

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, March 16, 1998

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Monday, March 16, 1998.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.), J.P.
Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. B. M. TATTT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)
Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.
Hon. G. W. PAYNE, (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)
Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN

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

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance)

Prayers were led by Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, March 10, 1998 and Friday, March 6, 1998.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly of Tuesday, March 10, 1998 and Friday, March 6, 1998, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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Mr. SPEAKER: If they are no corrections or observations, let those Minutes stand confirm.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Income Tax Amendment Bill be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

The question that those Standing Orders be suspended for the rest of the day's sitting was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 1 - SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 1998.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue which today will be the subject of debate in this Parliament must be conceived of as constituting part of a continuum, must be conceived of, Sir, as essentially constituting an integral, coherent, consistent and sustained development programme that is intended to transform Barbados in the early 21st century into a developed society with all that it entails. I do not believe that anybody can challenge the worthiness of that objective. He can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that for the purposes of sustained and meaningful development to be accomplished, a number of crucial strategic challenges have first to be met. Amongst these, and perhaps paramount, in the last few years has been the need to realize and to secure and to consolidate the recovery from the economic depression of the early 1990s, in so doing, Sir, to create the conditions for the maintenance of economic stability through a combination of fiscal prudence, monetary restraint and responsibility, complementary incomes and prices policies and especially so, Sir, fundamental conditions of stability resting on the security of measures to protect and to enhance this country's competitive position.

I make bold, at the outset of this debate, Sir, to say that Barbados has realized that recovery and has established the conditions for lasting economic stability, stability without which no further economic and social progress can be contemplated. Having secured the foundations of the economy, Sir, having established a fundamentally sound condition of stability, we are now in a position to mount and carry through a programme to bring about vigorous broadly based economic growth and development and to institute new measures to widen the economic opportunities in Barbados, to effectively reposition Barbados in the new global economy and to ensure that our economic growth and our material development truly take place within the context of social justice.

The first two sets of Estimates that I had the honour to present to this House in 1995 and 1996 were designed to consolidate recovery and to establish the conditions for economic stability. We must not assume in the light of the tenuous nature of the recovery realised up to 1994 that a full recovery had been either realised or consolidated. The first two sets of Estimates were designed to consolidate the recovery and to firmly establish the conditions for economic stability.

Last year's Estimates and this year's Estimates reflect a change of pace by the Government without losing sight of the need for fiscal prudence, they have been designed with the intent of contributing to the achievement of vigorous economic growth with carefully built-in mechanisms to ensure that the benefits of that vigorous growth are automatically passed on in terms of improved benefits to the vulnerable and the marginalised of this society.

Mr. Speaker, in setting the tone for the debate on these Estimates, from the point of view of broad strategic objectives, I ask only that they be judged by reference to three predominant sets of criteria.

The first: How will these Estimates contribute to the achievement of vigorous economic growth and development and sustainable economic growth and development without undermining the foundations of the stability and the recovery that have thus far been achieved?

That is crucial, Sir. We need vigorous and sustained growth but in the context of fiscal prudence and sound economic fundamentals. The question is: Are we proceeding to bring about that vigorous economic growth in the right way and in the right manner without losing the need to keep this country stable?

The second, Sir, is: To what extent will they assist in bringing about lasting and genuine social progress without any sacrifice of fiscal prudence and without any relaxation of the monetary responsibility which, together, are crucial

for maintaining our fixed exchange rate at the centre of our social progress?

The third issue, the issue that gains currency in the light of the changed global circumstances in which we are now functioning is: To what extent will these Estimates assist in repositioning this society to face the challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities in the new global economy in which we now live and in which these Estimates will work themselves out?

Those are the broad strategic matters, Mr. Speaker, that were taken into account in the presentation of these Estimates. Strong vigorous growth, the passing on of the benefits of material development in improved social advancement, the repositioning of Barbados to make it a sounder, stronger, more competitive society and a new intensively competitive global environment.

I truly believe, Mr. Speaker, thinking in broad strategic terms at the outset that these Estimates will assist in the accomplishment of the objectives set, namely, they will assist in ensuring our development of a stronger and a more robust economy, capable of meeting the needs of those without jobs, capable of ensuring a higher quality of life for the citizenry at large. 10.30 a.m.

I believe from a strategic point of view that the Estimates will contribute to carrying us more toward the accomplishment of a more just and a fair society and I do truly believe that these Estimates will enable us to contemplate building a more competitive economy and a society better able to cope with the challenges of surviving and prospering in a new global age.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Estimates cannot only in their preparation be informed by broad strategic objectives. They have to be structured deliberately and practically to meet certain crucial short-term management related objectives which, if not addressed properly, can frustrate the achievement of the longer term more strategic objectives. And from a tactical point of view, Mr. Speaker, in terms of short-term economic management matters, these Estimates have been designed to enable us to bring into account the most generous wage settlements in recent times, and to bring this into account without undermining our fiscal position and our overall economic and financial stability and without undermining the competitive position of the Barbados economy at large.

As a result therefore, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the composition of Government's current expenditure in particular, Sir, you will observe the exercise of strict fiscal discipline so as to enable us to bring into account a substantial wage increase without allowing that wage increase to undermine the fiscal position. We have, obviously, to treat this as a tactical short-term consideration.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Estimates and in particular the proposed financing of the Government's deficit have been structured to enable us to respond appropriately to the need for flexible responses to certain cyclical trends in the economy not the least being a surge in private investments, a tightening of the domestic liquidity situation, and the obvious slowing down of Government's capacity to rely only or largely on domestic financing of the deficit in the way we have done in the last two years.

