.

Now, I know that this business of common premises and common services maybe a fairly sore one in Barbados. We have had some not happy experiences in the past but, in my judgment, it is going to be very much the way of the future. Many of the developed countries do that. Right here in Barbados we see that the Canadians and the Australians share premises and services and they do so very happily. It works very well for them.

In many of the capitals where we think now it is in Barbados' especial interest to be looking to establish a presence, no matter how minuscule, we need to be examining the feasibility of sharing premises, if not with other Caribbean people, with, perhaps, other Commonwealth people and sometimes we may find ourselves with perfect strangers who will in due course become perfect friends, we hope. All of that is now engaging the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We hope that as early as next year we may be able to establish a more considerable presence in Geneva than we now have. The WTO by itself is churning out work regulations; matters to do with the way in which the WTO is only now beginning to establish itself, at a rate that we simply cannot service sufficiently well out of Brussels. Even with one person on the ground we could not possibly hope to do it. Whenever that Embassy is set up, that Barbados Mission in Geneva, it is clear to me that at least 80% of its time and its effort is going to be dedicated to servicing the WTO. The other 20% will service the other organisations in Geneva. Of course, there are other parts of continental Europe where there are important organisations to which Barbados is affiliated in which we have membership. One that comes to mind immediately is a relatively new one called "International Idea". This is headquartered at Stockholm and is served on its Board of Directors by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who as we know is also a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. I forget what the acronym is. Barbados has, on more than occasion, had membership of that Commission. In Sweden, this relatively n$w organisation is very dedicated to the promotion of good governance and human rights and so on. 2.30 p.m.

I have been pursuing for a long time, Mr. Speaker, indeed it started when I was in the Opposition and I have brought the idea to Government, to this Administration that we have everything to gain in Barbados by the establishment of a venue for 'think tanks', meetings, task forces and what the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister likes to describe as 'a centre of excellence'. We hope that in the Caribbean and particularly in Barbados in the early part of this new millennium that many 'centres of excellence' will be set up. The one that we have conceptualized is to do with good governance. This is an area in which Barbados has a very large and well respected reputation and we need to burnish it. We also need a place in the Caribbean where scholars can come on sabbatical for six months or a year at a time, where small brain thrust of one kind or another, 'think tanks' of one kind or another would wish to meet.

It occurs to me many years ago that Codrington College would be a perfect location for such an institute or however we may choose to call it in the end. We are pursuing this. It is not easy to find funding but we are pursuing it. They are talking to a number of organisations which we hope will become interested and interested enough to fund it. In respect to Codrington College we have to keep within the four corners of the Codrington Trust but it is the most beautiful location that you could want for that kind of institution. I have had the good fortune to have visited a few in other places of the world which work well, which are well known and which bring a kind of business to Barbados as well. Do not let us forget that again, that yet another initiative coming out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is that we hold Barbados out to the world as a great place for conventions and for meetings.

We have been able to use the Sherbourne Convention Centre to as great advantage as we can. There is still a lot more that we can do to it. I hope that it has been noticed that we are now in the process of cladding the exposed steel at the back of that building.

Just let me say a word about that. It was one of the several unfinished monuments left by the last Administration. As we know, we have taken the view that Government is continuous and that once it is in the interest of the people of Barbados, we virtually have a duty not to lay to waste what we have come and found. The Conference Centre is an interesting building. It is very over-designed in some respect and under-designed in others but we put it to as much use as we can. The truth is that today it is doing more non-conference business than it is doing conference business but it is doing business nonetheless.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Well, it was meant to be many things. It started out as an examination centre, it was once going to be a school of music. The Opposition does not like to hear me say these things but it is doing now more non-conference business than it does conference business and we want to increase the conference business that it does. Unfortunately, it does not have exhibition space and that is difficult when you want to do the kind of incentive convention business that we would like to pursue in Barbados. Certainly for occasions such as weddings and celebrations of one kind or another, Crop Over tents, all kinds of functions, we have been able to attract that business to Sherbourne.

The building itself was unfinished, with a great deal of exposed steel on the southern end. I asked for a costing on two fronts: (1) would you please tell us what it would cost to dismantle the steel which is deteriorating rapidly especially in this climate and (2) would you please give me a costing for cladding the steel so that we can clean 'and protect and put it to future use. We were told that it would cost $1 million to dismantle that steel and make good the gaping hole at the back of Sherbourne. We were told on the other hand that it would cost $1 million to clad it. I did not have any difficulty persuading the Cabinet, in fact, I did not have to persuade them at all. Common sense ruled that it was in our interest that we should clad it and hope to put it to more productive use.

Barbados has held itself out as a Convention Centre and we have consciously gone out there to encourage and to invite as many governmental and non-governmental business in that respect. The private sector as well is responding to this initiative that we have taken. We have taken it to the point and again I go back to a new dimension, a new direction in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Division of Protocol which you will find in any Ministry of Foreign Affairs anywhere in the world is in Barbados, I suspect a little different from its counterpart anywhere else in that it has now been enlargened into a Division of Protocol and Conference Services.

The Government is so intent on the business of promoting Barbados as a diplomatic and convention centre, certainly in the southern Caribbean, that we have forged in the Division of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a unit which managed all of the conferences in which the Government is engaged also workshops, seminars and conventions. We go out there and invite back as many of them as we can. We have had a few major ones and I wish to take the opportunity to laud Barbadians for the warm welcome which they extend when we have these large gatherings here. We hear nothing but praise from conferences for the way in which Barbadians take them to parks and invite them into their homes and try to be as helpful and as warm and welcoming as they can. We have had the summit here with President Clinton a little while back. That was a major undertaking. We heard again nothing but praise for the way and the style with which we entertained the Heads of the Caribbean and the President of the United States. We more recently this year hosted the ACP which was another big one. We hosted a couple of years ago the Caribbean Tourism Conference, its 20th conference. I suspect that was the largest ever in Barbados. I think we hosted about in the end 1 700 people. What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that as soon as you hear that a meeting is going to be in Barbados everybody wants to come because it is in Barbados. They come to Barbados for many reasons. They come because they like the friendliness of Barbadians. They like the security of Barbados. They come because they like the easy communications out of both sides of the Atlantic, daily flights... 2.40 p.m.

Our telecommunications, the new technology, is now at the disposal of any visitor and every visitor to Barbados. They like the hospitality of Barbados. I am discovering now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that tourists are flying from other destinations in the Caribbean to stay overnight here in order to dine in Barbados. The fact that a whole raft of very sophisticated and entertaining eating places, restaurants such as the Cliff and in Holetown we have Olives and we have Champers. There are so many of them. I am not meaning to exclude but I am just thinking of the ones which come to the head straightaway. But people are now flying in from the Grenadines and other destinations to dine in Barbados and all of this is part of our attraction. Our stable political democracy, our commitment to human rights, our commitment to the rule of law and our institutions of good governance, the social partnership in Barbados.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say a few words about this. The social partnership was forged out of adversity. It

was no deliberate policy. We were all in a difficult situation and out of it was born the beginning what we know now as the social partnership. It is not known in other countries. Indeed describing it to a few of my colleagues at the recent ACP meeting which was held here in May one male colleague said, and this is from a close neighbouring country here in the Caribbean, he said "it could not happen in our country". One colleague from a developed country said the same thing and a developed country that has been a long close friend and ally of Barbados, she said "it could not happen in our country". I was forced to opine that that one would have to have a very sophisticated democracy, a very sophisticated quality of governance for the social partnership to work the way that it does in Barbados and it is a credit to everything that is good about Barbados that it has evolved to where it has today.

The private sector, the labour movement, and I am exceptionally pleased that in this Administration we have been able to add the NGO community, and the civil society to this partnership as well, and that all major pieces of legislation, all major issues including this discussion paper are put on the table for consultation with the social partnership. What it has done is that it has taken a great deal of the unnecessary confrontation which small developing countries like ours simply cannot afford. It has taken a lot of the adversarial cut and thrust which again is a luxury that small developing countries like ours cannot afford, out of it. It has made for more participatory, more representational governance in Barbados which is all to the good. It is something which we are recommending to other countries and I hope that this too will become a feature of life in the Caribbean in the early 21st century where Barbados would export this initiative to its friends and neighbours.

Barbados and Africa, Mr. Speaker, Sir - Africa is high on the list of priorities for those countries where Barbados would love to establish a foreign mission but as I have been saying we have to be brutal in the priorities. Establishing a mission is a very costly thing. You have to set up a chancery. You have to invest in a residence. You have to have all of the accoutrements which go with setting up a mission. It has to be properly staffed. We have taken a decision, as I have said, re Geneva.

High on our list is Berlin. We have in Berlin a consulate which we want to upgrade to a full consulate General. Berlin, in our opinion, is going to become very shortly now the capital of Europe again. Indeed I think it will become the centre of Europe again. We continue to maintain a small presence there largely in the personage of the Barbados Tourism Authority. We do not do very well out of Germany now. Indeed no one is doing very well out of Germany now because as Chancellor Kohl is discovering to his cost, it would appear, the price of re-unification is way, way in excess of what the Germans thought it was going to be. They have in my own opinion taken a wise decision to bite the bullet and do it so that by the year 2000 it will have been accomplished and Germany will be on its way up, although it means less disposable income in the hands of the average German and particularly those who would like to visit a place like Barbados as a tourist. That market will come back to us again. I have absolutely no doubt about it and when it does Barbados will be there with it because we have stayed with it. You do not abandon a market simply because it is in downturn. That is the nature of business. But we are thinking too that high priority has to be given to upgrading Berlin.

Africa is a large continent. Some of our colleagues in the Caribbean have already established their presence in different parts of Africa, for example, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. In Barbados we have determined at this time that Southern Africa has perhaps now, more in common with us in many ways - in the way we do business, in the way we govern ourselves, in the way that we view the future of the developing world, particularly in the context of the ACP, and not only Barbados but CARICOM is very seriously considering a joint mission of CARICOM in South Africa which would service Southern Africa. When we speak of Southern Africa, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and those countries which form the southern cone of Africa. It does not mean that we do not want to establish a presence in other parts of Africa, but you have to begin somewhere. President Mandela as you know met very recently with the CARICOM Heads in St. Lucia, just last month, as we were celebrating the 25th Anniversary of CARICOM. He was very plain spoken. As I understood it to be, he was saying to the Heads, you^ know, we very much want to do business with you. A quite* sizeable delegation of Barbadians went with the CARICOM mission in January of this year, to South Africa to look at trading and other possibilities there. There are going to be other missions as well, but President Mandela was saying to the Heads, "We want very much to do business with you. We are very anxious to do business with you, but we too have our priorities." And he outlined for the Heads a priority that you might not even have imagined. He was making the point and he made it at some lengths that potable water in South Africa was a number one priority. 2.50 p.m.

We have Africa on our list of priorities and establishing a mission is very high on the agenda. In the interim, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of inter-activity. At this time as I have been saying, we have been very much working closely in collaboration with Africa as Members of the ACP, as we begin to negotiate LOME V. Also at this time, and as you know Barbados is in the presidency of the ACP, Barbados chairs the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which does excellent work everywhere in the Commonwealth, but

is doing particularly, a great deal of work in Africa. We are doing post-election seminars. We are doing training in terms of parliamentary staff, new parliamentarians and a whole host of other things as well and it is fortuitous that at this time I am sitting in the Chair of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and so our African connections are strengthening because of that.

Barbados also sits on what is known as the CMAG - Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. This is a small group of Foreign Ministers, eight of us who have been given the special assignment by the Commonwealth Heads to monitor human rights, rule of law abuses, breakdowns in good governance, that is democratic parliamentary governance which is the hallmark of the Commonwealth membership and in that regard sonic African countries are foremost on the agenda of CMAG. Nigeria is number one, and we are deeply concerned of the difficulties which exist there now. The Commonwealth Secretariat which services the CMAG is very busy at work seeking to bring whatever assistance it can to the process of normalisation.

In Sierra Leone and in The Gambia, I am happy to say that CMAG and the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, all of which Barbados is a member, a lot of work has been done over the past year to 18 months to bring back a certain order of democratic governance to those countries. Some new matters will come to the CMAG agenda from Africa and some from countries other than Africa. But in these ways we are pursuing a policy in Africa, which will see a greater collaboration in the new century than we have seen in this one and I am hoping that the new Pan African Commission will be able to bring its good deliberation, its recommendations which will help in this task of widening Barbados horizons in Africa. In Asia and the Pacific, we have to be minding our business as well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier in every niche and every marketplace there is market share for Barbados out there. And we hear so much of the tigers...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They are showing a little wear and tear at the moment, but I am sure that in the Far East they will recover from the financial crisis and other crises, environmental not being the least of them which plague the Far East. Again, it is a matter of economics. It is a matter of cost. Barbados cannot at this time afford to put a mission in Tokyo. As much as we would like, if not in Tokyo, somewhere in the Middle East to make our presence known and felt.

We have been using our Honorary Consuls in many countries of the world where we do not have a presence or a formal mission. We have been using our Honorary Consuls as part of the outreach to lengthen the reach of Barbados into countries with which we have a trading relationship no matter how small, even though in most cases, the balance of trade is in another country's favour rather than our own. We have to make a beginning somewhere.

And so in the Middle East, we are going to be and in the Far East and in the Pacific.

In the early 21 century, Sir, I think we are going to see a wider network of Honorary Consuls. I have quite recently taken a Paper to the Cabinet, recommending that with such slender resources as we have both human and financial, we are going to have to look at new ways of pursuing Barbados' interests abroad. I am going to be looking for Barbadians and there are many of them out there. Barbadians are everywhere and it would serve Barbadians at home well to remember that sometimes.

Barbadians are everywhere enjoying a good life and a good quality of life in other countries and making a contribution in other countries. They are in prestigious institutions and wherever we can find Barbadians and where we cannot find Barbadians, we will find other people whom we will invite, by virtue of some special status that we will •confer upon them to track a particular issue or to track a particular subject which we need to be doing, but we just do not have all of the resources to do so from home base or even from our Missions. Other countries are pursuing this as part of a new format, a new way of doing business in the foreign services. Foreign policy is taking on a more businesslike appearance in many parts of the world. Indeed, in some areas there is very much now - it is almost in vogue where one plays down the strictly Consular and other such duties - a greater focus on the economic and the other initiatives which Foreign Ministries will be undertaking more and more in the future.

So that in a manner of speaking, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the world is our parish and Barbadians, I am happy to say, are tooling themselves up and we are going to be looking to put more and more people into the pipeline to enable us to take fullest advantage.

We have allowed for too many years, language for instance, to become a barrier. Happily in Barbados today we have, at the Barbados Community College a language laboratory which is second to none in the Caribbean, and which is offering a multiplicity of languages now including German, Chinese, Spanish, French and Portuguese. This is just part of the armoury, ^ome of the tools which will help to give us entry to these marketplaces. The Ministry of Education is giving high priority to this. And I am hoping that the Minister will speak to these matters because she can more volubly than I. 3.00 p.m.

Her proposal for EduTech 2000, Mr. Speaker, Sir, needs to be fully understood by Barbadians too as another of the tools which will allow us access and easier entry into these marketplaces across the world. The beginning of it is there and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we are very supportive of the concepts of EduTech 2000. Indeed, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Barbados there is a current boast - I hope that we ate going to make it good - that by the end of 1999 it is likely to be the first paperless Ministry in Barbados. That is important.

In Foreign Affairs you cannot always wait until tomorrow or Monday to get the message. Even now, and I hope that video conferences will soon come, Mr. Speaker, but even now from time to time in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sitting down at my desk in Barbados, I can meet with our Heads of Mission by virtue of teleconferencing. When video conferencing arrives it will make it even easier for us to be speaking and dialoguing, conferring with an even larger number of people, not only our missions, but our Honorary Consulates can be pulled into this.

The Heads of Missions as you know are meeting here and we are hoping that rather than meet every other year when video conferencing arrives we may be able to meet with them every year. This is going to be a way of doing business.