When it comes to discussing Government's proposed financing of the deficit, Sir, I will seek to explain how we have restructured the Government's proposed financing of the deficit to accommodate the fact of potentially larger private domestic investment in the context of a tightening financial liquidity situation in the country.

The third tactical issue, Sir, that has had to be addressed is the issue as to how we should bring into account the largest capital programme ever conceived and to reconcile the carrying out of that capital programme with the prospects of that expanded public sector investment programme coinciding with a boom in private investment.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is a need for the Government as it conceives of its public investment programmes to have a holistic view of investment patterns in the economy, to recognise that public investment will take place at a time when there is a surge in private investment, to recognise, Sir, that as salutary as both private and public investment flows are, that the society will do itself an injustice if we were to over-extend ourselves in relation to the institutional and human resource capabilities available to carry out investment, Sir. So that technically separate and distinct from questions such as the aggregate and size of the deficit and the financing, Sir, matters pertaining to the institutional capability of Barbados to carry out large scale public and private investment simultaneously have had to be factored into these Estimates to prevent a recurrence of situations that have happened in the past where our problem has not been little activity but too much activity, badly sequenced and may I say also, Sir, badly financed.

I am determined, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the surge in activity in both the public and private sectors is structured to bear a sensible relationship to our absorptive capacity with the financial resources available, for the discharge takes awareness of the human stock available for their support, Sir, and that there will be an appropriate sense of phasing and resort to the appropriate financial mechanisms to create the beneficial situation where the boom does not lead to a bust.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this presentation of these Estimates should be set in the context of these strategic objectives to which I have spoken, Sir, as well as to the short-term economic management objectives that I have identified.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, at the outset as well, to set the presentation of the Estimates in the context of the recent performance of the economy and the immediate economic prospects that confront Barbados. We are now at a juncture where Barbados¹ economic performance and prospects are both bright and where our problems are now being described as the potential problems of over extension and over performance rather than the problem of under performance.

I am frank enough* Mr. Speaker, to recognise that you have to be careful in how you manage your booms. You also have to be careful in how you bring about conditions of stability to interface with economic downturns. Our situation, all of the evidence by all objective observers, points to the fact that our economic circumstances are bright and the prospects for sustained growth and development are real. Our major problem, Mr. Speaker, is to avoid overheating of the economy, over-extension of ourselves in relation to institutional financial and human resources necessary to carry us forward in an orderly fashion. 10.40 a.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:....! will speak to that issue today, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the evidence is clear. The Central Bank has provisionally estimated that Barbados in 1997 enjoyed its 5th consecutive year of economic growth and we are poised to enter our 6th. That is an achievement in itself.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, the real rate of growth realised in 1997 of 4.3% was higher than the annual average rate of growth of 3.2% realised over the course of the previous 4 years and, in fact, it was higher than what we ourselves set as the sustainable rate of growth for the Barbados economy. I would like to repeat that, Sir. The economy that was emerging from the recovery, growing at about 3%, has started to grow at a rate of 4%. So it is a clear signal that there has been an acceleration in the recovery.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Michael South is about to say that I can accept tutelage. As I said, if he wants me to issue any credit, no problem with me whatsoever. I have no difficulty with saying so. All I am saying, is that we are growing. We have started to grow at a faster rate than what we regard as the sustainable rate of growth of the Barbados economy, because we have said that we believe we can sustain 3V₂% without putting a strain on our institutional capabilities, our financial capabilities, our human resource capabilities and, therefore, Sir, I have that perspective that we have to be careful. That

was a critical comment on the member for St. Michael South Central.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is an entirely salutary index. To my mind what has been even more salutary is the fact that the growth has been driven by our bringing about a sensible balance between the trading and the non-trading sectors, because in a small open economy, for growth to be sustainable it is crucial that the correct balance be struck between those sectors that earn foreign exchange and those that consume foreign exchange and your growth path is likely to be most sustainable when the stimulus for growth and development is coming more from the trading sectors, the foreign exchange earning sectors, than from the non-trading sectors. Last year, as in the previous years, the sectors that earned foreign exchange in Barbados continues to grow at a faster rate than those sectors which use or which consume foreign exchange. That, Sir, is a reflection of an underlying strength in the economy that we would do well to recognise and to understand that to sustain it we have ever to be vigilant about sustaining our competitive position as it relates to our foreign exchange sectors.

Real activity in the tourism sector was salutary, but I am pleased to say that once again the growth was not only in advance of the annual average rate of growth in the initial stages of the recovery. I am also pleased to report that the growth was not only driven by the trading sectors but that the growth was broadly based, that all major producing sectors of the Barbados economy - tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and the whole welter of services, all contributed in some respect, some more than others, but all contributed in some respect to the overall growth of the economy.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we avoid a situation where this economy goes back to a Dutch disease syndrome where there is a disproportionate reliance upon one or two sectors but try to create and sustain conditions for broad-based economic growth in this country to have the economy firing on all cylinders.

Last year, yes, the foreign exchange sectors were in the lead but all of the sectors in the Barbados economy in lesser or greater measure contributed to the economic growth. Manufacturing by 2.6%, sugar by 9% and the wholesale/retail and the services sector by as much as 5%.

The information also indicates that after a surge in inflation in the first half of the year, that inflation has stabilised and on a point to point basis a rate of inflation of 3.6% was realised for the year so that we continue to have sustained economic growth within the context of a relatively stable price level in Barbados.

In relation to the external position, last year I announced that because our foreign reserves were performing far better than expected and because we had far

exceeded the ratio of reserves to import cover necessary for the purposes of safety we were proposing to service the foreign debt and to meet the expected surge in the demand for imports from the foreign reserves rather than resorting last year to any foreign commercial borrowing for the purpose.

So we had a deliberate strategy last year that we put some of our reserves into the sinking fund to build up the sinking fund. We paid our foreign debt, including the first tranche of the Bankers' Trust, \$40 million debt out of the reserves. We met the expected surge in the increase in demand for imports, after the uncertainties surrounding the VAT had gone, from the reserves. The reserves in the first half of the year increased by \$130 million but they declined in the second half in pursuit of that deliberate strategy.

For 1997, the net reserves increased overall by \$30 million. I am pleased to report also that in the first quarter of the year there has been a continuous growth in the reserves again and I will come back to this issue. In this instance, the surge in the reserves in the first quarter is being driven again by foreign exchange earnings, particularly from tourism but most especially, I want to stress this point, from sustainable long-term capital inflows.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados is in many respects starting to develop a kind of love, hate relationship to foreign capital but in many respects we should learn from the lessons of the Eastern Asia so-called miracle that speculative short-term capital inflows designed to take advantage of currency fluctuation or aberrations in stock markets have no place in this society. Those who feel that we should go the way of other countries and institute flexible exchange rates to enable people to make a lot of money from just sitting down, not working, but speculating in the value of currencies as some people are doing now internationally or to have rules governing the operation of our securities exchange where short-term capital comes in to buy Barbadian shares in Barbados companies to realise quick capital gains, off-load them and take back out the foreign exchange, those things have no place in Barbados either.

I want to stress that point, Sir, because the notion of unbridled liberalisation in financial markets, in capital markets and securities markets has been shown to be a problem facing economies that are as vulnerable as ours.

I know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we will from time to time hear this chorus of voices pleading with us to liberalise the capital market, allow unrestricted capital movement for all kinds of purposes. We should be warned that we are better served, not by relying on short-term speculative capital inflows to take advantage of the aberrations in money and capital markets, but that Barbados is well served by having long-term direct investment related to the financing of investment that can expand on

a permanent basis this country's foreign exchange earnings capabilities in particular. 10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker I just want to say from the Floor of this House that in support of the balance of payments and also in support of Barbados' long-term sustainable development prospects, the Government will continue to give support to private capital inflows that are designed to expand real capacity in this country, particularly real capacity geared to enhance our foreign exchange earning capability. Those people who expect us to relax property transfer taxes and remove exchange controls to enable all kinds of speculative short-term capital activity to take place in the country are going to be continually disappointed in the reactions of this administration,

May I then say, Mr. Speaker, that we anticipate a relative strengthening of the balance of payments based...

Aside,

Rt. Hon. O S« ARTHUR: I am hearing a squeaky voice, Mr. Speaker, as though Malik has come into the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate a continued strengthening. I want to stress the point, Sir. We anticipate a continued improvement in our balance of payments and, at least, the holding of a sound balance of payments position driven by enhanced foreign exchange earnings and by sustained private capital inflows related to the financing of high value, high income, high foreign exchange earnings projects in the export sectors of Barbados.

'Sir, as I mentioned, there has been somewhat of a tightening of the liquidity situation in Barbados. Over the course of the last few years some of our fiscal planning has obviously been conditioned by the availability of excess liquidity in the system.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, Government contributed to the relative restoration of a balance in the liquidity situation by taking a lot of the deposits out of the system and investing them in foreign securities. That was done as a deliberate strategy, Mr. Speaker. You will find, for example, the Industrial Credit Fund deposits were taken out and invested abroad. We built up the sinking fund at a rapid rate, and more rapid than necessary. In fact, we probably have about \$ 100 million in sinking funds now and that was a way of drawing money from the system to redress the fact of there being too rampant a liquidity situation in Barbados,

When there is too rampant an excess liquidity situation, Mr. Speaker, as you know there is a tendency for people who have an eye for speculative capital

inflows wanting to take the hard earned savings of the Barbados public and do serious things with them abroad. It is better that the Government takes them and puts them in sinking funds abroad rather than allow...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Richie Haynes, Sir, is a fellow that* has that kind of money. The only people who can buy millions and millions of dollars in foreign exchange are people who have millions and millions of dollars in domestic currency. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West can never be in that position.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House since I neither have any such resources nor propensities.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, there may not be a propensity...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member now is portraying me as a poverty-stricken MP. I have to be very careful with that also.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West gets up to proclaim the possession of his millions and I do not know where they have come from. He might want to tell us.

As for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, he may not have the inclination but he simply has the resources. I want to really make one point, that in order to have access to a lot of foreign exchange you need to have a lot of access to domestic currency. You cannot buy foreign exchange unless you have a lot of cash, and I stand on the point.

Mr. Speaker, there has been somewhat of a change in the liquidity situation as compared to the situation that faced us over the last two years. It indicates the virtues of the Government not having responded to the pressure from the banking system to radically change the structure of our interest rate regime in response to what they thought was too excessive a liquidity situation. We felt, as I said in last year's Budget, that there were ways of working itself down and we have found a way of stabilising it.

The point in all this, Mr. Speaker, is that the extent to which Government can depend upon domestic financing of its deficit this financial year to come, is reduced relative to our capacity to rely on it in the last two financial years. The financing of the deficit proposed is to be judged by reference to whether Government has been cognizant of the trends in the financial market and has taken the steps to deal with them appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, the outlook for 1998, I am told, is also relatively bright. The Central Bank estimates that the economy is projected to grow at about 3% in 1998 which would be in keeping with what we would set as the sustained level of economic growth. The growth in the economy again, Mr. Speaker, is likely to be energised by foreign exchange earning activities, higher levels of investment, particularly in tourism related activities and capital formation. I want to stick on that point, Sir. We are now about to enter a phase where high levels of capital formation by both the Government and the private sector can carry Barbados to a new plateau of economic accomplishment for the next 10 years if properly managed. 11.00a.m.