We are working in the country team collaboratively with the Ministry of International Trade and Business. We are working with the Ministry of Culture now. Our Minister of Culture has asked to be brought back on board and we have welcomed her. The Ministry of Domestic Trade, Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Tourism, of course. From time to time, other Ministries will feel the need to approach us. The Ministry of International Transport, I imagine, can be one of those, will feel the need from time to time to approach the country team to say this is something which is new which is different, this is a particular idea a concept that we want to be promoting, find room for us in your country team. That is how it should be. What I am trying to describe therefore, Mr. Speaker, is a Ministry of Foreign Affairs administering a foreign policy more as a coordinator, as a facilitator. It is for us to be tracking what is happening out there in the region and in the global marketplace and to pull it down to say to this Ministry or that in this regard we can be useful to you.

It is an initiative taken in Barbados, this business of bringing an economic component so to speak into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which I would not go so far as to say that it is taken as a model but we have noted that other countries are now seeking to move in this direction. So in a new global environment, in a new century, we are of the view in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Ministry itself will need to look differently, be differently configured as we have grown accustomed in the 20th century, and will work in a different way. Already it works in a different way from all other Ministries in Barbados. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to operate on a 24-hour basis. There is a time difference, five hours sometimes of the year, six hours others, for instance, between Barbados and Brussels. We cannot say to Brussels we cannot deal with you because it is the middle of the night. It is not how business is done today and that has to change and is in the process of change in Barbados.

In a manner of speaking, I like to think that maybe Barbados is indeed leading the way in this regard. We are now in the process of putting up - and the Heads of Missions are here, I know that you cannot see them from your seat, Mr. Speaker, but in this week of consultation this has been high on our agenda - a reconfigured, restructured Ministry of Foreign Affairs. How can we stretch our dollar? How can we stretch our grasp? How can we stretch our outreach to the greatest advantage? We are in the process of putting together a blue'print for foreign relations in the 21st century which will of course have to get the support of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Civil Service. The Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter is saying "same person". We well know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that sometimes the Minister of Finance does not agree with the Minister of the Civil Service and sometimes neither of them agrees with the Prime Minister. But we struggle in this regard. When it comes to resources, financial and human, we struggle in this regard.

We want to put up a blue print. It is a technique that Prime Ministers employ. I am saying that for the benefit of the Member for St. Lucy. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious document which we want to put up and hope that it will meet with approval because what we are saying is that this at a minimum is how we think we have to go to service all of those needs of Barbados in the early 21st century. These are the linkages at the domestic level which we have to establish.

For instance, only yesterday afternoon, the discussion centred at one point on the fact that we now need - the Attorney General may or may not be pleased to hear - a legal officer. In fact, we need a legal unit.

When we think of the number of treaties, bilateral investment treaties, and the number of documents which require legal drafting, and the legal advice, we absolutely have to have a small legal unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Let me give you an example that everybody will understand, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

A couple of years ago when what is commonly known as the Shiprider Agreement was presented to us I said to the Attorney General, "You are going to have to carry this because I do not have the legal resources at the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs to do it." Indeed, he did it. He has done it exceedingly well and he has now made himself internationally an authority in this regard and he continues to do that work.

You only have to look at the legislation which has passed through this House over the past decades and this spans one administration to another. There is no political partisanship in these matters. When you look at the legislation that comes through this Parliament and you look at the underside of it, as legislators in here we have to do that, you will get a clear idea of the requirement because quite a bit of it has its genesis within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3.10p.m.

There are a number of Treaties and other such that we have to monitor on a continuous basis out of the United Nations alone that will require specialised legal advice, and that is another area in which there is a dearth of expertise in the Caribbean.

Let me give you an example, Sir. At this time I am trying to consolidate tourism legislation and some new legislation as well to bring one Tourism Act to this Parliament. Tourism is the major foreign exchange earner. It is the major sector of our economy and in respect of the legislation we are so far behind the game that in some respects we are not even in it.

I could not find in the Caribbean a single attorney who was specialising in tourism or even tourism related matters. There are many specialties and sub-specialties coming out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, coming out of the Ministry of International Trade and Business, even the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will tell you, coming out of the Ministry of Culture where we have to put people in the pipeline. We have to train people if we are going to be able to service our domestic needs not to mention service our organisations outside of Barbados.

Imagine that we are negotiating FTAA in the Americas, LOME in Europe and neither at our Mission in Washington nor our Mission in Brussels do we have a legal officer. It is as reality. We seek to service that from home and the Attorney General's Chambers is dealing with all other matters in Barbados and we were looking at that.

We were looking yesterday in consultation with the Heads, at the need very soon now, if not immediately, of a Unit within Foreign Affairs which will deal with Marine Affairs. It is no small area. It does not only deal with the environment, it deals with fisheries. It deals with something that I mentioned earlier this morning to have the limitation now of all marine boundaries and so on. There is a plethora of matters which require the attention of highly specialised people.

We cannot wait for them to come through the system in the general Civil Service of Barbados. We cannot afford to wait even to recruit them in due process in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is clear to us, and I have intimated this to the Cabinet of Barbados already, that there are going to be more and more occasions when we will just have to go out there, find the expertise, preferably if we could find a Barbadian, but if we cannot we have to find the expertise and hire it, buy it in, however we can, at the same time, put younger people in the pipeline so that in the year 2005, in the year 2010 we will have this at our fingertips.

We are struggling to do this mammoth job, Mr. Speaker, with next to no resources in some respects, and none in others. There are some areas where we cannot pursue at all simply because we do not have the bodies. We do not have the money, which brings me to make an observation which I have made in here before, but I could not sit down without making that observation in this debate.

Several years ago in the early 1990s when many countries were in recession here in the Caribbean not excluding Barbados, many CARICOM countries in an effort to keep their foreign Missions abroad intact, rather than cut back staff, rather than downsize, sold their properties abroad, they sold residences, they sold Missions in order to keep their foreign services going, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica did that.

Barbados was the only country which took the retrograde step of downsizing its foreign service. It was done in one fell swoop one night in the style of a Saturday night massacre. With the stroke of a pen a whole bunch of people were recalled. It was not a wise move because Saturday night massacres, Mr. Speaker, happen on one night. To retool and bring back up to strength the Barbados Foreign Service is taking the better part of 10 years and we are suffering for it.

No Minister of Finance, and I do not care which side of the House, is going to be able to put back in place those people who were recalled at one fell swoop by one stroke of the pen. We are not replacing the same people but what I am saying is that we have large gaps. We have small Missions where nobody can afford to get ill and some of them cannot even afford to get vacations.

The whole question of remuneration of the Foreign Service is going to be discussed by the Heads tomorrow. The Minister of State with responsibility for the Civil Service and his Permanent Secretary will come and join us in our discussions because that is another sore subject.

The Heads of Mission, and I am not saying this simply because they can hear me, Mr. Speaker, because I have said

it many times when they were not here to hear me say it, are the most underpaid and under-remunerated in the Caribbean. Even though in this Administration we have on no less than three separate occasions sought to upgrade them, when compared to their counterparts in the rest of the Caribbean, they are still grossly and gravely underpaid.

The Foreign Service is part of the general Civil Service of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, but there .are aspects of the way in which the Foreign Service conducts itself which differs from the rest of the general service. I think that in modern Barbados, bearing in mind the task at hand, that we a*e going to have to look at a differently structured Foreign Service which will treat its Missions abroad in a different way than it currently does.

There are some ridiculous situations in which our Heads of Mission find themselves. You know what we have to spend precious time discussing over this past few days, Mr. Speaker, that no Head of Mission of Barbados abroad can carry a credit card. You cannot carry your counterpart to lunch and flash a credit card unless it is your own personal credit card. If you are doing it on the Government's behalf, if you have to buy a new fridge or a new stove, you cannot do it. It is so structured that you have only one person in the Mission who is described as the authorised representative who is the Foreign Service Officer who has those powers. In modern business you cannot operate like that. It is ridiculous, it is embarrassing and it is backwards. These things have to change. I mean, that it is almost at the level of trivia and nobody would believe it. The same thing happens with Ministers but I would not worry with them today, Mr. Speaker, because as we know, we are the workers with the worst conditions in Barbados. If we want our Foreign Service officers abroad, our Heads of Missions abroad to be able to deal on eye ball to eye ball basis with their counterparts, we have to put them in a position so that they can. We cannot put them at a disadvantage. In the world of diplomacy, in the world of international trade and business, people do not have any patience and any time for that kind of trivial inconvenience that can make life in a Mission sometimes nearly impossible. Those things have to change. 3.20p.m.

We still have a situation in our Foreign Service, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Minister of Finance knows this because every year in January when we sit down with him in the pre-estimates exercise, I make the point that a kettle is a capital object. You do not have a little contingency vote that if a kettle burns out in a residence or in a Mission that you can buy one. It is a capital object and you have to come to Parliament to get $26 to buy a kettle. These are irritants that Heads of Missions have to be bothering themselves about when they need to be getting on with the business of promoting Barbados as a premier business and leisure centre. When they need to be getting on with the business of foreign policy and foreign affairs as the business of Barbados. All of these things have got to change. I am only dealing with those because although it may appear trivial to you, Mr. Speaker, they can sometimes represent a major irritant.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know the problems of kettles.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would have a very sensitive appreciation of these difficulties which bedevil Missions abroad.

I have brought a ministerial statement to this House way back in January of last year when there was a lot of public comment about how we provide working conditions for our officers who serve outside of Barbados. We have refurbished Missions, we have brought new residences where they were none before. As you know, we have set up a new Consulate General at Miami which is working very well. In fact, in a manner of speaking for the Caribbean and Latin America, Mr. Speaker, I think you will discover that in the early 21st century, Miami will become the business and travel and leisure hub in the way that New York used to be in the 1950s and 1960s and 1970s.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, we set up a full Consulate General at Miami but we never had a residence and so we had to buy one. I would image that we are going to maintain a Mission in Miami for the whole of the next millennium the way that things are now configured in North America. We are told that Miami is going to become the largest hub in the world. It is happening already* Mr. Speaker, that people are going to start overflying Miami to get away from the congestion there. You see Orlando, you see Atlanta, Fort Lauderdale, people are overflying Miami out of those surrounding and several other airports as well. But as a business centre, that services the Caribbean and Latin America, Miami is continuing to expand.

It made economic sense that instead of renting and making somebody else rich that we should buy and make an investment in a residence. Toronto is the business centre of Canada and we have rented there. You know how many people we have made rich with rent. We finally decided to invest and buy a residence there in Toronto. We have moved our Mission so that it is more centrally located in Toronto. That has been very well received not only by business Toronto with whom we are doing a lot of trading but by Barbadians who live there as well.

I am not going to go into that in any large detail. I am not pitching the debate at that level but I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the whole form and structure of the Foreign Service is bound to change in the years to come. We cannot, it will be physically impossible for us to service all

of the requirements of a modern Ministry of Foreign Affairs continuing in the same clothes, so to speak, of the 20th century. As I say, we are in the process of crafting a blue print which will identify our priorities, strategies upon which we must be engaged in pursuance of those priorities and the financial, human and other resources which will be required for us to do so.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I hope that I have been able to sketch out the big picture for Barbadians in respect of where our foreign relations are. I hope that the Discussion Paper has been able also to sketch out a little bit for Honourable Members how the big picture is configured and it is for us now to determine where Barbados wants itself positioned that respect.

Mr. Speaker, life is about choice and life is about change. Change is ongoing, it is inevitable, it is part of the human condition. I believe that in my lifetime Barbadians are learning to accept change with more equilibrium than hitherto and that is a sign of maturity as a nation. Choice, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is ours exclusively and it is for us to decide whether we want to go forward and find our place knowing that it is not going to be easy - nobody said it was going to be easy - knowing that it is going to be more competitive, knowing that nobody is going to be out there beating the drums for us or making life easy for us. They are going to be out there disputing every step of the way with us. I think that we have as a nation, as a country, the courage of our convictions. I think that we have a commitment in respect of the way that we want to go. I think that we have strength of character, strength of purpose as a nation to carry us forward. We have to be hopeful that the choices we make will be the correct ones, that they will serve the purpose that we mean them to serve and that we make them secure in the knowledge that those who come after us will have a foundation on which to go forward such as that set for us by those who came before us. 3.30p.m.

It is a continuum, Mr. Speaker, and we have our small contribution to make. We must not become too giddy with it all and think that ours is the only contribution and we must not overstate the contribution that we have to make but particularly as parliamentarians we are endowed with the duty to make a contribution which is going to make a major difference now. It must make a major difference for Barbados, a modern, vibrant, confident, Barbados in the world of 21 st century.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

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

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

Before the Honourable Member begins, please let me remind this House this Honourable Member has unlimited time according to the rules of this House. The Honourable Member has however, 2 hours and 48 minutes television time according to our mutual arrangements.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, we have listened since this morning to the Honourable Member for the City as she implemented a debate which the circumstances had led the community to anticipate for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, I recall that soon after the Honourable Member became the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs she indicated, I believe, in a debate in this House that she would, "hifthe road running". I think that having hit the road the Honourable Member stumbled and I do not wish to say fell, but certainly after today's debate one cannot say she is running. I listened very carefully to hear what the achievements over the 4-year period of the Honourable Member's stewardship could be and unless the Honourable Member is waiting for the windup of the debate to put these achievements before this Honourable House and by extension this honourable country, we are going to have to get a research unit to examine where these achievements had occurred.

I do not say that with any alacrity or with any joy because in some ways if one is not able to see the achievements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the naked eye then it creates a different kind of problem in the njinds .of the people of Barbados who listened at the end to what the Honourable Member said remained to be done, bearing in mind that one of us on this Side would have to be doing those things not long from now.

Sir, in the context of a Foreign Affairs debate, I think there are a number of young people in this country who would need, if they are to understand what this is all about - there are those who would be asking in the words of a famous song, "Tell me what is happening, what's the fuss" - to be taken back a few steps so they can at least understand some of the contributions which are made and which hopefully will be made in this debate. I think we have to go back to the beginning.

In preparation for this debate, Sir, I took the pleasure of re-reading the debate that this House in 1966 experienced when the whole question of the need for Barbados to have a foreign policy at all was being discussed in its generic way, that is to say, the independence debate. I think it is there we have to go back to if we are reviewing the foreign policy so we can put it in perspective.

Mr. Speaker, that was a debate when the parliamentarians of that day had the opportunity to state their position on the framework that was going to be the bedrock for any foreign policy that Barbados would have and Mr. Speaker it is instructive to read that debate again. I have no intention of quoting from it or quoting at length from it but I invite Honourable Members and the public at large, if they can, to refresh themselves on this debate, to refresh themselves on the debate that consumed the whole country at that time when a preponderance of view prevailed against the relatively small group in the initial stages who had the courage to say, let Barbados go forth and let Barbados be a country in its own right.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad that this debate is coming after the Nevisian exercise because I should not have wished in any way to influence the outcome of that vote and communications being what they are these days, you never can tell what might have happened had I been reminding people that many of the arguments that were used against the breakaway of Nevis were arguments which were heard in their pristine severity during the period when Barbados sought to become independent.

There were many people in Barbados and there may be some even now today who did not believe that it would be possible that 30 years later we could be meeting in a Parliament constituted the way it is constituted to discuss Something called Heads of Missions and that the Minister is able to say with impunity but with truth that some of the finest persons fill the positions of Heads of Mission for Barbados today and I might add by extension and over the last 30 years. That that has occurred is itself a matter for rejoicing and a matter for serious consideration and we are not going to understand a Barbados Foreign Policy unless we understand the origin of that foreign policy in the courage, the indomitable courage of one man and his team. I once heard it described as one man and his dog, but one man and his team, who were prepared to take on all comers and say Barbados can do it.