We expect as well that this year's inflation will revert to normal rates of less than three per cent. We expect, Sir, some improvement in the net international reserves on the strength of higher receipts from tourism particularly and on the strength of increased long-term capital inflows and generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, our focus is now to ensure that the boom is properly managed.

I want in that context, Mr. Speaker to present the projected outturn for the last fiscal year and to give a policy meaning to the Estimates that are before the House. You will recall that on March 17 last year I came to Parliament and sought approval of the House for the Government to collect current revenue of \$1.297 billion and to make current and capital expenditures of \$1.646 billion. Sir, the Estimates available to us at this time suggest that we are likely to collect \$1.493 billion or just about \$195 million more than we had forecast, and that the Estimates of current and capital expenditures will be about \$1.766 billion or \$120 million more than we asked the House to spend.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is already a widely opened and discussed secret that the Value Added Tax accounted for about 70% of the excess of revenue over our initial projections, Sir. I just want to say in this matter that our own perception of the structure and the performance of the Barbados economy is now changing in the light of the performance of the Value Added Tax. I think, Sir, that the case can be easily sustained, that nominal GDP in this country has been substantially understated for many years. It has been understated because Barbados has been following a deliberate strategy to become more and more of a service economy and we all know of the intrinsic difficulty of measuring service activities. I remember teaching a course in National Accounts at the University in the 1970s and the socialist national accounts as used by the Eastern European countries entirely excluded services from the composition of national domestic product. There has always been an intrinsic difficulty in measuring the

value of services in Barbados as Barbados becomes more and more of a robust service economy.

What the value added indirect tax reform has done, Sir, is that they have brought into the tax net services and with it, the most robust part of the Barbados economy. May I remind the House that the old consumption taxes and most of the taxes that have been abolished, but particularly the consumption taxes, Sir, and the stamp duty and import duty, fell on goods. The perception of underestimation of the Value Added Tax is but a reflection of an underestimation as well of the GDP. At some stage the Department of Statistics will have to undertake the exercise, not to correct for this year...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: At some stage there will have to be a set of normal GDP Estimates in Barbados to properly reflect the changing composition of the structure of the economy and the relative increase in the contribution of services to the Gross Domestic Product. That is a fact, Sir.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not embarrassed by the receipts. The receipts are also in part a result of the fact that the economy has grown faster than we also anticipated for which I am thankful, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I always make that point to warn those who have called upon us to make draconian changes in the rate that I will resist a change in the rate of the indirect taxes because the new indirect taxes must serve us in the good times and as it is doing now, Sir, but it must also serve in the bad.

Let us therefore not be confused by a misrepresentation of the significance of the short-term bounty that we have realised by imposing a broad-based consumption based tax in an expanding service economy. Tint is the reality. We have been fortunate in bringing into the tax net a lot of services that should have been subject to taxes for many years in the past. It now gives the Minister of Finance a lot more elbow room because the indirect taxes system now falls on a broader range of goods and services and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that you will see in the future less of a fluctuation in the receipts from indirect taxes because they now fall less narrowly on a restricted range of goods. I make the point that the Value Added Tax accounted for 30% of the difference between projected and realised because the income tax and direct taxes also performed very well too.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, we also realised an increase in the import duties. One of the intended benefits of the 'Value Added Tax was that it was intended to discourage

people from wanting to under-invoice their imports. That is a fact. A proper paper trail is being done by the Value Added Tax that will better enable us to compute income taxes in the future because a lot of service providers who were not carrying their fair share of tax in the past are now leaving a paper trail, Sir. Also, at the Port there is going to be an improvement because a person who is going to offset his input taxes is hardly going to conspire with anybody to under-invoice his imports.

We have already started to see those salutary benefits arise from our courageous decision in the face of the strident opposition from those who conceived of the VAT to carry through with it. Sir, the anticipated revenue of the Government allowed us also to expand our expenditures including bringing into account a \$40 million wage increase and yet at the end of the financial year we would end up with an overall fiscal deficit of about 1.5% of the GDP for this fiscal year. At the start of the fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, we had anticipated a deficit of about \$348 million. We anticipate now, Sir, a deficit of about \$260 million but I would like, Sir, to speak to some of the factors that have occasioned an increase in our current expenditures by an amount of \$129 million over what was initially forecast. 11.10a.m.

As I have said, Sir, of that \$129 million, \$40 million has to do with the increase in wages and salaries and the associated National Insurance contributions for the public sector.

The largest increase, Sir, in current expenditures above what was forecast however had to do with an approximate \$59 million increase beyond what was anticipated in current transfers and in this respect, Mr. Speaker, the Transport Board, during the course of the fiscal year, accounted directly for \$20 million of anticipated expenditure directly and we had to provide \$7.5 million to the Ministry of Education and the Welfare Department to enable them to meet the cost of accumulated arrears to the Transport Board for the transportation of school children, pensioners and the disabled. So that \$59 million in current transfers above what was anticipated by the Transport Board alone, Mr. Speaker, accounted for \$20 million in direct subsidies and we had to find the funds to meet the cost of accumulated arrears amounting to \$8 million.

I cannot over emphasise the point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Barbados cannot be committed, Sir, to a new bout of instability where excessive transfers to state corporations serve as the basis for an unanticipated increase in current expenditure. I want to stress that point, Sir, that we have to expect of statutory boards the same kind of levels of fiscal discipline that we expect of central government departments and we have put new management at the Transport Board, Sir, young new management. We have sought to capitalise the Transport Board, Sir. We

have sought to rationalise it by hiving off some of its most important cost centres, like the workshop. But to have to meet accumulated arrears of the Transport Board to the extent of \$20 million, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is a problem and were it not for the fact of the growth in revenues arising from the value added tax we could have had a problem. Twenty millions dollars, Sir, is just too large. As I said, Sir, we have, I think, given the Transport Board the resources to get the job done. They wanted a new fleet, Sir. We have upgraded the fleet. We have hived off some of their cost centres, Mr. Speaker, but we are paying a social cost, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and Barbados must continue. I would want to stress that we have a responsibility to meet the need for transportation of those in this society, particularly those in the far flung constituencies who have to depend upon public transport and the Transport Board, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has a responsibility to be cost effective. I want to stress that point, Sir. It must be cost effective and this year we are not making any provision for a \$20 million subsidy because that was their accumulated arrears.

From the information we have been given as well, Sir, I tried to bring to account the accumulated arrears owed by the Welfare Department and the Ministry of Education for travel on the school buses but we have asked them to put a business plan in place that will enable us each year to meet our reasonable deficit of no more than \$5 million. Mr. Speaker, I think a \$5 million deficit, Sir, is reasonable and we can accommodate it, rather than these ballooning deficits that have done so much damage to this country in the past.

I really, Mr. Speaker, do not believe that this message must go unheeded. The Transport Board has been given the tools to get the job done, Sir. We expect an improved performance. The Government also, as you know, Sir, this year also had to pick up some unanticipated expenditures such as increased support for our welfare programmes in the light of the impact of the value added tax, the increase in expenditures in support of, for example, the candidacy of Sir George Alleyne and the like. But the reality, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that the growth in current transfers to state enterprises to subsidise inefficient operations factored as the major cause for the unanticipated increase in current expenditure during the course of the last financial year and we have to bring it under control, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the capital expenditure for last year, the year ending March, is now set to be \$258 million as compared to the projected \$267 million at the start of the Financial Year so that there has been a very modest shortfall in projected capital expenditure, \$9 million below what was projected. Generally speaking the capital programme has performed largely in line with expectations.

Of course, that \$9 million shortfall in capital expenditure is related in large part to the South Coast

Sewerage project which brings me, Mr. Speaker, to the outline of the fiscal deficit for the next fiscal year.

There are a number of factors that have constrained us as we set about to structure Government's revenues and expenditure for the next fiscal year. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to bring to account a number of adjustments this year already set in train that will reduce Government's revenues.

As the House is aware, in my budgetary presentation last September I announced an increase in the personal allowance from \$13 000 to \$15 000 and an increase in the allowance to pensioners from \$23 000 to \$30 000 a year and those two allowances combined will cost the Treasury about \$20 million in a full income year. So that is a constraint that has been taken account of.

The House is also aware, Mr. Speaker, that effective the 1st April this year, Barbados will introduce the fourth and final phase of the Caricom Common External Tariff. If I may refresh the House on this point, Sir, it was agreed early in 1989 when firm decisions were taken to implement a single market and economy in the Caribbean that there was going to be a four phased reduction in tariffs paid on extra-regional imports from a high of 45% on consumer goods in a sequence leading to the Common External Tariff being 20% by 1998. Barbados has honoured its commitment every year and we are on the 1st of April this year going to reduce our top rate of import duty on extra regional goods to 20%.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak to that issue a bit because we have to understand why these things are being done. If our countries are going to compete in an international economy, where there is a progressive lowering of the rates of protectionism, our producers can only become competitive if they look less and less to the protective barriers of high import duties as a shield from competition from the rest of the world. 11.20a.m.

Over a four year period, Sir, our domestic producers would have been put in a position where they would have been gradually asked to become more competitive in the face of falling rates of protection from high import duties.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that as we contemplate the future, even a 20% common external tariff is likely to become an anachronism, and all of us who have an interest in fiscal planning as it relates to the repositioning of economies should be cognisant of the new phase on which we are about to embark.

Mr. Speaker, even as I am speaking to you, a meeting is taking place in Costa Rica at which Trade Ministers

of the Hemisphere will agree on the methodology and prepare a declaration to formally launch negotiations for a free trade area of the Americas by the year 2005.

What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that between now and 2005, all the things that have to be done to erect a free trade area, agreement on market access, agreement on value added to satisfy rules of origins, agreement on anti-dumping laws and so on have to be negotiated. But the key point, Sir, is that we will have to contemplate a future in which, over time, the 20% top rate of import duty will effectively and gradually be phased out.

If, Mr. Speaker, you contemplate a free trade area starting in the year 2005 and presuming that you get a period to phase in the provisions of the free trade area, it is to be anticipated that some time between the year 2005 and 2015 this stream of revenues from import duties is going to recede as it relates to revenues realised from import duties on goods coming from countries within the Americas.

Our participation in the free trade area of the Americas will, over time, have fiscal implications that we have to start to plan for now. Our situation, I think, is less drastic than The Bahamas which does not have an income tax and depends very, very heavily on import duties. Countries like St. Kitts, Antigua, Grenada that have not also put in place income taxes and do not have consumption based, broad based taxes like we do, will find themselves specially challenged as they cope with the new vagaries of a new free trade area of the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is compounded by the fact that under the LOME agreement...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:... the best that will be allowed is for a longer phased-in period. But it is the best that you can get. Rather than get 10 years to phase in, you will then get 15 years.