Now, Sir, I speak of no less a person than the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. We cannot discuss foreign policy for Barbados without drawing his name into the debate and for being at the centre of the debate. The reason is that he had the knowledge because more than anyone else in his time he would have been aware, because of his fortune perhaps, but certainly because of his travels and his exposure that up until that time there had been countries smaller than Barbados that had benefitted from something called sovereignty. And even today as we speak, and I read recently in one of the journals with which we are blessed in this country, something to the contrary, but in truth the Vatican is considered to be a sovereign state and its population is less than a thousand, but therein lies a tale. It is the constitution of that population will allow people from far and wide to feel that they are capable of conducting foreign affairs, or any affairs, while people like us, and certainly people like those who were in existence as the Government thirty years ago, would be incapable of having something called a foreign policy. But, Sir, there was this man and he had the foresight, he had the vision, he had the will but above all, he had the commitment to ensure that this thing would work. 3.40 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he himself, in the course of that debate, made a statement which I necessarily must copy for reasons which will become apparent as this debate unfolds. If you have a trumpet and it is your trumpet and you guard the mouth piece, no one will blow it for you. You have to blow it yourself. And having, myself been there, more or less at the beginning, soon after the beginning, I feel able to speak especially to the younger generation of Barbadians at a level that history requires about those things and the way they happen and the joy and the privileges and the pleasures and the results.

Mr. Speaker, I am not talking here now about my being at the heart of policy to decide that we were going to become independent. I was still in the minds and eyes of many people, relatively fledging, being in the twenties at that time and in those days being in the twenties was fledging, not like today where we have many who, just over twenty, do not consider themselves fledging.

But, Sir, when the whole question of the independence of Barbados was finally settled in 1966,1 had the privilege of being one of the first persons born in Barbados to be appointed to be a member of the Foreign Service staff. I think Jean Holder and myself were the first two overseas appointments. In fact a year before independence, I had been appointed to the office of the then Development Board, which became the Industrial Development Corporation and the Tourism Board was created in 1965 and we had started the creation of our representation in New York City and in London where there had been a Welfare Office. Jean Holder, I believe, we fall into this new status which came with independence. And so at the United Nations in 1966, the first delegation to put a foreign policy by Barbados into the wider community saw some of us sitting on the delegation. I happened to be a member of that delegation.

I say without fear of any contradiction that that has to be one of the proudest moments in anyone's life. It is a moment which cannot be repeated. I am sorry that there are other persons who will -not be able to have such an experience but I can let you share in that experience of seeing the first Prime Minister of Barbados go to the podium of the United Nations, of sitting in that room which on that day was packed to capacity including a number of Barbadians who had come from far and wide in what is called the diaspora to witness that historic occasion and to hear the Foreign Policy of Barbados put to the world.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things subsequently which I have always found amusing is that the very clear call to a Foreign Policy by the Prime Minister of the day - he happened to be the Minister of External Affairs so it was perfectly proper - I lived to hear the centre piece of that policy not long thereafter ridiculed; but I have subsequently heard it reinvigorated, reiterated and I am seeing other countries of greater capacity adopt exactly the same stance in their foreign policy. I speak of the famous statement, "friends of all, and satellites of none."

Mr. Speaker, there are practitioners in international relations and other similar esoteric studies in and out of Barbados who have tried to analyse that statement. The serious ones have come to recognise that it was the clearest statement a society of this size could make in all the circumstances to indicate a form of non-alignment. I say a form of non-alignment, Sir, because we would come to have to make a decision and one of the most non-aligned groups I have witnessed in the international community, the so-called non-alignment movement, was a very interesting non-alignment movement, but I would not take time out for that now, Sir. But, that statement which was made in those days, stated in essence that Barbados would seek to have friendly relations with every conceivable state in the world and Barbados would also seek to ensure that to the best of its ability, it would not become a pawn, a satellite or a peon of any country in the world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I used to work in the United Nations, when I used to participate for Barbados in the United Nations at the level of delegation, there is a country which will remain nameless now, and we used to play a game that however our neighbour to the North would vote, we knew that that country, no matter what the issue, would vote the same way. And after a while we used to suggest to that country that it should give some thought to operating in a manner which the Minister has just described except that communications had not been so far advanced where that country could have remained in its capitaj and ask someone to press the button to vote for it.

The time would come, Mr. Speaker, when Barbados would be tested, when, in the United Nations we would be required to take a position of morality and on that occasion, Mr. Speaker, Barbados took its position and I recall very well, the then Deputy Permanent Representative who was leading the delegation getting a set of instructions from Bridgetown and saying to the then Permanent Secretary in all the circumstances if that is the instruction we have, then I will have to ask to be relieved of my position. And he said, "but what about the person next to you?" and he turned to me and I nodded and he said I had asked him to say the same thing for me. We subsequently got a better set of direction from Headquarters. 3.50 p.m.

I will say in passing, Mr. Speaker, that many years later when I held the position now of Foreign Minister of Barbados, I had the privilege of hearing one of the officers from the same United Nations Mission responding in exactly the same way to the Foreign Minister, indicating that the instructions which had come from Barbados were not in keeping with the morality of the position which Barbados had taken in the past and that they would like the instructions to be reviewed. I will say in passing, Sir, that it happened exactly as the officers in New York anticipated.

I am saying that, Sir, to make the point that the Minister had a gap in her presentation which I think is a very unfortunate occurrence in our foreign policy utterances. To hear the Minister and the Government talk about the country team you would believe that this was an invention which was located for the first time in the brains of the Barbados Labour Party. You would believe that the country team, if you hear the hoop-la that is made of the country team and how countries around the world are now rushing to borrow this concept and implement in order to get a more efficacious foreign service and foreign policy you would never believe that this was the very fundamental policy position from the very beginning of foreign affairs in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we went so far that there was once created in New York an entity which could only be described as a hydra-headed monster. It was called the Barbados Mission at New York. So intent was the Government of the day on integrating all of the services that there was created, and it is forgotten - the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would not forget that, because it was a bone of contention between officers in New York - when headquarters created something called the Barbados Mission at New York. I said it was a monster, Sir, because it had to be pointed out eventually that it had not been done in international affairs before and that the powers that be who grant status could find no precedent for it and eventually it had to resort to the more traditional form of representation.

It was during that early day when it was decided that representation from the IDC and representation from the Tourism Board would all become consular officers and would all have consular status. I find it difficult to understand how the same entity that is advising at the level of officialdom would not have drawn to the attention of the Minister that the country team concept is only warmed over soup. It is just a different name for the same concept that has always been the policy of the country.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member says it is drinkable soup now, Sir. I am never one to question the Honourable Member in either her culinary tastes or her ability in certain areas in the kitchen. If she says it is

drinkable soup she knows who will drink it; but breadfruit soup is also drinkable soup.

Suffice it to say that the country team is not something new and we should not be putting out to the young people of this country, leading the young people of this country to believe that a Daniel has come to judgment and that new policies and new innovative ways of doing things have been created when, in fact, all one is doing is putting a gloss on what exists. It is not a matter in which one is angry, it is one in which one wishes to have truth told, if we are going to have the young people of this country take up arms and follow those who have gone before.

The country team, therefore, is not something that I am going to allow anybody to foist on the intellects of the younger people in this society. Suffice it to say, it is a system with which we agree. Incidentally, let me correct one error and I wish to believe that the Minister made that error genuinely, if you can make an error genuinely, while she was in the heat of winding up.

The decision to establish a Consulate General at Miami was made in 1994 before the general elections. In 1994, the Honorary Consul was upgraded to Consul General. The Honorary Consul lost his status as a permanent resident and became a consular officer and, indeed, after the Government changed there were tremendous personal difficulties which that officer suffered because he had made the commitment, after persuasion, that he should shift from one position to the other. Fairness requires that I go no further in that regard, but it highlights one of the differences between this Administration and that administration for those who ask what is the difference between us in our foreign policy.

One glaring difference is this. For us, foreign policy is a matter of the person as opposed to the thing. We are concerned to personalise our foreign policy such that the citizens of Barbados outside of Barbados and by inference the ones inside are at the centre of our foreign policy. Trade and aid and all the other things run a close second.

We therefore have always thought that a humane foreign policy as applied to those who worked for us as well as for those for whom we worked is the only way in which small countries can have a credible foreign policy. It is a people oriented foreign policy and that is why when Barbados became independent and started to have officers overseas they were very careful to choose the officers carefully, without reference to their stripes. Now I heard the Minister as she was closing give an impression and I think I am right that the Minister gave an impression that there was what she called a Saturday night massacre. Now a Saturday night massacre is usually associated with a venemous decision by one group to eliminate another group. That is what that phrase means to those of us who have been accustomed to reading that kind of literature.

The Saturday night massacre to which the Honourable Member appeared to be referring would have been the decision made by the Government of the day under circumstances that are well known and well documented to reduce its expenditure within the levels that had been mandated. On the one hand we have had utterances from that Side about the social services and indeed during her speech today the Honourable Member was able to say truthfully that during the hard times neither Government of Barbados has cut the social services as compared with other countries in similar circumstances.

Now, Sir, when the Government of the day makes the decision that it would cut back its foreign service as opposed to cutting back its social service we live to hear (he new Minister of Foreign Affairs who has glided in on an easy wave saying that it was a Saturday night massacre. Mr. Speaker, I take exception to that. I did not rise on a point of order because when we have these broadcasts we try as much as possible to avoid intervention and interruption. It was a decision made not in cold blood but a decision of warmth. It was a decision that required not only little people but indeed it required Heads of Missions to change their lifestyle.

The Honourable Member can now with hindsight, twenty-twenty vision, say that that ought not to have been done. When I became the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I reviewed the same file which I am sure the Honourable Member looked at, my first reaction was in fact that it ought not to have been done. I, perhaps, was in a better position than the Honourable Member because I knew all the facts. At least I allowed myself to know all the facts. I studied the facts and I was able to understand, in consultation with those who were there when the decisions were made, why it was necessary. But the Honourable Member herself should have said when she said it would take 10 years to recover, that when she came to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs she found the process already in place. 4.00 p.m.

The Honourable Member must not let this debate go forth with any impression that she has started from scratch in any direction. What she found, for example, in the question of the restructuring of the Foreign Service, these are matters that just before this Honourable Member left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were having active considerations. They had gone beyond active consideration. She would have found that restoration in the Mission that had been hit the most had already begun. She would have found, notwithstanding all that had happened, that expansion in other areas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already been put in place.

The Minister has an obligation to herself to familiarise herself with all the facts and four years after being the

Minister there is no excuse that I will accept for her not to be able to articulate these facts in the manner to which she has become accustomed when she is articulating outside of Barbados, with which we do not disagree because on this Side we share the view that the foreign policy of the country must be conducted by the Foreign Minister.

There are many people who come up to us and say, the Minister made a statement from New York. We have not heard anything from you. I take the time to explain to them, as Cameron Tudor had taken the time many years before to explain to people, that it is improper, unacceptable and certainly undesirable that if a Foreign Minister makes a statement of policy outside the country that somebody should be countering that statement unless, of course, it is a matter of life and death, or a matter of such grave morality that to do otherwise would be equally heinous.

The Foreign Minister knows that from time to time when a particularly outrageous statement has been made that we have had no difficulty drawing to her attention that we did not agree with that statement. In here, in this Honourable Chamber, we have, whenever time permitted, put the case for this Side on any issue on which we divide.

Mr. Speaker, again there are journalists, perhaps because of their youth, in this country who believe that having the Heads of Missions in Barbados this last couple of weeks is innovative, is new. Now, Sir, they did not come to that *sui generis.* They came to that because the hype that had been put on it had left a lacuna in the area of credibility. Therefore, they have been able to come to the conclusion, unwittingly perhaps, that this is new.

I do not hold it against you if they come to the wrong conclusion, but I hold it against you that you have not corrected them. I believe that the Minister has a duty to tell the country the truth almost from the beginning of the establishment of the Foreign Affairs, External Affairs before Foreign Affairs as it is now. It was understood that every year there would be a review of foreign policy.

Now, Sir, it started off with a bang but, as the Honourable Member herself said, Ministers of Finance are very nervous about expenditure that cannot be accounted for in jobs and in concrete. So on an occasion when the Minister of Finance, who on that occasion happened to be a Minister of Finance in the Government of the Barbados Labour Party, came to the conclusion that to have a Heads of Missions' Conference was in excess of his understanding of expenditure that year, there was no Heads of Missions' Conference in Barbados.

That Minister, having observed that the Heads of Government were not meeting at the time, and had not met for very long, saw no reason if the Heads of the Caribbean were not meeting why he should have the Heads of his Foreign Ministry meeting. These are facts. Unfortunately, Sir, that former Prime Minister is now not with us - he was Minister of Finance as well - and so Mr. Adams would not be able to put his view on what I am saying. Perhaps, some person will be able to verify that.

The fact is, though, that there were subsequent Heads of Missions' meetings and when those Heads of Missions' meetings were held, they included the entire Civil Service. In the Ministry of Foreign Service there must be papers that are prepared by other Ministries. Indeed, there are papers that were prepared by other Ministries for previous Heads of Missions' meetings.

I hope, Sir, that this one will prove more fruitful than some of those I had the pleasure of observing where some of the best, and you will have to give the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this, that down through the years some of the finest presentations, some of the finest synopses, some of the finest ideas have been put together, courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As long as they do not include spending any money, they have enjoyed and endured wide and happy attribution. But if they include spending any money, and I hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs to be saying that there will be the case of spending money, we can rest assured that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is unlikely to be too enthusiastic, unless someone is able to show him where the funding will come from.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to disagree with the Honourable Member that there is need for some fundamental change in some aspects of the Foreign Service because that is what we had set in motion up to August 1994. That is what the Honourable Member found and I have no quarrel with her if she is implementing some of what she found. If she has improved on it, I have no difficulty with that. I do have a difficulty again, Sir, with the concept that to review foreign policy is something innovative. 4.10p.m.

Again, Sir, you would not accuse the Minister of saying / that this is the first time there is going to be a review of foreign policy in Barbados. That would be inaccurate. If I would say that to this House, Sir, Your Honour would immediately stop me to find out if I was telling the truth. You also cannot say that the impression has gone abroad in Barbados that this is the first time there has been a review of foreign policy.

The colour yellow appears to be a common colour for the foreign Ministry, Sir. They like yellow apparently. I think it is in keeping with the colour of the flag.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That it is in keeping with the Democratic Labour Party colours... I do not wish to be taken away from my main thesis here. It is a fact that they are also in keeping with Democratic Labour Party colours.

Mr. Speaker, in 1986, one of our distinguished sons became the Foreign Minister. He caused to be done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a document which reviewed the foreign policy of Barbados up to that time. It is a document which I would make bold to recommend be reprinted and updated. Again, Sir, the skills are there. It only needs to bring forward some of what is in the booklet. It should be required reading certainly in colleges and schools because here the story is told, unvarnished; not as if I tell it. If I tell it, I would feel bound to talk about the heroes of the first five years of Independence.

Sir, it confirms that we did have a review of foreign policy. If the former Senator Wickham is listening to this debate, he would be pleased to remember that it was he, Senator Wickham, in the Other Place, who introduced a debate in agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the day, and he said so in the debate. It can be found in Hansard in the Senate Debates, February 11- December 16, 1987. Those debates have a foreign policy debate that is not unlike the one which the Minister has tried to initiate today. I have no quarrel with the Minister reviewing foreign policy. That was 1987, that was about ten years ago and I think that it is not unreasonable or unacceptable that we should review foreign policy and have a foreign policy debate. Again, if one reads what Cameron Tudor had to say in that debate, one hears the same kind of admonitions that come from the Foreign Ministry from time to time that the people of this country need to become knowledgeable and involved in the foreign policy of this country.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that as Mr. Barrow said in the first speech to the United Nations, that we in the Democratic Labour Party do not see a difference between our domestic policy and our foreign policy. As he said, there are the obverse and reverse sides of the same coins. It makes no sense to have a foreign policy that is not directed towards upliftment of the people of Barbados. It makes no sense to have a foreign policy that is unconcerned about how the people are living in Richmond Gap or in Lakes Folly or in Bush Hall. The foreign policy of this country is useless if it is only to satisfy the psychic rewards of a few elites as opposed to finding a methodology by which the resources of this country can be better deployed, can be better increased, so that the quality of life for which we continue to yearn for all of our people can become something that is possible in their lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, only those persons who are out in the snow and the rain toiling, who get the benefits of being called diplomats but who live a fairly rough life most of the time - most of the time not all of the time. Do not let the Minister give you the impression that the fellows do not have a drink anymore. It is a required part of their duty to have a drink. Sir, they can always say that such drinking as it is done, is done as part of their duty to their country. Some of them might wish to have a higher sense of duty than others but that is just by the way, Sir... It is still a fact that those who toil for the country outside of Barbados work hard generally speaking and they have a fairly rough life even though it is not as rough as the vast majority whom they leave behind.