The reality that the House must be cognisant of is that we will bring to an end on April 1st the phasing in of the common external tariff as it relates to our obligations to Caricom but no sooner than we have done that, we will start a new process of negotiation in our own Hemisphere that could affect that 20% rate of import duties.

To complicate the matter, Mr. Speaker, as the House is aware, our relationship with Europe is so structured that any concessions that we give to any set of developing countries, we have also to confer on European Union countries. If we enter a free trade area with the Americas in which there is a commitment to phase out tariffs on American goods and Canadian goods, in any future

relationship with Europe that will have also to be a corresponding precept in the negotiations. Our fiscal planning as I have said, Sir, has to take into account how we reposition the economy in the world.

Mr. Speaker, beginning this year, very difficult negotiations will begin to take place with the European Union. I want to say this very clearly, I believe it reflects our loss, not of preferences, but our loss of important friendships. There was a time when I believe that we could look to certain European countries to defend and stoutly advance our interest and our causes. But there is a new mood in Europe, particularly on the part, I think, of the British Government, where pangs of conscience about the colonial past and any concern about the special relationship with Caribbean countries are being subsumed in a different definition of their strategic interest. We are seeing a new Europe and a new Britain that is concerned as much with a relationship with the emerging markets of Latin America as with maintaining the stability of the vulnerable ex-colonies of the West Indies. That is a fact.

We are also seeing a new Europe and a new Britain that is as concerned with its kith and kin in Eastern Europe as it is in maintaining the viability of countries in the Caribbean.

I am suggesting to the House that those of us who feel that you can go into negotiations hanging on to preferences and hanging on to non-reciprocal trade arrangements are going to be sadly disappointed. It behoves us, therefore, to have a long-term view of our fiscal planning, not just taking into account Government's revenue and expenditure concerns but to begin to fit our fiscal planning in the context of our trade arrangements and our societal re-organisation that will be induced or forced upon us by the changing nature of the new World Trade Organisation.

Mr. Speaker, I have said enough to suggest to you that the CET at 20% will hold for a while. At some time early in the 21st century, countries like Barbados will have to revisit their common external tariff. We will do so in the context of tough trade arrangements. That is why I am pleased, Sir, that one of the matters that we will ask the House to move in this debate is to establish a Barbadian presence in Geneva to better service our interest in the World Trade Organisation.

I am satisfied that the last time around the developed countries did not take the multilateral trading negotiation seriously enough. We were not present at the table when a lot of adjustments, not only reductions of tariffs on goods, but a whole new framework governing intellectual property, were put in place. New rules of trade that feature non-discriminatory reciprocal trade arrangements were

devised that can work to our disadvantage, and we were not present at the table. We must be present at the table on this occasion, Sir.

During the course of this debate, I have asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to cost for us what it will take for Barbados to have a presence in Geneva to service the WTO. I have also put to the countries of the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States, Sir, that one of the first things that we should do as a group of Eastern Caribbean states is to have joint representation so that in those fora of the world where we need to have a presence because it is crucial to our repositioning...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: We do not have a presence in Geneva at all. Jamaica has a presence. Sir, it is a shocking thing. There was no presence at all.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have made a point that in the years to come, if we are not careful the cost of Government is going to slowly spiral out of our control. We simply must go to Geneva and service the WTO well. The WTO still has 46 committees. We cannot look to go to Geneva with anything other than a high-powered presence with internationally trained lawyers, international tax planners and other people who can interpret for us the legal constructions that are coming out of the WTO. 11.30a.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have to be very serious at this juncture, therefore, to reposition this economy in the light of the new trade arrangements such that we get the very best advice from specialists, but also to make sure that we are represented where we must be properly represented.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No, we do not have to downsize. That is why I am strongly of the view that a confederation with countries that are on our similar development path is so crucial. We have to find the way of sharing the cost of education, health care, defence, judiciary, foreign service and rationalise reasonably, rather than each country trying to do what it cannot do properly, have a high quality educational, health care, defence foreign service and judicial system. Sir, it is now reaching the stage where these small economies in the face of shrinking resources will not be able to do these things well. There is an urgency attached to it, Sir. Good governance requires us to move in that direction.

I thought, Sir, I would put the CET and the reduction in the CET in that context, because it is a phase of something to come and the full implications have to be understood clearly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Estimates also reflect a \$16 million reduction in the Excise Tax on energy products and taking all these things into consideration, you will notice that the Estimates of projected revenue for the year to come reflect only a 5.6% increase in realisable revenue from last financial year. I want to stress that point, Sir. We have been conservative as well, I must say, because we still have to wait and see...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Probably too conservative. But I would rather, Sir, be too conservative and set expenditure in relation to a conservative estimate, than over estimate the revenue and then find that I have set in trend expenditure programmes that I cannot sustain.

Sir, we have used estimates of revenue that project an increase in Government's revenue by 5.6%, despite the fact that the economy is projected to grow by 3% in real terms. This is because we have brought into account the adjustments we have made in income tax allowances, the adjustments in the CET, and the \$16 million reduction in the take on Excise Tax from energy products.

Mr. Speaker, as a result we have brought the public sector wage increases to account in these Estimates, Sir, but have allowed current expenditures to rise by only 5.4%. I want to stress that, Sir, that current expenditures which is Government's expenditures for housekeeping for the next financial year have been set to increase by 5.4%. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the largest component of that projected increase is the increase in the wages bill, but we also anticipate that there will be an increase in debt service. In fact, Sir, as part of the wages bill, the largest increment in current expenditure in the next financial year will be a \$22.5 million increase in the wages bill and in that respect, in May of this year, we will have to find \$48 million to service the last tranche of the Japanese bond.

So that what effectively we have sought to do is to bring the wage increase to account, to make provision for an increase in the debt service, but hold a very tight line on the rest of Government's current expenditures. And, we intend, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to follow through on that strategy as closely as we can. It means, Sir, that we have had to take a very determined position on transfers to state corporations. Obviously the \$20 million subsidy last year to the Transport Board was unprogrammed. But it is a one shot, and we do not have to replicate it. But, this year, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the two major transfers to state corporations are:

- (1) to the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC) of \$5 million and

- (2) six million dollars on the current account to the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC).

I want to speak briefly to the first, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report that the restructuring programme at the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation, has transformed the corporation, from a corporation that was losing more than \$5 million a year into one which this year is going to lose no more than half a million dollars, and is on its way to financial viability. I want to stress the point, Sir, that the BADMC has been restructured and it was losing \$5.5 million a year in operations and the restructuring has taken the form of our having to do some tough things, Sir, that the estates have been put under the management of the B AMC, where they started in the first instance.

We have privatised "The Hope", Sir, in St. Lucy.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: If you want to talk about it. We have privatised it on the basis of competitive tendering. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have passed on the motor tractor cultivation scheme to people who were working there and they are now providing a service to small farmers and making a living for themselves and their families from it.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Well, but they are making a living, Sir. It was never efficient, but they are now winning it, Mr. Speaker, Sir. They have passed on the workshop as well. We have as well, Sir, the Export Sgining Unit that was a drain. We have told the people to make a living for themselves. The monies that are put up, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the BADMC are not operating expenses, Mr. Speaker. We have given BADMC a government's guarantee to borrow money to settle its debts and to have working capital, Sir, with the understanding, Sir that the Government will help to service the debt for it until it has reached a situation of full viability. We are in fact, Mr. Speaker, Sir, bringing that into account.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: But, Sir, tough decisions have had to be taken and I commend the Chairman, the Board and the Management of the Corporation and Ministry of Agriculture for having the courage to take those tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the BIDC also has some extraordinary land tax arrears that have been the subject of

dispute for many many years. We have given them \$6 million to clear those arrears, but this is not going to be a transfer that will recur.

But, I want the word to go forward, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Government's statutory institutions have to exercise every precaution and institute every measure to give the public a cost effective quality service. They must not continue just to look indefinitely to the Consolidated Fund to support unsustainable deficits. We have had that problem with the Transport Board, but it is a matter that I would not wish to see re-occur. Sir, in terms of the expenditure, we are holding a line on current expenditures and the capital programme is anticipated to expand from \$256 million to \$320 million. 11.40a.m.

Before I come to the capital expenditures I would like to focus on 3 crucial activities by the State, 2 of which are likely to accrue as continued increased expenditures in the years to come. I feel that whenever we are on the point of introducing a new stream of expenditures the House should seize upon them and discuss them with great seriousness.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Barbados has an aging population and we will have to give serious consideration to how we provide institutional, community based and other types of care for old people, those who need acute health care, those who need residential type care and the like. But the care of the aged has emerged as a matter that is deserving of concerted priority and public attention.

Sir, I am not referring either to the Member for St. Michael South or the Member for St. Michael West. I am speaking in a generic way.

The care for the aged is a matter that needs properly to be addressed and the evidence as it presently stands is that inadequate solutions have been provided in this crucial field up to now. Indeed, I would say that there has been a - I do not want to say misuse - but part of the problem of managing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital properly is that it has become in part a residential institution for old people who are deposited there by relatives or who are committed there who do not necessarily need acute health care but are put there largely because there is no place else for them to go and there are two incredible costs of having the elderly citizens of Barbados put in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The first is that the cost of having them there is astronomical; but there is an opportunity cost because so many beds are taken up for other than acute care purposes at the hospital so that the hospital is not properly utilising the facilities that are there for a 600-bed hospital.

We therefore had to find a way, new institutional arrangements for treating the elderly. We have to distinguish between the need for residential care of

the elderly and acute care, and to put in place a framework such that non-governmental organisations can be brought into the picture with appropriate support and incentives but subject to regulations as they relate to the health care component of care for the elderly.

We have to bring the community back into caring for its own and this is what family values must be about. Sir, it may sound like a modest beginning but it has been identified as a problem that we must start dealing with now.

We have put in place not only expanded support for the existing health care institutions dealing with old people but we have put in for the first time monies for a project which we call Alternative Care of the Elderly.

Sir, we would like to provide direct support for nursing homes and others that have excess capacity to move some of the elderly citizens from the hospital, those who need only residential care, subject as I said to the drafting of proper standards and regulations pertaining to their use.

We are looking to expand the facilities of the Geriatric Hospital. We are looking for...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That was in anticipation of his becoming a resident.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Right Honourable Member is absolutely right since we never know who might become a resident, we should make sure that it is acceptable for each one of us. If we look at it in those ways then it would be acceptable for the rest of the population and that is a policy which was there and I will speak about it, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it will take more than we have provided this year to do it properly but as the Member for St. Michael West said we have to be careful how we involve non-governmental organisations. The care of the elderly in circumstances where we must maintain the quality of the acute health care they receive. So there has to be a set of regulations to address the matter, but I am serving notice to the House Mr. Speaker, that Barbados must be true to its old people. A new dispensation for the care of the elderly that is not institution based, that is not necessarily State led, will have to be put in place and resources found to carry this through in the pursuit of our becoming a more just and caring society.