The sense of purpose which a foreign diplomat, that is a Barbados diplomat who is working overseas... I make a distinction between the ones who are living overseas and the ones who are centred here because we have the phenomenon where they are some people in this House who are being designated as diplomats and I have a problem with that. I understand 'special envoy' but this concept now of embracing Members of Parliament into the diplomatic staff is something which the Minister had better revise in her head. Certainly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if they could hear me, I would tell them that they should try and get the Minister to deviate from that concept. It is not possible in the system that we have, but that is another matter.

The* ones who are working outside cannot fail to understand what their duty is to the people whom they have left in Barbados. I do not mean the people like us, I mean the people that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, there is a distinct difference. It is true that the Honourable Members in this House are not overpaid. In fact, they are not well paid, that is true, but there is not one of them in here who is hungry. There is not one of them who would have any problem of where they will sleep tonight or at least how they will sleep tonight.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, if I am lying on anybody, I apologise.

Sir, there are some people in our society for whom this question of poverty and where they are going to sleep, this question of how they are going to feed their children, how they are going to get the children to school when school opens, how they are going to get all the things they require, the question of a roof over their heads, is still an issue which we wish the diplomats and the rest of us never to lose sight of because that is the only reason why we should have a foreign policy. Our foreign policy is useless, it is sterile, unless it is rooted in an understanding and a deep philosophical belief that it is for the people for whom we work.

Certainly, Sir, I get pride when people say that I was a good Consul General. I get pride, Sir. Being a Christian person I have to admit when I prideful.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Are you questioning my Christianity? One of the things about the born again Christian as announced, is that they assume that they are the only Christians but this is not a religious discussion.

Mr. Speaker, let me not go down that road. Let me go back where I wanted to go so that you will understand that I am not now saying this here. Let me give you an indication of what I wrote to the Ambassadors and High Commissioners on September 22,1993. September 22,1993 is when I became the Foreign Minister. I wrote to every one of the Heads of Missions:

> "Since assuming responsibility for Foreign Affairs on September 1st I have been acquainting myself with the issues currently before the Ministry as well as reflecting on the role that the Foreign Service should be playing in support of the Government's policy objectives. I should like to share some of those reflections with you. First of all the Foreign Service must play a strong active role and must be seen to be playing a strong active role in support of the Government's economic goals.
>
> Secondly, the Foreign Service must become more people oriented in two senses. We have to restore service to the Foreign Service so that all Barbadians at home and abroad have no doubt that their diplomatic and consular representation exists to serve them in the most efficient and friendly manner and perhaps even more important, we must enlist the support of every single Barbadian living overseas to assist in the work of promoting the interest of Barbados at every possible opportunity".

Let me pause here, Sir. One of the difficulties of countries like ours, is the inability, to which I think I heard the Minister allude, the inability to put representation everywhere that you would like because of economic difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain in my mind that to the extent that we enlist every Barbadian who lives outside of Barbados as an ambassador, that that will redound to our economic and social benefit.

Mr. Speaker on more than one occasion, certainly in 1986, when tourism was down, we were able to appeal to every Barbadian outside of Barbados to try to bring at least one person to Barbados during that year, if not two persons. 4.20 p.m.

When you examine the role which the Barbadians who come back to visit or come home for good, when you examine the role which they played in the economy of Barbados, especially when we are in difficulty, you will see that this is a worthwhile exercise.

I go further and this is an improvement on what I am saying, or at least an advancement. In this day of what is called the new technology there is absolutely no reason why we cannot have a total bank of all of the names and addresses of every Barbadian outside of Barbados. There is absolutely no reason. And I would consider it an inefficiency if by a time set those missions which are in the areas where Barbadians exist and there is hardly a place you will have a mission where no Barbadian exists, but especially in Toronto, in New York, in Washington and the Metropolitan areas and in London there is no reason why there cannot be a deliberate decision to get all of these people in the computer in the Ministry.

Now, I make the assumption that by now every Mission has a proper computer. But we should have that bank. There is no reason why the Prime Minister of the day should not be able to write every Barbadian outside of Barbados. There is no reason in this day of the computer why he could not write as many letters as he wished. When General Motors can find from whoever bought a car in 1931 to who bought a car that needs to be recalled 4 years ago, where there are people selling all kinds of junk no matter if you left where you were 42 years ago it seems as though they run behind you no matter where you are... I still get junk mail from the United States. They have found me and now everybody has a computer and if the EduTech people would listen to me they would do away with this expenditure which they are about to spend. They would put a computer in every home just like we have a refrigerator in every home. It would be cheaper and you would be surprised at the speed at which the children would learn all there is to learn about computerisation and away with all of this foolishness.

I do not want to get into that now, Sir, but if you put a computer in every home in Barbados the cost will not be as much as it is with the EduTech, but that is a debate that will come, Sir. There is no reason why we cannot have all of the names and addresses of every Barbadian living outside of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear the Minister and the Ministry talking about FURN, at first I thought it was a young woman who lives in Belfield. I heard about this FURN and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central knows at least one FURN who lives in Belfield. I thought it was that FURN but then the next thing I knew again the Minister got some soup, put it in a saucepan, put it on a coalpot, warm it up, put it in a whole new dish and called it an innovation.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ought to have been able to tell the Minister that the Minister of the day held a reception for returning nationals in 1994 at the Grand Barbados and that the policies which have been put in place were in place and they were suspended by the present Prime Minister when he came into office. For some reason the capacity to bring home a car and the other things we had implemented were suspended. Then 18 months later, just like a company that goes into bankruptcy or near bankruptcy, then comes back with the same name and put the year in it - so you have D AC and Company Limited and then you have DAC 1998 and Company Limited - they come hfack with almost the same thing but more yellow paper. I believe that they have large stocks of this glossy paper in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sir, because every time I look around I am seeing a lot of glossy paper. I hope that small printers are getting these jobs. I hope that these jobs are going to small people. They look very nice. I must tell you that.

One thing you will have to give to the Minister, Sir, she is photogenic. There is no question about that. No one, not even her worst enemy ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition who knows about these things very well says that is her international pose.

But, Sir, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is constantly putting out these things with the blue headlines and dressing them up and I saw FURN come out with something similar. I have no quarrel with FURN because it is a policy which I implemented. It was not called FURN but the Honourable Member for St. John was the Minister of Finance when we went and suggested to him and he agreed and it was implemented and you can check with the Customs that people who were coming home who have lived outside for 3 years or more, or was it 8 years?

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It does not matter. I do not have to remember every single detail. I think it was 8 years, Sir, but it was a policy which was being implemented. I have no quarrel. I am not trying to get the credit. It does not matter if we get the credit, Sir, as long as the people get the benefit. If the people are getting the benefit, that is fine with me but I do not understand why the Minister, by extension the Ministry, why they keep getting these little hiccups that they cannot get the facts straight. They are always leaving something out. It is like a lawyer who goes before the Court, picks up a case, starts to read it, leaves out two paragraphs and if the Judge is sleeping, Sir, he might hear the wrong thing. That is what they do to us all the time and what we are saying is, step back a little bit. As Sir Donald Jackson used to say, could you read that two paragraphs for me again, please? That is what we are asking the Minister of Foreign Affairs to do.

Now, Sir, the Minister also spoke very strongly about Europe. She talked about the World Trade Organisation and my colleague is going to speak about that in some detail but again, Sir, Your Honour might recall that when the Uruguay Round was to be signed by December 15, 19...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am being told, Sir, that you can find the details in a new publication called the "Essence of Economics" put out by the Sandiford Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the World Trade Organisation is a result of negotiations and discussions that have been going on for a long time but I was a little surprised. I think the Minister was seeking dramatic licence when she said that persons who attended the WTO came away in shock. There was never ever any doubt. Now if you want to hear about a real massacre there was never any doubt that the World Trade Organisation was going to take out the entrails of the developing countries. There was never any doubt in that and one of the things that we have to understand in foreign policy and Barbados is no less needing to understand this, is that the developed countries have not changed their reason for having foreign policy in the 18th century, the 19th century, the 20th century or the 21st century. It is the same as ours. It is enlightened self-interest.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I am quoting the Essence of Economics. The Uruguay Round started in 1986 and concluded in 1994. That is from page 105 of the latest publication "The Essence of Economics", the introductory text written by Lloyd Erskine Sandiford. It is on sale for $50.00.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I spoke earlier about the penurious position of the Members of Parliament, Sir, but I never thought I would live to see the day when the Attorney General would be hawking a book for one of his colleagues. I never thought I would see that day, Sir. 4.30 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Anyhow, Sir, we live and we learn. I was making the point that the reason why the developed countries exist and have foreign policy which has hardly changed over the years. And it is the fault of the developing countries if they continue to have some kind of romantic notion that these countries have more love for them than they have for themselves. There is nothing we have ever got from any developed country at any time that we did not have to work for.

There is no time that we get a quid and they do not get a quo. There is nothing wrong with that. We just need to understand that that is the way of the international community. Mr. Speaker, there is no second to that. The World Trade Organisation is a successor organisation to one that existed and it was felt that the GATT and its corollary organisation had reached the stage where, as happens in domestic politics and is happening in Barbados today, where people think that if you change the name and make a couple of other cosmetic changes that all will be well. But the problem is that developing countries were unable or unwilling to participate in the conferences leading up to these decisions. And many of the developing countries could only have been in shock because they had not read the documents that had been sent to their capitals.

The truth is, Sir, that it was always the intention of the major countries of the world to introduce the concept called reciprocity. They always manage to find an esoteric word that is the new mantra. But reciprocity is what is causing the problems that Barbados and the other developing countries will be facing in the 21st century as we look at trade.

The ACP was not an accident, Sir, the Africa Caribbean Pacific country arrangement was not an accident. It was hard, painstaking work by Shridath Ramphal, and a number of other Caribbean Ministers back in the days when the European Community was seeking a new and different way to get Britain into the European community. Britain with its large quantity of satellite countries was seeking a way to eat its cake and have it too and we had some negotiations. We started negotiating about sugar and the protocol for sugar, and Mr. Speaker, arising out of that we had to go and knock heads and we had to take first the Pacific countries and then the African countries and we had to lead the way and we had to show them why it was necessary while battling with Europe. Britain was ostensibly helping us but Britain had its own domestic problem at the time between the two political parties about joining or not joining. We had to show Africa and the Pacific how we had to stick together. And when it was done, it was said that it was a first time that all of those countries, so many developing countries, had been able to stick together for anything of that nature for so long.

And, Sir, it proved to be effective enough that we had LOME I, LOME II, LOME III. But there is a thread running through all of the negotiations, where the Europeans were always seeking to claw back any concessions that had been given. Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the year that I was Foreign Minister, 1993 to 1994, we had to fight to stop Europe from selling some things called rum, Sir. They gave them all kinds of esoteric names. They had blackcurrant rum, red rum, green rum and it was only constant knocking and knocking and holding fast that we in Barbados were able to ensure that Barbados rum was not excluded from the market of Europe and that it was not disadvantaged by a number of imposters which were being put into the marketplace as rum.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that the World Trade Organisation is an improvement on all of that, especially from the other side. They have finesse, the capacity and the ability to deal with the developing countries. And the intellectual property is not something as you have heard, Sir, in debates here, it is not something that we would have been grappling with from time immemorial as we were grappling with criminal law. It is not something in which there is an abundance of expertise in Barbados or elsewhere in the developing world. But there is an abundance of expertise in the developed world, because that is where it started. They have been grappling with these things for years. The first time we saw anybody beginning to shape up about intellectual property. This Crop Over, Sir, you saw what happened. BAMCI and Company did what they thought was perfectly normal and said, "we want some money for this intellectual property." And they were lucky that somebody did not beat them. Eventually people are beginning to realise now that that is a new and different arrangement which will become part of life. Although in passing I will say, that while they were dramatic to make the point, they must back off now and do not be so silly to say that if somebody in the beach playing their little music, eating their little fish and making a little sport that they have to pay some kind of royalty. Mr. Speaker, they need advice on that and I give them some free advice from here through you, Sir, that there are times when it is better to look the other way if you wish to carry people with you. It is better to have the population with them against the rest than letting the population come to feel that they cannot play music on the beach. That would be frightening. And, Sir, you know that our constituents will not be able to pay any royalties and royalties have to be paid. You know, Sir, what will have to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the European community is not going to negotiate the new LOME from a point of view of love and affection for the developing countries. I believe it is only this morning that the Barbados Ambassador in Brussels was on television explaining his concern about how this LOME is going to come out and how recalcitrant the Europeans are. How they are dragging their feet, my words, *et cetera*. The contrasts very sharply with the view which the Minister left with the people of Barbados after they had the conference here. There was a euphoria that having had a conference here, which was a discussion conference that somehow everything was going to be all right.

That is the sort of thing which the Minister is going to have to get the journalists in Barbados to understand, or if as they have done, get the Manager of *CBC* to dictate something so it can go out as news and the people will hear what the Minister wants to say. If that is how it is to be done, then start it, or at least put somebody. You did not do

so badly. The Right Honourable Prime Minister has now been on the "call-in" programme. What the Deputy Prime Minister has to do is to go back on one of these programmes and ensure that the people hear exactly what needs to be said. But do not leave these impressions of euphoria, as has been done because we had a conference at Sherbourne. The ACP...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well to tell the truth, I did not hear her. It must not have been a speech of any great importance because I do not think that any other Honourable Member in here can remember. I do not believe the Right Honourable Prime Minister himself can remember. But he is not here, so I will not go any further.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying, Sir, that the Ambassador's statement is a realistic one. The impression left by the Minister is not realistic and we should not let that happen otherwise we will continue to mislead the population.

The question of bananas... The Americans are not going to do anything for anybody in the Caribbean on bananas. I do not understand why we continue with what in essence is window dressing about what we are going to ask the Americans to do because it is time that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the Caribbean, but more particularly it is time that our Minister of Foreign Affairs in Barbados come face to face with the reality of where we stand *vis-a-vis* those countries. 4.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the valiant effort which was made by the Government of Barbados to have Sir George Alleyne elected as the Director General of WHO. The story has been told in part. I have already explained the role which I played in this. I want to say for the record that on the occasion when the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Health spoke to me and told me the Cabinet had deputed them to ask whether I would participate. I immediately talked to the Leader of my Party and without more his reaction was an immediate yes.

I then got the endorsement of my Annual Conference which happened to be sitting on the Sunday when I left to go to Johannesburg and, Mr. Speaker, I say without fear of contradiction that it was a work which I undertook with great pleasure because the candidate we were putting forward was a manifestation of the aspirations of Barbados. We had been successful in putting that candidate as Director of PAHO and we had every reason, all things being equal, to anticipate that we could get him as the Director General of WHO.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt analyses have been done, and I know that one of the well held views is that the Africans let us down. I could speak to that, but I think that would require a separate lecture because I will only say in passing that there are many people who seem to feel that Africa is one massive country, homogenous, eating the same foods, doing the same things and thinking like robots. They do not understand that the differences which exist between French Africa and English Africa are as wide as the sea that exists between Barbados and Dakar.

They do not understand that East Africans are different from West Africans. They do not understand a number of things about Africa and, more recently, when one got involved very slightly in trying to get people to distinguish between African and black a whole lot of foolishness was put forward in the community. But unless the distinction is made and people begin to understand that Africa is not the dark continent, that Africa is not something out there, that Africa is not the Africa of Tarzan and the apes; unless people begin to understand that and unless we start to allow people to learn, then we will continue to have that foolishness, I call it, that we had a few weeks ago.

I am making the point, Sir, that some people will say that the Africans let us down but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, my own analysis and my own perception. I particularly waited until the Government had taken its position because I think it is only fair that the Government should have its position on the matter. I will say, and perhaps it is not politic for the Government to say it and so I will say it: if the British had not let us down the chances are that he would have been the Director General.

The new Government of Britain is headed by the Labour Party. Every one of us in here would have every reason to feel that a government headed by a Labour Party would be more sympathetic to us than a government headed by a Conservative Party or even a Liberal Party. We have been nursed on that particular myth. We have accepted it, including me. I thought that if a Labour government is in office that we from two Labour parties would at least be able to count on somebody from another Labour Party.

Even if we were not able to count on somebody from another Labour Party we are members of the Commonwealth. There were five candidates in the end. They were from the Commonwealth. It stands to reason that a blind man on a trotting horse or a five-year old who has never been to school on the presentation of that particular problem would say that the British are bound to support somebody from the Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, would you believe that to this day Britain was unable to tell the Government of Barbados, as I understand them, who they would support? That is one. Two

- we know beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt that - I had better say that I know and take the Government off the hook. I know beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt that Britain did not support on any matter any member from the Commonwealth. Now how can we go fooling the people?

I went around the world. In eight days I went to six capitals and when I got off the plane the last time my eyes were dropping out. I went because I was deputed by the Commonwealth to go with the ministerial mission. I believed then - I believe now, but not with so much fervour - that the Commonwealth is something that we must believe in as a community of people. Therefore any task that I am asked to do that I have the skills to do I will do. I went around the world. I went to the heads of people in Tokyo. I went to Washington. I went to London.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard me say how much I like to fly. I really do not like to fly. I flew across from Detroit to Tokyo and from Tokyo to London, from London to Washington. That is after I had come from Geneva. I went back to Geneva and then to Brussels and then to Bonn and then to France. I did all of that, Sir, in eight days, because I believe that the Commonwealth is something we should believe in.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard that the Foreign Minister did not have time to see our Foreign Minister, when I heard that Britain could not tell us who they were going to support, when I know that the vote was a political vote, and I hope the Minister of Health will insist that they change the foolish rules which leave the impression that the WHO members are there in their personal right. They are there representing governments. Change the rule and let the governments send somebody, because the instructions come straight from governments to whomsoever is there and therefore we can attack the governments with impunity.

Were it true to the constitutional arrangements, I would have to be talking about persons and would not be able to do that in this House. The Government of Britain did not support us. The Government of the United States did not support us. Now the United States is a different cup of tea because they had a duty to make sure that their candidate won, because the United States is the country that had gone and sought out the present Director General of WHO and asked her to run. I am not bringing any secrets out. Having gone and asked her to be the candidate it would not fall well from their mouths to be working against her. In respect of our candidate, Sir George, they were kind enough to tell us that they would not lift a finger against him. As far as the eye could see, they did not.

You know, Sir, eyes from developing countries are usually a lot less capable of seeing far than other eyes and I suppose they did what they had to do when on the day before the last it was obvious that if the members were going to make a decision based on the presentations that our candidate was going to win. I blame. I write it down in my notes. I leave it and I tell whoever writes after me I believe that verily if Britain had supported Sir George, the countries that went away from us would not have gone away from us. 4.50 p.m.

When I examine why the Africans supported Norway, I had no difficulty because if the Minister now would just review the speech that was made at the UN in 1994, Barbados praised Norway for the work it had done in Africa, properly so, because Norway had been in the forefront of doing work for Africa which no other developed country would do.

When Mrs. Brundtland was the President of Norway, she spent a substantial part of the Gross Domestic Product of Norway in Africa and she is regarded by the Africans as one of the few European Heads of Government that has ever regarded them in their own right. It would not be long before they come to whatever conclusions they come to.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making is that there is no justification for the British Government, and especially the British Prime Minister to give the impression that a Daniel had come to judgement for the developing countries. If you read what was put out after the last meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government and if you read most of what is put out, I have every reason to be disappointed at the behaviour of the Prime Minister of Britain, that is the present Prime Minister. I never thought I would live to say that had the Conservative Prime Minister been Prime Minister, I believe we would have had a better chance because I believe that his commitment to the Commonwealth and to the Caribbean is of a different stamp, no pun intended.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of what we have been able to do in the human rights area, I have always thought that we were very successful, very fortunate to have the Honourable Oliver Jackman elected to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. I believe, Sir, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados has a duty, indeed, they have a responsibility, to be in the forefront of the fight for human rights.

I do not think that a Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados can afford to have human rights issues treated the way apparently they are being treated by some countries in this region. I am very concerned as I look around at some of the Caribbean countries to see the kind of flip-flop positions which are being taken by individuals. After all, human

on. Human rights are primarily matters of the conscience, matters of the heart.

I really am concerned that as one looks through the Caribbean, one begins to see a kind of flip-flop attitude which when people are out of office they are the strongest advocates for human rights and when they attain office all of a sudden, when you hear those persons you cannot believe that it is not the devil incarnate who has been transformed. I have difficulty with that, Sir, and I will have difficulty with a foreign policy that does not recognise that imperative.

The Minister did not pronounce on human rights but I can say with impunity that our Administration has in the past and will in the future champion human rights as one of the pillars of its foreign policy. You cannot have a world in which everybody is talking about democratisation, and then when you come to the real democracy, when you come down to the nitty-gritty issues, you find people are slinking back. Countries are trying to hide.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of a Caribbean Court is as much a foreign policy matter as it • a legal matter. I have said before, and I want to say again, I never thought I would live to see the day when I would be worried about the creation of a Caribbean Court. I believe that the Caribbean jurists in this region are every much as eminent, and certainly lack no scholarship, in relation to their ability to judge matters of the kinds that will go to an appeal court.

I do not disagree, certainly, with the decision to try to attach to the court certain jurisdiction for settling of disputes because that is innovative but it is an indication of how we may, in time, save resources. I am concerned that ordinary people will not come on board in this exercise because of the perception which has been allowed to go abroad that the primary reason why a Caribbean Court is to be established is so you can hang people faster. It cannot be right. It cannot be morally right that the reason we will establish a court would be to speed up the hanging of people.

There can be no magic in the speeding up of the killing of anybody for any reason, least of all if the killer is the State. But another time will come when we will be able to speak to that in more detail so we can let people understand what our positions are. I ask no quarter in this matter. I give none because mine is a position from inside of my soul.

Mr. Speaker, I said that to bring me to an area that causes me deep concern, the Caribbean Community. There is an initiative from the Prime Minister for Barbados to become part of the OECS. I degree with that. He has given his reasons and I am not going to take issue with that on this occasion because to take issue with that one needs to take issue with it seriously and in detail. On principle, I do not understand why it is that in the other parts of the world they are trying to get larger and larger groups together, but we in the Caribbean seem to be looking for smaller and smaller groups to put together.

I am charging the Caribbean Community with failure. I am saying that notwithstanding some successes which are put out after each conference, after nearly 30 years of effort on the part of some of the best minds in this region, it just is not acceptable that we have been unable to settle what are basically simple matters in common market, what are basically simple matters in any attempt to unify.

I cannot accept, Sir, that it is not acceptable and efficacious for members of the Caribbean Community to pay their dues in the regional agencies. I do not accept that. I do not accept that Barbados must continue to be the one that is paying and the others do not pay and we have to appease them by making concession after concession.

From 1973 to the present we have been trying to get the whole question of the harmonisation of fiscal incentives and the harmonisation of various matters relating to a common market settled and always there is somebody who is, in the words of the young people, "pool-sharking." 5.00 p.m.

There is no acceptable reason why we should allow that, Mr. Speaker, and then we seek to solve that problem, it seems to me by creating yet another agency for us to expend the new resources we have been putting together.

The members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ought to be hard at work in each of our territories, putting on the intellectual anvil whatever is necessary for the solutions to making the CARICOM work. The Europeans were able from a little steel treaty to move into what is arguably the strongest bloc the world has ever seen. They have had difficulties, the Germans perhaps have had perhaps greater difficulties than anybody else. German reunification was a requirement for Germany's participation fully in the European Community. Germany bit the bullet, to use the words of the Minister, and created a Germany that is once again a single entity. Surely the people for East Germany are not having the best time in the world as the inflation and the difficulties come with their change of status. The Britons said that they would not go into the single currency but as time goes by they are making provision to enter the single currency in due course. There are those who are saying that the Chancellor in Great Britain is in fact going to find an aperture through which to go to allow him to go into the single currency.

Mr. Speaker, in the Caribbean what we have had is layer upon layer of new concepts, new ideas about how not to move forward. At one time it was not sufficient staff in

the Secretariat so we moved from having a Secretary General and I think we now have two Assistant Secretaries General and then we have another tier and then we have another tier. We have created desks although, Sir, we have not been able to create the kind of structure for the social services. The Health Desk is still not manned at the level one would *expect* to see in a community of this kind where the vast majority.... I do not mean the individual who sits at the desk, I am talking about the status it has in the whole structure. But that is a detail, it a matter for them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by extension the other Ministers who participate in the structuring of C ARICOM ought to insist, I think the time has come where the Governments of the Caribbean should insist that the Caribbean Community finally be made into what it was designed to do.

Mr. Speaker, if the Caribbean Community was as successful as it should be... We went and argued for a place for it at the United Nations and we got a place for it at the United Nations as an observer. We went and argued everywhere we could in every regional organisation and even organisations beyond the region for a CARICOM presence and if the Caribbean Community was as successful as it ought to have been by now, we would be a larger force to contend with than we are. But we have the spectacle of an application for a judgeship in the International Court. We were not in a position to solve that problem. As a result this region sent two candidates in the full knowledge that both must lose. How can you expect the people of the Caribbean to read that in the newspapers and then take the Caribbean Community seriously.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this region have come to feel that the Caribbean Community means nothing to them. I hope that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in this debate, as she winds up, will be able to show to the average man in the street in Barbados what the CARICOM has meant to him or her. Average man there means man and woman, Sir. Unless we are able to show the ordinary person in this country that these various esoteric arrangements which we make will redound to their particular credit, we will continue to do what the Trinidadians call 'spin tot in mud'. And the mud is getting muddier, Sir.

One of the things which we are able to say is that we were successful in helping to solve the problem in Guyana. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is an invariable rule of mine not to interfere, while I am in politics, in the domestic affairs of any country, but especially any Caribbean country. For that reason, Sir, I will not in this debate utter any view of what is going on in Guyana. But I will say this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados owes it to the people of Barbados to assist in bringing full information of what is happening in Guyana to the people of Barbados. It is something which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs probably does not feel that it has responsibility for. If the private sector press is not able for whatever reason to put information into the marketplace then I can think of no reason why within a community the people who constitute the Governments of that community cannot do something to help the people of the Caribbean have a clear picture of what is going on.

Sir, take the discussion of the secession of Nevis. All we heard in this country about the secession of Nevis was about two or three inches. No one in Barbados is any wiser except that the radio stations, and by tomorrow the newspapers, will be saying that the Nevisians did not secede, and nobody will be any wiser. We will all resume the next day, business as usual. We will continue to regard the Nevisians as some people down there somewhere and the Kittians as some people who fight with them in a federation they do not want to be in and the whole picture of the Caribbean will continue until you see the clarion call for West Indian unity and everybody will say yes, that is what we want but nobody is explaining to the people of Barbados or Grenada or St. Vincent or elsewhere, but especially in Barbados what is going on. The people keep asking the question, tell me what is happening, what is the fuss.

We raised the question, why are the young people going up to Buju Banton.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I give way to that. When you are on your feet they can mislead you. You have to try to understand that he is speaking directly to the people. When he speaks, or any artist like that addresses the youth, they do it directly. When we in this Chamber and by extension when the Foreign Minister seeks to make foreign policy an everyday occurrence, an everyday subject, something which we will discuss at the beach tomorrow morning.. .tomorrow morning you know what they are going to say to me? Either, I did not understand what you said or, you were good, man. My crowd at the beach will ask me to explain certain things which the Minister said and I will have to say that I did not understand them either.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: They will ask me what I said and I will respond to them. The point is that when we have finished this debate, will the population be any better off in their understanding of how foreign policy affects them.

I am still in the Caribbean. That brings me to my favourite subject, Sin There are many people in this country who are mystified, completely mystified at the 360-degree turn by the Barbados Labour Party on the question of President Fidel Castro. Mr. Speaker, there are some things in heaven and earth that are more mystifying than other things. 5.10p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I, Sir, have always worried about the integrity of public information which goes out. Four years ago, in my capacity as the Minister of Foreign Affairs it was my duty to welcome to the shores of Barbados the President of a Sovereign State who was coming to an international conference.

Now, Sir, Barbados had done extremely well to get the United Nations to agree that we were capable of putting on a worldwide conference. There are certain special requirements which a country must provide in order to qualify for a UN Conference. Barbados had done well. The same Sherbourne, that very self same Sherbourne that has been described in so many ways that for the first time today I heard the Minister say it is a conference centre but up until then it had been called almost every other thing except a conference centre. But notwithstanding that we had managed to get the SheAourne Centre into shape and as the UN people, engineers, etc. came to inspect it, they said we were going to get there on time as we had told them we would get there on time.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to spend a few minutes later on that but when you get an international conference the place where the conference is held becomes the United Nations for the purposes of the conference. There is an agreement which the country goes into with the United Nations and it becomes the United Nations so that the United States cannot stop somebody with whom they do not have diplomatic relations from visiting the United Nations. That is part of the agreement and similarly no country that accepts to hold a UN conference can get exemption from that requirement so he was coming here to an international conference. I was the Foreign Minister, we had responsibility for his person, we had responsibility for his security, we had responsibility for his accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when he arrived here all manner of things were said and done and there was one that I found particularly interesting which went something like this: "There are times for exuberance and exultation especially on nationally important occasions when fervour runs high. Thereafter sobriety must prevail as it should have done on Wednesday night in an extraordinary display of ministerial excess at Grantley Adams International Airport. We have no record of any other Barbadian Minister hugging and kissing a visiting Head of State but then times change as do some habits. Moreover not all Ministers are given to moderation in all things." Later on it said, Sir, "the euphoria surrounding Dr. Castro is badly misplaced", and it went on to be, at the least, abusive. That was 1994, Sir.

In 1998 the same hand writes as follows: "If there is one lesson to be learned from the second visit here of Cuban President, Dr. Fidel Castro, it is that Barbados is not out of step with the many major Western powers where he has been welcomed by ideological opposites such as the People's Republic of China and the United States. It cannot be mere happenstance that Democratic standard bearers such as Canada, Britain and France have no difficulty recognising and doing business with the Caribbean's lone communist nation". It went on and on.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would say to you, Sir, that I saw a picture of the Prime Minister of Barbados and either he was hugging up Dr. Castro or Dr. Castro was hugging up him. I cannot swear who was hugging up whom but I know they were hugging. A mere 4 years before that, I was vilified in this country.

Mr. Speaker, there was one gentleman who wrote then to the newspapers and I have not seen him writing now. There was another gentleman who went on the call-in programme and I have not heard him but what is really awful is that the same newspaper that was able to editorialise in those terms similar to what I said, is able to do a 360-degree turn and it is the same hands, writing the same editorial. The level of public information given in this country requires a higher integrity than that.

My lawyers have told me, Sir, that in no circumstance must I mention the name of that journal. I will not call the name of that journal until the case which I have outstanding from those times has gone before the courts. I draw it to Your Honour's attention because people in this country have asked what is the difference between then and now. Maybe it is because President Castro is 4 years older. They are asking about the Labour Party but I have told them that the Labour Party has no difficulty changing its position if it is expedient to do so. That is what I have told them, that the Labour Party has done that from time immemorial; when it is convenient they will: change their position. But the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that it is a changing world and I have to accept that it is a changing world but reality and integrity are constant and ought not to be trifled with and that is why the people of Barbados who look on from the bottom up are never taken by the spurious attempts from time to time to mislead them in matters such as these. 5.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will never allow you to fall prey to some of the things which we could quarrel about in this debate. But there are some matters which I believe we should put on the record.

The Democratic Labour Party has always believed that we should have a people oriented foreign policy. The only way this is going to be carried out properly is if we have our offices overseas functioning at the highest possible level. The consulates and the missions, it seems to me, should be given clear instruction as to what their responsibilities are to the citizens who function in and around the area which they serve. And as I was saying, Sir, all of that I was doing, Sir.

Sir. You will recall 1 was reading a letter that I had written to my staff when I became Minister and I had paused. With your permission, Sir, I will now resume.

You will recall that I stopped when I said,

> "And perhaps more important we must enlist the support of every single Barbadian living overseas, *et cetera."*

I then went on.

> "My intention is with your help to develop in the next couple of months a coherent plan of achieving these objectives. Within the broad framework, we should plan and undertake a set of focus activities for each mission. I expect to achieve all this within an 18-month period beginning almost immediately."

Well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are aware that there was an intervention halfway through that and I was unable to carry out my objectives. There was a hiatus and an administrative interruptus, but we will be back, Sir, and we will need to continue. I have become aware that the morale of the Foreign Service leaves much to be desired. Now this is what I was say ing in 1994.

> "1 have become aware that the morale of the Foreign Services leaves much to be desired. I wish to assure you, and through you all members of your staff, that I shall do my utmost within present financial constraints to provide all missions with the wherewithal to do their job and in general to ensure that working conditions are as comfortable as possible."

And here is the next sentence, Sir.

> "I want everyone from Ambassador to Messenger to know that you are appreciated."

I think I should take some time out, Sir, and say that irrespective of whomever are the officers in these places far off that they need to know, on both sides of the House that their work is appreciated. From time to time we may have to say a harsh word about the way they function, and to the extent that is necessary, they can expect a harsh word from this Side, certainly from me, but they also can expect to hear that they are appreciated. If Your Honour is ever in a position to pass that word onto them, because the Minister is not now in her, oh, yes, she is here. I hope the Minister will be able to pass that onto them when she sees them, if she would let them know that on this Side we appreciate their work as well, the Heads of Missions and their staff, if she ever sees them. I mean after this debate. You let them know that we appreciate them. But you must tell them that they are not to get involved in political matters of this kind. If they hear a row going on down here, wherever they are, get the papers read them and keep your mouths shut. We go no further than that. I am convinced that a happy Foreign Service will be a productive and efficient one.

I then went on to say,

> "One of the glaring deficiencies I have noted and one that I wish to remedy immediately is poor communication and a near non existent flow of information between Missions and Headquarters and vice versa. Frankly, I am appalled to note that most Missions have ceased reporting altogether except on an ad hoc spasmodic basis. I hope the Minister will be able to tell me that Missions from each quarter are now reporting specifically and clearly on a regular basis."

I went on to say,

> "I am aware that your human resources have been severely cut back, but timely provision of information is critical to the proper conduct of foreign policy; that if a mission is to perform no other function, this should be it. I must insist therefore on the following forthwith."

And I then gave them some things which I do not think I need to put into the debate, but I went on to make this other point.

> "In this regard I have also become of shortcomings at Headquarters, so I shall ensure that Headquarters does its part not only in keeping you fully informed, but in providing you with the directions you require in order to carry out the objectives of your mission. I myself shall be in regular communication with you and I will expect to hear from you. Please feel free to call me any time of night or day. As the opportunity presents itself, I shall visit your Mission for direct contact with your staff and observation of the environment in which you work and live. In the meantime, please accept my best wishes for your continued good health."

Now, I know that the Minister certainly took up that part about visiting them to see the environment in which they live. So I have no doubt that she will be able to tell us about that, but I am concerned that the morale does not seem to have improved and one of the reasons why this may have happened is that the Minister, it seems to me has been somewhat high-handed in the way and manner

of the transfer of certain... I am not going to go into specifics, but I feel that we should go on record as saying that it ought to be a matter of policy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that when an officer is posted that that officer can fully and reasonably expect that barring the most unforseen circumstances that that posting will be for a specified period of time, not less than a time that can be identified.

It is really not fair for a Barbadian to leave home, sometimes with a family and go to a place as an officer working for his or her own country and within a relatively short time, a propos of nothing which that officer can identify to be given short, swift and speedy notice to get back to Headquarters forthwith. I believe that that is sending the wrong signal and it smacks of a level of administrative victimisation which I do not accept and will not accept.

I do not know all the circumstances all the time because I make it my business not to try to find out what is going on inside the various missions overseas. I believe that those missions ought to be able to carry on their work in the manner they wish to carry on their work without interference from the political process. But the other thing which ought not to happen and I have reason to feel that in some instances it does happen, an Officer has the right, under the Constitution of Barbados to be a supporter of or even a member of a political party in Barbados. Nowhere is it in the Constitution of Barbados that Foreign Service Officers are some kind of political eunuchs who cannot belong to, speak of, associate with or otherwise let it be seen that they know a political party.

I think that although the country is small that both sides should agree that especially at the lower levels, obviously if you have an Ambassador, you expect the Ambassador, if he or she is not a career officer to have some understanding of which God he or she is serving. We do not expect an Ambassador appointed by a Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Barbados Labour Party to report to the Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Labour Party, but if that officer is a career officer, and even if the officer is not a career officer, I do not expect that if I call the office to get information that I am to be treated in any manner, shape or form different from how a Member of Parliament should be treated. Or indeed, how a Shadow Minister should be treated.

I think officers should always remember that the Shadow Minister of today has every possibility of being the Minister of tomorrow.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is correct. Not me. I agree with the Honourable Member. I accept the Honourable Member from his chair admonishing me...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He does not wish me to say the next sentence, Sir. But I know the Honourable Member did not ,mean at that time to say that, so we will move on.

Suffice it to say, Sir, that we have to set a frame work within which officers functioning outside of Barbados can do their work and therefore if an officer is invited by a New York organisation or a Miami organisation, or a London organisation to attend a function and if that function happens to be part of the institutions of one of the political parties, unless the function is an internal function or unless the function is one called for the purpose of interfering with the Government, then no government of the day has any right to inveigh against an officer for attending such a function. I would consider it *infra dig* for any person to be suggesting that one is not entitled to attend a function given by a political organisation whatever the stripe of that political organisation. I hope that the Minister will make it clear that that is the position. 5.30p.m.

I want to turn to a subject now, Sir, that is creating all kinds of confusion in the minds of a lot of people. The question of international drug trafficking is not something that arose last week, week before or even five years ago. The question of international drug trafficking has been with us for some considerable time and the number of attempts at solutions is legion.

Accept this! Constantly there is not much attempt being made by the major consuming nations to provide efforts at their level while calling upon small nations like ours to do so. I have always felt that if it were possible for us to have the resources to patrol our shores as we should, we should be able to eliminate drugs from Barbados or any of the islands in the Caribbean in a very short time.

It is impossible for Barbados with the equipment we have to do the East Coast. Every now and again drugs come into Barbados but the pattern back in 1973, back in 1983, in 1987, there have been all kinds of conferences: UNDP, UNDC. All of these conferences have been going toward a solution to the drug problem.

The Shiprider was supposed to be a part of this solution. Now what I said about the Government I feel strongly about the Shiprider as well. When the question of Shiprider arose the Prime Minister and the Government were very swift to seek the assistance of this Side in taking the stance which they took. The Prime Minister and the Government sought our private position to ensure that when they took their position on the Shiprider that they would have

no carping criticism from this Side because we felt exactly the same way.

When, however, Sir, the credit is being given for "standing up to the neighbour to the North" it is as if the Prime Minister stood on the burning deck by himself. I have always found that unacceptable. The next time somebody wishes to praise the Prime Minister for being a man of great courage to stand up to the mighty USA just put in a little paragraph together with the others on the Other Side. In this House when we have debates there is never any divide when it comes to standing up for certain principles *vis-a-vis* the neighbour to the North and I do not think that we should lead the population to feel as if this is something which has been done alone as one lady said to me.

I am not going to go into any great detail because I do not believe all of the details of any position that has been arrived at need to be put in the market place but it has to be understood that if we agree to provide a common front in any issue, especially in matters of foreign affairs, we expect that when the credits are being rolled that even though ours may be in smaller type and further down to the bottom we still wish to see them. Otherwise there will be a next time.

I do not think that there is a single one of us in this country in public life, certainly in this House, who would wish to see our position any different from what we have accepted as the position in Shiprider. We - in fact, I could make bold to say I - took a position which was published on the question of how we are going to respond and we felt that OECS people had been too swift to come to the conclusions they have come to. The record is there. It can be seen where we were.

I have no apologies to make for saying what I am saying because I wish when my children are a little older that they are able to say that we stood up and watched our fathers stand up. I am sure that I speak for all Honourable Members on this side when they say that when they stand up they wish it to be known that they stood up.

That brings me to another issue which I wish the Minister to explain to me. I have read in the newspapers something about the appointment or some great office that is going to go to some Pan-Africanist. In the past when a person has been appointed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Minister has done us the courtesy of coming to this House giving us the curriculum vitae of the person, giving us a job description.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying not Heads of Commissions from her seat and I have no doubt that she will straighten it out and tell me the difference between a Commission and a Mission. I wish to know what kind of foreign policy we have and I wish the Minister specifically to tell me. I do not want to hear from anybody else. The Minister responsible for foreign policy I want to hear how this new hydra-headed intellectual conundrum is going to work in the context of foreign policy.

I wish to know because if I am shadowing foreign policy I would like to have some clear indication when what is being said or done is part of foreign policy or whether it will fall under the ambit of he who is shadowing the Prime Minister's portfolios. I do not understand what is the difference between a Commission on the one hand and a Mission on the other.

In Canada, we have a High Commission. In London, we have a High Commission. It stands to reason that a High Commissioner would have to be in charge of a Commission. It happens to have Mission status. Now if the High Commissioner was located in Barbados, would that High Commissioner be in the Prime Minister's Office? When Frank DaSilva who was High Commissioner in Trinidad came back to Barbados to operate from Barbados he was located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I do not understand what it is that could impel the Government to create this unnecessary status first among themselves and secondly among us who are trying to grapple with the policies of the Government. They are making our work unnecessarily hard because we cannot understand where they are going.

Now I get the impression that the vast majority of Ministers, and in particular the Foreign Minister, wishes to have nothing to do with this. That is my impression. I know they will be able to speak and they will get up and say if my impression is wrong. 5.40 p.m.

I do not intend any offence to any Minister. It is simply that my understanding of their positions over the years, and certainly my understanding of the Foreign Minister's position, suggests that she would not have anything to do with this. There is a problem for me, Sir, because I have a specialty which I think has been recognised now in that I have been paying attention to African issues for a long time.

I saw that the Honourable Oliver Jackman, who is not without some experience in this field, I would have to say he is not without some little experience in this field, was having the same kind of difficulty when I read his column on Sunday. He could not quite understand what this new hybrid is. I would have thought that since Jackman has more time than I had to study these matters, that he would have been able to understand what the Government is putting together. But Jackman says that the Government is practising symbolism.

Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty understanding the Honourable Oliver Jackman sometimes so it could possibly

be that I do not understand him this time, so I am going to read the article again just to be certain that I understood what he said. My understanding of what he was saying is that this Government is a Government of symbols. I do not mean CYMBALS. I mean SYMBOLS. There are one or two cymbals over there, Sir, but I mean SYMBOLS. I read Jackman to be saying that.

I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to explain to me what is this new policy, and by extension explain to the people of Barbados, because if the Honourable Oliver Jackman who has been Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, High Commissioner to Canada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United Nations, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States, Judge of the Inter-American Court, eminent journalist, and former resident of Africa cannot understand what this new job is about, then I do not see how one of my poor constituents who we are now trying to get interested in Foreign Affairs would be able to understand, or one of yours for that matter, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, it might very well be that you would be able to enlighten me what this new job is about. I do not have a problem with it. If the Prime Minister is able to explain it, and if it is true that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said to the Prime Minister, that is yours, you keep it over there, then that will be an explanation which would be acceptable to me because I can understand how difficult it would be for the Foreign Minister to be able to absorb this particular nomenclature in her very clear vision of what the Minister of Foreign Affairs should be doing.

Now it is my understanding, Sir, that tomorrow the Heads of Missions will address the issue of the structure and more particularly the remuneration.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister said so. I was listening very carefully. The Honourable Member is asking me how I know she said so. I know the Honourable Member does not listen to her and could not have listened to her for as long as he did today, but it is my duty to listen to her. I understand. He does not listen to her if he can help it. I have to listen to her because it is my job, so he would not have heard when she said that but she did say that, Sir.

Tomorrow the Heads of Missions will be addressing the structure of the Foreign Service and by extension remuneration within the Foreign Service which they will then, presumably, put to the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for the Civil Service.

Incidentally, I heard her saying that the Minister responsible for the Civil Service will be going to the meeting and taking his Permanent Secretary. I think the Minister of Foreign Affairs needs to get her position clear but that is not what this debate is about.

I want to know if the new Commissioner, now he will not be a High Commissioner, Apparently there is a difference between a High Commissioner, but is there any such thing as a low commissioner? If you have a High Commissioner, and you have a Commissioner it stands to reason logically that there must be a low commissioner.

The Honourable Member, the Minister of Agriculture seems to be ready to answer me but I will wait until he speaks.

Seriously, the Prime Minister's office will have to tell this House at some point what is the remuneration for this new post. The Heads of Missions, the Foreign Ministry and presumably the Minister responsible for the Civil Service and others will tomorrow be putting it together.

Barbados will be very interested to hear the result. Barbados will wish to know how the two things are going to relate, and to whom the new person reports and if these reports will go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the Prime Minister's Office or if they will go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then to the Prime Minister's Office. The matter has not yet been explained. Perhaps, when the Prime Minister gets up to speak he will be able to shed some light on it. I am sorry he is not here, Sir. I like to say these things when the Prime Minister is present because people go and tell him the wrong thing.

I would like to feel that it is not true that the Prime Minister himself is not too sure what the thing is about either. I wish to believe that is not true but there are those who believe fervently that he will let it play by air and let it work itself out and whatever the matter turns out to be, that it will be.

Mr. Speaker, that is only symptomatic of what has been happening with the Government and the Government's foreign policy is unfortunately linked to its confusion.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke today and she spent time going from head to head but at the end of it I wonder if anyone who heard her would be able to say this is the foreign policy of Barbados; this is what it is grounded on; this is where we are going; this is how we are going to operate. I get the impression that if we had this debate next week after the Heads of Missions had been able to fashion the new direction that we might have been better served by way of policy, i confess that I am no wiser after 2 %" hours of the Minister's presentation as to what the foreign policy is than I was when she began.

The document which was published does not help very much in that regard because there are parts of it which do not

really make a lot of sense. I do not wish to go into any detail about it but there are parts of the document which would need some clarification.

When they say that they are going to reposition Barbados, these new .buzz words are all right when you are preparing a document to send out to the people who work on the cutting edge, or whatever it is, but when you are putting out a document for countries like ours and you say that you are repositioning Barbados, I wonder what it is that the Minister said today which indicated that we have been repositioned.

I am not sure that I heard anything that is different from what we had before. I am not sure, except to acknowledge that the world has changed, that I have heard anything different. The Minister said that she is going to be putting a new position in Geneva and thereafter she hopes to follow it with a mission. She did not tell us what would be the mission statement of the new mission in Geneva. All she did was to explain to us that the world is shifting. The Minister said that she is going to be putting a new position in Geneva and thereafter she hopes to follow it with a mission. She did not tell us what would be the mission statement for the new mission in Geneva. All she did was to explain to us that the world is shifting. I think when the Minister gets up to respond that it would be helpful, it would be desirable if she could let us know what is the new position of Barbados. And then I want to ask another question. 5.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will recall because it was relatively recently when President Clinton came to Barbados. It was only the other day. President Clinton hit Barbados and we were all aglow. I happen to be out of the country at the time but from what I read in the newspapers and what I heard, President Clinton was in the country and there were a number of statements about what we could expect from President Clinton's visit. Mr. Speaker, there was definitely silence on this from the Minister when she spoke. Since the people of Barbados have been involved in the visit themselves, it would help the people of Barbados if we could hear whether President Clinton's promises have been kept. What scholarships, if any have come out of that visit? You cannot just have a visit by the President of the United States, he meets with the Head of CARICOM and then thereafter, nothing.

President Clinton is not an African President who when he leaves and comes down here they are not sure if he is going to get back. The President is from a place where presumably they have a steady system of Government and any little difficulty he may be having now will not affect the kinds of programmes which he promised us when he came here. I really feel that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs owes it to the people of Barbados to say categorically, these are the results of the promises made by the President himself. There are some people who believe that you are not to say anything about the United States but I lived there for a very long time and it is one of the freest countries of the world and they love you to say things about them especially if they are true.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, it is true, they have promised and promised and promised and promised and they have not delivered. What they have delivered to us is the banana confusion. They have committed to having discussions on the banana issue but when the people in Europe ruled, America took the position they had taken before to the detriment of the banana growers in the Caribbean. I did not hear from the Minister on that.

I wish to know what is Barbados' position. What have we told the United States? What letter have we sent to the President of the United States telling him how we feel about the banana issue? It is no point telling Dominica and St. Lucia and St. Vincent that we are in solidarity with them. Let us know that you have been involved in telling the United States what the position is on the bananas and asking the United States what is the position on the promises and the commitments made by the President when he came here. They are not going to cost a lot of money as I understand it. You will have to say that the visit was a failure. At least President Castro did not promise anything except to get closer.

I am very concerned about the kind of symbols which appear to constitute the foreign policy. When you consider that the Ministry of Tourism is linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what happens in the Ministry of Tourism cannot be separated from the foreign policy. You cannot tell me in language flowing about what message you send in your imaging and then you go and appoint an Irish American woman to be the first thing anybody sees when they ask for the management of the Tourist Board of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, you are not believable when you tell me so. The Minister cannot be believable when she comes and tells me and the rest of Barbados that her foreign policy is a manifestation of the aspirations of the people of Barbados and tourism on the cutting edge of our foreign policy. The Honourable Member herself said that tourism is the major engine of our economy. Therefore it has to be one of the major bulwarks of our foreign policy and it happens that the Minister is one and the same so they can be no doubt whatsoever.

We say then whenever elected to Government that, we will resume having images in all of the offices overseas that represent Barbados. I am amazed that the Government over there allows the Minister of Foreign Affairs whenever it suits

her to do and say whatever she feels like and nary a person utters a word in defence of the Government or by extension the people of Barbados. I have said and I am repeating: it is an insult to Barbados to suggest that this person who is going to be doing administrative work in an office in New York that I have observed for 30 years has some skill that cannot be found somewhere in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that you are not permitted to read from a newspaper but you can hold it up.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This young man was found and brought home here to be Vice President in Tourism and this newspaper authority says that he has what it takes. We can go out anywhere in the United States or any part of the world and find more and more young men like him and young women. The Minister had a young woman on television as Consul General in Toronto. She is a public officer so I cannot speak of her in any way since I did not acquaint you but I think Your Honour will give me leeway to say that no one who saw that person acquitting herself could doubt that we have people of quality. I do not know the young lady but she has acquitted herself like a person who is a Barbadian and whom I am proud of and all the ones who went before her and the ones who are to come.

How dare the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Barbados take somebody who is an Irish-American and come telling me that I am to accept that. I do not accept that now. I never will accept it. You believe that there is any Barbadian who could get a job in Ireland in a foreign office, in a tourist office, in a dog catching office? You believe that we can leave here and get a job in the United States? You cannot even get a visa to visit the United States furthermore get a job in one of their foreign policy places. And you come in here talking to me about foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I have no axe to grind except the axe of the people of Barbados and I say that it is an insult. Whatever policies you have, however bright they are, how ever much cutting edge you are on, whatever else you are doing, if you are going to cumulate those policies in that kind of decision, then I say that the policies are a fraud.

Mr. Speaker, I am unhappy about it, I have been unhappy about it especially at this time when we make a song and a dance about Emancipation. How emancipated are we, Mr. Speaker,? I ask this question of you, Sir. How emancipated can we be if we are making those kinds of decisions in 1998? This is foreign policy for the 21st century. Are we going into the millennium in that kind of tenure?

Mr. Speaker, if we are to get people of a certain kind we have enough of them in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I believe and I want to make the point because one or two people believe that my position on this has something to do with the colour of the woman. I do not even know what colour she is except that it is impossible for her to be black. I will say this. Mr. Speaker, if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs puts every person in each Mission overseas and each one of those persons is a white Barbadian as long as the person is competent, I will applaud. I might not like it, I might draw to their attention that it is a little skewed but I would applaud if the person is qualified because when you are working overseas, you have to be qualified. I know about that. I cannot be challenged on that. The Government cannot challenge me on the requirements for out there, because I have been there, done that and did it well.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Even the Honourable Member agrees with that. Seriously, Sir, we cannot have this. I am going to be honest with you. If this were not a televised debate there are some people I would ask questions in here. All the people who always jumping up and down trying to give people the impression that they are out front in pursuit of the goals of the ordinary Barbadian, ask them, where were you, where was your voice, why can't we hear you on this particular issue? This is not merely an issue of a job. This is a symbol, this is a message that you are sending and it is not a small issue. It is a huge issue and it needs to be aired, and the Minister needs to answer. What the Minister says, Sir? "I have no apology to make". Well she does. She has to make an apology to this House because this House provides the money and this House provides the mon^y through the people and she has to make an apology to the people of Barbados and she is going to make that apology if I have to go down to Fitts Village with a petition and show her that there are several people who want the apology. 6.00 p.m.

There is more, Sir. The Minister is the Minister of Foreign Affairs. How people perceive Barbados is part of what we set out to do through foreign affairs. Mr. Speaker, foreign affairs is the projection of our domestic policy. Thus I talked about the foreign policy and the domestic policy are the obverse and reverse side of the same coin. There is a certain intellectual in Barbados who says that we are the only people he ever heard with that, so I went into my archives and I hauled out, Sir, *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, published by authority of the Honourable Mitchell Sharpe, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, Canada. This is 1970.1 have some good material, Mr. Speaker. Anytime you wish to do a little research I would make it available. You will have to sign it out and sign it back in.

I just want to read, Sir, *Foreign Policy in Essence* which is the first section. Why review Foreign Policy. It says

Foreign Policy in Essence and it goes down the road, in undertaking this review, etc. But time does not permit me to read all of it but this is the last part:

"External activities should be directly related to national policies pursued within Canada and serve the same objectives. Diplomatic relations are maintained and strengthened for a wide variety of reasons, among others trade expansion, collective security, cultural contact, cooperation and development assistance, exchanges in science and technology. Such relationships have to be kept under review to ensure that they continue to serve Canada's objectives effectively. Those may change as both Canada and the world change. In essence, and this is it, Sir, foreign policy is a product of the Government's progressive definition and pursuit of national gains and interest in the international environment. It is the extension abroad of national policies" - 1970, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canada. That country has been designated as the No.l developed country in the world in which to live. It has been designated so by the UNDP scale human index. So our domestic policy cannot be separated from our foreign policy.

Now, when the Foreign Minister of a country makes a statement at home most people do not realise that is law. If you make a statement in the international community in certain circumstances, whether you make it at home or abroad and you are the Foreign Minister in international relations that is accepted by other countries as a statement from the country and in certain circumstances which I am not required to go into now, when the Foreign Minister has spoken, the country has spoken.

Now, our Foreign Minister lives on the sea. She lives as you go down Highway 1. That is the West Coast, Sir. She is as much West Coast as you can get. If you step off her verandah you are in the water. I know that, Sir, because I know the West Coast very good. The Honourable Member made a statement which I am not going to repeat but which all Barbados has heard. The Honourable Member has not yet recanted that statement. There is no one in the Government who has recanted that statement. There is no one who has even remarkably come close to saying that they are sorry that that is not what she meant. Therefore, Sir, we have to assume that that is what she meant. She said that all the people who took an opposite position had some psychological problem, needed psychiatric help. But what is more, Sir, the statement she made has to do with the perception about land in this country and more particularly beach land in this country. So what does it mean when the Foreign Minister and the Minister responsible for Tourism makes that statement, Sir? It means that every Tom, Dick and Harry...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I am sure you are aware that the matter that you are about to raise is before a Committee of the House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Not this particular matter, Sir. As a member of the Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Am I misunderstanding you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. As a member of the Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are also a member of a Committee?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, and therefore the statement which the Minister made has not yet come before us, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you are actually referring to the issue which the Committee has been charged to look into.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well, Sir, as Your Honour pleases.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would prefer if you are going to make a statement, it just be a passing statement and move on, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have no difficulty, Sir, but I am sure that the force of my feeling has not been lost on Your Honour.

Mr. SPEAKER: There will be time for that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well Sir. I am sure the people who have heard the little I have said so far would be satisfied that that is sufficient, especially with your ruling, Sir, I will not touch it again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just move on, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will move on, Sir, but if the opportunity ever presents itself, Sir, I will acquit myself accordingly.

Very well, Sir. You are a member of the Committee too.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, Sir, that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was right to bring this debate before this House. I believe that it is important that we air these issues, that the people of Barbados get an opportunity to understand that within the context of Government there are issues which on the face of it appear not to concern them but which in fact are related to their everyday lives. I think it would have been much preferable if the Minister in setting out her foreign policy had given the philosophical basis of the foreign policy of the Government and had shown how it relates indeed to the lives of ordinary people in this country and the achievements which she, in her four years of stewardship the country through the Foreign Ministry would have achieved. 6.10p.m.

But, Mr. Speaker, not much of that happened today. What we had instead was the Minister telling us that the world is changing. I do not believe that anybody who watches CNN or listens to BBC can have any doubt that the world is changing. And how Barbados is going to deal with those changes is probably a subject for discussion. But, Mr. Speaker, we on this side do not believe that foreign policy can be a sterile issue to be trotted out every 10 years or so and given to the population as if we were feeding them a diet. I believe that we should be discussing it on a daily basis. I believe that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other agencies of the Government ought to be able to show the people from time to time what aspect of what they are doing relates to foreign policy and *vice versa.*

I am glad that the circumstances of finance in Barbados are such that we were able for the first time in a long time to have a Heads of Mission conference in Barbados. As I have already said, I believe that the collective wisdom of the Heads of Mission will do well for the country. But I hope that the Heads of Mission having come to Barbados and having been able to touch base and rub shoulders with some of the people here will be able to go back into their respective territories, recognising that we have still a number of problems here in Barbados that have not been solved and will not solve themselves.

I hope they will go back and let the people in the other parts of the world where they have to rub shoulders understand that there are still some of us in the vineyards striving, trying to give ordinary people a place in the sun in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of my presentation if I have given the impression that I wish to be a champion still of the ordinary masses of this country, it is because in a sense it is all that I know. It is the service which I undertook more than 30 years ago and I still find some solace in that service. I still find joy in that service, but I become very concerned when I see aspects of that service being misrepresented, being misdirected and I hope that when the Minister responds and if the Right Honourable Prime Minister is able to participate in the debate that we will get some very clear statements about a number of issues which are concerning people in this country.

It cannot be that the people of Barbados who cannot find a place to live and there are lots of people in Barbados who cannot find a place to live, can be comfortable to hear us discussing what is going on in Brussels, or what is going on in Geneva or even London when in fact they are still struggling, 30 years after independence to find somewhere to live. I am committed as I know my colleagues are committed to serving the people of Barbados both here in Barbados and more particularly in the international community when the time presents itself again. To the extent that we have been successful in that and the record shows that when we have had the opportunity we have beep successful, we are grateful to all those who have helped us.

In the meantime we will continue to keep behind the Government to have the Government do what is the correct thing and in particular the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs to have to understand that it will not be sufficient merely to announce. She will have to explain.

I finish with one last thing. If there has been wastage in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the 30 years, it has occurred in our inability to have a very clear, steady housing policy for diplomats overseas. I have reason to feel that the policies have been too up and down. I have already said, Sir, that I did not believe that we should sell the house at Pelham. I believe that there is no reason why we should not establish some kind of continuity in our policies. We have had three or four houses in North America which have been sold and we have bought other houses. I am not going to reduce this debate to the question of how many dollars have been spent because of foolish decisions. There is no doubt in my mind, for example, that one time we paid rent for two places to house one group. There is no doubt in my mind that very recently after selling the house at Pelham we found ourselves in a situation where we had to spend unnecessary money. We have had to have staff on staff while not doing anything because again of the inability to do our timing and our decision fnaking appropriately.

All of those are matters, Sir, which require the detailed attention of the Minister. But in keeping with our understanding of this debate, we have not yet raised these questions, but these are matters which the Minister had promised that she would at the first opportunity give detailed answers to this House. Your Honour will remember that. What did she do today? She gave us a summary as she is wont to do from time to time and one always knows when the Minister does not have the information, you can expect a summary. Well I am going to give her a summary now. This may very well have been her last opportunity as a Minister of Foreign Affairs to put her stamp on something that will be lasting. We have not yet seen it in the debate. I hope that when she answers some of the questions which we have asked that we will see some effort toward that. In the meantime, Sir, she can expect further and vigorous debate from this Side as we seek to put a human face on this thing called foreign policy.

I am gratefirt to you.

Dr. R. C HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, we have had a long day dealing with a large number of matters relating to foreign policy and I wonder very much whether at the end of the day, the people of Barbados would not have had such a surfeit that the entire matter would continue to fall into the category of the esoteric as far as they are concerned.

In the half an hour available to me, I propose to try to touch on a few subjects, because it is quite clear that speeches encompassing areas such as the changing world from east to west and north to south, the repositioning of Barbados in that world, the full range of international issues, trading arrangements, international drug trafficking, human rights and democracy, Barbados and the environment, marine affairs, looking after the interest of Barbados abroad, *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,* certainly cannot be dealt with satisfactorily in any one speech.

I believe that this is the second occasion where an issue relating to foreign policy has formed the sole subject of a broadcast debate in Barbados. I think the last one was in 1983 soon after the Grenada invasion. But before I deal with that particular issue, let me say this, that I do not think and I made the point during that debate in 1983 that foreign policy can no longer continue to be the prerogative of the executive. What happens in Barbados is that once a year we have Estimates and there is some discussion relating to the purchase of a house or re-employment of somebody and that is the end of the foreign affairs debate. 6.20 p.m.

There is some rumour about some scandal somewhere and it surfaces again as a political matter but in terms of dealing with the substance of foreign affairs matters as they affect the welfare of Barbadians there is no continuing debate.

This brings Barbados, Sir, as a democratic country in sharp contrast with what takes place say, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and in most democratic countries of the world where the Parliaments and the people of those countries are very much involved in constant debate on foreign policy issues.

Before I start, and lest I forget, I believe that it is important that there should be a Permanent Joint Select Committee of Parliament which should be in place to deal with foreign affairs matters and that would be a continuous link to Parliament and to the people of Barbados. Periodic debates, in my view, do not cover as wide an area and even get across to the people of Barbados how this relates to them.

It is very important for me to deal with one or two issues and I think the first one I want to deal with is the Cubans. My position on Cuba today is the same as it was 40 years ago. It has not changed and it will never change. I have seen the Cuban position from my first visit there as a member of the executive of the International Union of Students way back in the late 1950s as one of the assertion of the sovereign right of a Caribbean state to have an independent existence in this hemisphere as the number one issue relating to Cuba.

If Cuba was not in the Caribbean it would be treated in the same way today as China and other countries are treated. So the fundamental issue and the fundamental challenge that we as Barbadians have to face in relation to Cuba is whether we share in that same fundamental principle of the right of these small states to an independent existence in the Caribbean.

Let it be clear that we can never ever enter emotionally or intellectually into the mix that informs United States policy in relation to Cuba. It is a mix of responses to domestic issues, whether it be the Cuban group in Florida and their vote in Florida and elsewhere or it is part of the geographical factors that even after any question of any military threat has long disappeared threads back into the whole concept of the Munroe doctrine etc. which I quite clearly understand. Indeed, Sir, nor can the population of the United States easily overcome the impact of 40 years of constant vilification of a leader in a country even to begin to cope with any change in policy with any degree of objectivity.

So, Sir, these deep-seated emotional and other factors in the United States we do not share because a lot of it is irrational. It does not relate to reality and it never related to reality. That is why I have no difficulty now and I have had no difficulty in the past in condemning the American boycott of Cuba. All it does is hurt a lot of poor people. It threatens to deepen poverty, not only in Cuba but throughout the region because, in the long run, our trade with Cuba is going to be a very important factor in sustaining economic activity in Barbados. When the full impact of free trade and globalisation and all of those pretty words, when the full impact of our inability to respond competitively because of the reality of scale of our production when virtually any activity in Barbados could be knocked out overnight if anyone chooses to do that purely on the basis of scale of production.

There is nothing that we produce in Barbados which cannot be rendered uneconomic in the event that any major country enjoying scale of production decides to dump those activities in Barbados particularly in a situation where we have little control over tariffs that we levy, etc.

Let us be clear that our future very much depends on what happens here in the Caribbean. I want to get that up front and I want to look back a little at that debate in 1983 which I found very interesting. I started that debate dealing with the question of the need for Parliament to be involved. Later in that debate, just to show how the climate has changed, there was a contribution which I found very amusing a little while ago largely because I took a Caribbean position in that particular debate and this is what I heard. Hansard, page 105:

> "The only charge made by any member from the other side of high-handedness by this Government is by the

> member for St. Michael South Central an avowed Communist."

That is all I did; I tried to put a Caribbean perspective on the whole issue; but times have changed. Sir this is very interesting and then there is in that exchange...

> "... only yesterday, that Honourable Member and distinguished physician and scholar admitted here on the floor of the House that he visited Russia with an International Union of Students group attending a conference. I go further, Sir, it was on more than pne occasion and I shall be producing documentary evidence to this effect. At that time he was being indoctrinated into the movement which he believes in, the movement of communism. In recent times he has been visiting Mr. Brick, the editor of the Morning Star, a Communist London based newspaper and he has visited Grenada on several occasions and has been met by Mrs. Julian Riscoe."

Sir, all of that was incorrect but that is not the point. The point I am trying to make is how things have changed. Our position in relation to Haiti has always been the same. It is only a matter of a few years ago we were being abused on various programmes in Barbados and in the Press when we said we should put out a helping hand in terms of the refugees from Haiti and just take 10 or 20 of them as an indication of our concern. This is as late as the 1990s during the Haitian refugee crisis.

I do not want to dwell on those things except to make it clear that I am a Caribbean man. I am a Barbadian nationalist and I believe that the number one objective of any foreign policy should be the preservation of the sovereignty of Barbados in all matters except where we may choose to cede any aspect of that and only in the context of realising a Caribbean state and under no other circumstances. That is the number one and fundamental objective of our foreign policy. It must be to preserve the sovereignty of this country. We have fought too hard for too long and we must not allow any kind of glib arguments or any kind of considerations ever to cloud our mind that our sovereignty must remain untampered with.

The next area that I want to deal with and that is as far as Barbados is concerned... 6.30 p.m.

I want to state and restate our position and it is this - that as far as I am concerned, the aim must be one Caribbean nation. That must be the aim. More than half of this century the Caribbean people have been grappling with the idea of Caribbean integration, a Caribbean organisation which would respond to the totality of the benefit of all people in the Caribbean. This is a debate that was going back to the days of Marryshow and before him. It is almost a century that we have been talking this business. Now comes a new millennium and we are still talking about it, and it has not been achieved.

As far as I am concerned, that must be another fundamental plank of our foreign policy. All other things come after the issues of the sovereignty of Barbados, ceded only in respect of being part of a Caribbean nation. All else comes after that because that is your bread and butter. That is your foundation. That is your foundation for material existence, for spiritual existence and for cultural existence. If you can manage to put that together and let that be your fundamental foreign affairs for us, then I think that the future of these islands would be best secured in that way.

I not only speak of political unity, Sir. I talk of a single economy in the Caribbean. I talk of freedom of movement for the people of the Caribbean and I do not refer to a few chosen persons being able to move around the Caribbean. I am talking about the people of the Caribbean from all walks of life united towards one goal in one economy and one nation for the future. That is my vision, and that is where I think should be our main thrust in the area of foreign policy.

All this stuff, Sir, in relation to trade, tourism, investment capital and all this kind of thing, all this is secondary. Make no mistake about it, because if you are poor and you have a solid base as a nation, then there is always hope. It is when you are enslaved by somebody, when you have lost your sovereignty, when you can no longer take decisions for yourself that there is no hope so let that be clearly understood that, in my view, that should be the foundation of our policy.

The second thing I want to make clear is this. I have never understood why the idea has been perpetuated down the years that the Caribbean is a poor area. The Caribbean is not a poor area. The Caribbean is one of the richest areas of the world. If you take, for example, our marine resources, not potentially, it is there. We have not been able to exploit it. That is the problem.

If you take our mineral resources, if you take our marine resources, if you take our land resources, if you take the totality of the resources in the Caribbean, including Guyana, of course, in this whole concept, you will see that per capita the Caribbean is potentially one of the richest areas in the world. Yet we continue to perpetuate this idea and do not recognise that what we need is to really develop our resources.

One of the main thrusts of our foreign affairs, one of the main thrusts of try ing to attract capital into the Caribbean is to try to help us develop our natural resources for the benefit of our people. So if you start off with that presumption and that understanding that you are not dealing

with an area which is a desert, you are not dealing with an area that has 20, 30 or 40 million people with little or no resources, you are dealing with an area which is well equipped with natural resources and far advanced of most countries in the world in terms of human resources, when you take that combination you recognise that the major defect is the lack of political will and the lack of a proper articulation of the need for a unified economy, and the need for political unity in this region which the people can relate to. Until the people can relate and be organised in this direction, then you will get nowhere, that is, if we continue with this business as an intellectual exercise for a few.

In the past those of us who have spent some of our days in London philosophising on the question of federation, and more recently those who have gone to another institution in the Caribbean, and when you start dispensing benefits to them as a priority as distinct from the ordinary people in the Caribbean, then they begin to feel that this whole business of a single economy, freedom of movement and this kind of thing has nothing to do with the ordinary man. That is the way they are going to feel. That is why, Sir, I have decided, since I only have half an hour, to pick on one or two areas which I consider to be of some importance.

The whole question of trade with Latin America, trade with Africa, quite clearly this is going to be of considerable significance. I think in the more immediate terms, and surely from the Trinidad experience, it seems to me that there has been quite a significant movement of capital into the region from Latin America, but I believe that the time has come when we need to recognise that a second language for Barbadians is a skill.

I believe that all our children from primary school, every single person should have a second language, and if many of them choose Spanish, this would be the greatest asset in trying to do trade with Latin America.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES:- Let me give you an idea. I know of a very enterprising small businessman who decided to try to sell some things in Venezuela some years ago. The only trouble was that he forgot that the people spoke Spanish and all his labels were in English and his products did not sell.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He has asked me what happened to the pepper sauce. I never said it was pepper sauce, but the products did not sell. We know of instances where the reverse has happened where people in Latin America have shipped things to Barbados and it was in Spanish and as a result of the problem with language no trade could take place. I think it is very important that we identify a second language as a major enhancement of our human resources if we are thinking of doing trade in these areas.

The next area I want to deal with is illicit drugs. The United States has spent billions of dollars trying to deal with the importation of drugs into the United States. They fail to recognise that nobody could export drugs to the United States if there is not somebody there to buy the drugs. That is the first thing. The second thing is even in the face of the most recent evidence where there are parts of the United States of America particularly in the Midwest where there is no cocaine, no marijuana, no imported drug... 6.40 p.m.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I said in particular states in the Midwest of the United States.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: These are police reports. Police reports are that 100 percent of the persons they are arresting today with drug offences that they are addicted to drugs manufactured in their neighbourhoods. They are not imported, not grown outside of the United States but actually manufactured in their neighbourhood.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Amphetamines and related drugs.

Now what is the clear message. The message is quite clear. That law and order has a role to play but law and order will never be the answer to the drug problem. I think that Barbados is more a victim of the international drug trade than to be an active participant in it. I do not think that there is any major trans-shipment of drugs through Barbados. There is no major trans-shipment of drugs through this country. We do not grow marijuana, we are not involved in the production of cocaine or anything like that.

This business of trying to get Barbados to reduce certain areas of its sovereignty in order to accommodate certain activities in respect of law and so on, I think it is a bunch of nonsense to begin with. I think what this court should be telling them is this, that drug addiction like all addiction is fundamentally a public health issue and like all other public health issues it can be helped by law but it cannot be cured by law. I happen to know that there is an abundance of research information available to the United States of America which puts it beyond any doubt whatsoever that the drug problem in the world today is fundamentally a public health problem. Little research has gone into that and there is little response to that. All you get is a lot of political gimmicks like just say no and this kind of

thing. That does not in any way influence the extent to which people get hook on drugs or to the numbers of people involved in the drug trade.

Barbados' position should be this. Tell them (1) we do not grow the drugs (2) we do not manufacture the drugs. In fact as far as I am aware only one small manufacturing thing started here about 15 years ago and the chemist was so incompetent that within two days he had half his brains blown off by fumes from the drugs. That is about 15 years ago and it is the only incident that I know when one attempted to manufacture a drug in Barbados. We do not grow it, we do not manufacture it, we do not export, there may be some drugs coming through by way of trans-shipment but we are not prepared to compromise our sovereignty in anyway. We will do our bit as part of the community of nations on this earth but stop putting out there in propaganda that Barbados is significantly involved in anyway in the international drug problem. If anything, we are the victims of the whole lot.

The next area I want to pay a little attention to, if I have the time, is the question of NGOs. I think the Minister, I have heard her on several occasions talking about the role of NGOs and so on in the furtherance of economic development and in the furtherance of foreign policy. Be careful! A lot of these developed countries have recognised that when they face a political situation in the country as far as elected individuals are concerned which they cannot get around, they spread their influence through NGOs which are in many instances very dependant on them for funding and from agencies in that country. I sincerely hope that Minister would take this warning very careful. You can find that your foreign policy in a country could be severely undermined by the influence which those countries can have on highly credible NGOs.

I recall when NAFTA was being sold to the Caribbean people. I recall when the CBI was being sold to the Caribbean people. I recall when there was the beginning of attempts to sell free trade. Ask yourself, who were the people taking the initiatives in Barbados and around the Caribbean. Look back through the newspapers and see who had the conferences, look back and see who financed those conferences and you could see distinct and clear evidence of attempts to influence policy through NGOs here in Barbados and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

I would strongly warn that you should be very careful and not to pin too much hope on NGOs unless they clearly understand that when they operate in your country, they operate within the confines of policy articulated by the Government of Barbados; articulated policies put in place by the Government of Barbados and preferably policies put in place by the Parliament of Barbados and with a Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in place. I do not know why the Minister is so reluctant to support the concept of a permanent Select Committee on foreign affairs. It can only help you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am the largest, loudest proponent. Nobody is a greater supporter of that than me.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very glad that you are in your place now and if you are a great supporter of that, I would hope that coming out of this debate soon from now we will see steps taken in this Parliament to establish such a permanent Select Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Sir, I want to deal very briefly with the issue of globalisation and the issue of free trade. Lots of Barbadians have reacted to this as though it is some panacea for them. My view is that that it is going to put a lot of the economies of small countries at considerable risk. I recall the NAFTA experience and I recall that within a matter of less than a year that the Mexican economy was in turmoil from which it has not yet recovered as a result of trading on NAFTA.

If you look and see what is happening now in the economies of the Far East. Same problem. This is a part of the problem of free trade and free movement of capital. If you see what is happening now with the massive devaluations that are taking place and the enforcements by the International Monetary Fund and the precondition that American capital, especially in the banking area, must be allowed to take over these assets. It is a perfect recipe for economic recolonisation of an area.

That is why it is my belief that our Number One thrust in foreign policy must be to strengthen our economic base. You can only strengthen that by being a single economy and that would help us to withstand a lot of those shocks. Quite frankly, when you look at all the elements of free trade and globalisation, there are a great risk. I have heard the Minister spend a lot of time dealing with the opportunities of the information age grafted on to that. Sure, it can work that way too but we have to be exceedingly careful and clearly understand the risk to which the country is exposed and not take for granted that it would be smooth sailing all along.

As far as this area is concerned, our relationship with the United States friends, I really feel very strongly that we should seek to have a very friendly and productive relationship with the United States on the clear understanding of mutual respect for nationhood and sovereignty. That is where the problem is going to arise. Every single person in Barbados respects the nationhood and sovereignty of the United States. I cannot say that there is a broad consensus of opinion on the Hill or anywhere in the United States which sees these territories other than as some kind of humbug in the Western Hemisphere. We must

constantly seek to remind them and to assert our sovereignty whenever any threat is presented to the people of Barbados and to the sovereignty of the people of Barbados or anyone in this region. 6.50 p.m.

Sir, I believe that foreign affairs presents an important challenge and the biggest challenge is to make it meaningful to the ordinary person. To be able to speak a language which people can easily understand and which they can relate to emotionally, where they recognise that when decisions are taken at a particular level that it is something that is being done in their interest and in the interest of generations to come.

I have sought, Mr. Speaker, in this very brief presentation to try to present what I have to say in a way which I feel would relate to a large number of people in Barbados and at least if they recognise that the foreign affairs thrust of Barbados limited in scope though it must necessarily be because of lack of resources and other factors that it is something that is very critical to the development of this nation.

On the issue of tourism and the environment I do not think that enough is being done to look at the environmental pollution related to tourism not only in physical terms but also in human terms, the impact which tourism has on human beings through their inter-relationships with tourists and so on. This is something that needs to be studied in greater detail and I believe that the last fairly comprehensive study I saw of this was at the University about 10 years ago, a very interesting study done 10 years ago looking at the human pollution that occurs or can occur as a consequence of tourism and how it is beginning to affect Barbados in certain specific areas.

That too, Mr. Speaker, has a significant foreign affairs component and it would have been nice, Sir, and I sincerely hope that we will have the opportunity to debate each and every one of these issues over the months and the years ahead because each and every one deserves a full parliamentary debate which I hope will be televised because then you can get into details on each and every matter affecting the particular head. This, Sir, should be the subject of several debates. No one debate can do more than just give a kind of summary or capsule vision of what is involved. If the Minister does not bring these matters before the House for further debate, what I should undertake to do and I promise I will do this, is to continue to bring my Resolutions, Sir, before Parliament and hopefully we would be able to get them going by way of Resolutions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Friday morning, 14th August at 10.30 a.m.

We want to, if possible, conclude this debate on Friday. The Order Paper is really quite heavy, Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking on the adjournment, and we would hope to be able to dispose of some other matters on Friday was well. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has indicated that a Budget is imminent and we want to be able to work the Order Paper as much as we can in advance of that hoping that once we have concluded it the House would be able to go into a very late but very much needed recess, so 10:30 rather than 11:00 a.m on Friday, Sir.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 7.00 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER .....

The Minutes of the Meeting of Friday, August 11, 1998 were deferred.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR 2**

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 16) Order, 1998.

2. The Insurance (Barbados Light and Power Company Limited) (Self-Insurance Fund) Regulations, 1998.

3. The Insurance (Co-operators General Insurance Company Limited) (Extension) Order, 1998.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2

Notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 42 was ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2

Suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 were suspended for the remainder of the Sitting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 - RESOLUTION TO COMMEND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF GOVERN MENT 2

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 2; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 20; Dr. R. C. Haynes, 41.

SUSPENSION 12

ADJOURNMENT 46

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, 46.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

HAYNES, Dr. R. C. (St. Michael South Central)
MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown)
TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)