This year, Sir, in addition to our continued commitment to the other programmes, we are starting it as

a pilot. We are discussing it with the officials in the sector but I cannot immediately begin to think of anything that is more worthwhile doing this year than to start an alternative and to do it well.

Sir, I would really hope that the House can all join in this issue in a constructive way because it is one of the most crucial social problems facing this society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House will also note that we have committed giving \$5 million this year for EduTech. This again is likely to be a project that - not this year, in the years to come - will factor as one of the sources of increased government expenditure which simply in the process of trying to reposition this society in the new global village we have drastically to revisit how we train our people, how we retrain our people and to do so without losing sight of the basic virtues of a sound education system, namely ensuring that there is no lapse at all in our mastery of the basic Rs, because that has to be the key, Sir.

EduTech is conceived as a project therefore that will be executed over a number of years but its planning from the outset has to be approached with due care and consideration, first of all to make sure that we do not end up creating a new world without addressing the imbalances of the old. 11.50a.m.

That is to say that we just do not superimpose a new sophisticated high-tech educational system on a basic education framework where we are not addressing basic virtues. All those things have to be attended to properly. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have to phase in EduTech in keeping with the availability of the resources necessary for its support no matter how attractive might be the solutions being sought. There must be a reconciliation of resource available with programmes and objectives being sought -

As a result we have this year committed \$5 million for EduTech so that comprehensive planning activity can be carried on, that we establish the dimensions for the programme, that we establish, the correct sequencing for the carrying out of the programme that we succeed in fusing the old virtues of a good sound education with the new virtues of a better trained and more relevantly trained workforce and a more rounded citizen and that we do it systematically.

The \$5 million that we put in EduTech this year is not intended to do much more than to make sure that the planning for it is done with reference to the very best advice. We anticipate putting the documents to the CDB and the IADB who have already agreed in principle, and when once we have managed to pin down the financing subject to having all of the feasibilities and the assessments necessary to our own particular satisfaction done, Sir,

then we will come back to the House to outline the level of financial support that this important project will get in future years.

I just want to say since we are at the inception that EduTech is now a line item in the Estimates. It is \$5 million this year but it is likely to grow in significance in the years to come as we grapple with the great challenge of completely reconsidering our stock of human resources to enable our human capital to be the cutting edge of our development and to make it more relevant in the new information technology of the future. This, Sir, might sound modest but just as we want to reposition Barbados as a society more caring of its old, we want to reposition Barbados in the new global economy to make us become a society that has a relevant stock of technology and human resources in relation to the demands of a globalised and highly technological world.

We are also saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that this year we have decided to increase the subvention to the Barbados Tourism Authority. When we assumed office, the Barbados Tourism Authority was receiving a subvention of \$28 million. We have increased it incrementally. This year we will give the Corporation \$43 million. The additional \$7 million has been designed to enable the Corporation to mount a more aggressive marketing programme in the United States market. There is no question that the tourism industry has done reasonably well, but we would be purblind not to recognise that we have come to depend fairly excessively on a continued strong performance from Europe, and that Barbados has in some respects to address some of the imbalances in our tourism marketing efforts.

It is intended that this \$7 million increase subvention to the Barbados Tourism Authority will enable us to feel that the erosion of our market share in the market can be arrested, and that we can look for a future tourism industry that is more balanced in terms of its arrival patterns and its market focus than the one that you had in the recent past. Again, Sir, that is a significant new increase and it gives the House the assurance that as we can find the resources we will have to continue to support an improved marketing effort by the Barbados Tourism Authority. I would have loved to tell the Deputy Prime Minister that I could have found \$50 million to give this year, but I cannot. They still need more than we are giving but I would hope that the additional \$7 million...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I want the House to be of a view that as a matter of priority should there be any increase in the revenues we should try to devote that increase in revenues to make sure that we have left no stone unturned in protecting Barbados' competitive position

in the competitive U.S. market for tourism, Sir. It is a national priority and I feel if we can get it right that the result would be a stronger economy and a stronger society in the years to come.

May I also say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the House should note that as regards the distribution of the benefits of material progress to the marginalised that there is an expansion in the vote to the Urban Development Commission. I think that is getting a \$10 million vote this year as compared to a \$6 million vote for the Rural Development Commission. The Urban Development Commission came into existence after the Rural and there is a very ambitious programme of urban renewal that awaits its urgent attention.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we speak in terms of house spots but we have identified 1800 derelict house spots in the greater Bridgetown area that if we were serious we can address that problem.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR. We are into that, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Funds are there to uplift communities by the putting in of community facilities. May I also say that in addition to the \$10 million direct subvention from the Consolidated Fund the Urban Development Commission will also have access to resources from the Social Investment Fund to start an Urban Enterprise Fund to provide small loans to people who want to start enterprises in urban Barbados, if Members of Parliament in particular submit community-based activities to the Poverty Alleviation Committee that it can also have access to them as an executing agency as it has already started to do in relation to housing.

There has been an expansion in the provision for both the Urban and the Rural Commissions because we do not feel that we should at this stage slacken the fight against poverty. The House will note that whereas last year the poverty eradication vote managed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs was \$10 million that this year I have set it at \$6 million. The reason is that last year you will recall, included in the \$10 million was a payment for grants to minimum-wage earners as a part of the reaction to the Value Added Tax. I accept the need for us to put in place a system to treat not just minimum-wage earners but low-income earners in Barbados. There is a class of Barbadians including the minimum wage earners, but also persons who are beneath the threshold at which you pay income tax, where people are not paying direct taxes but it does not mean, Sir, that they do not carry a tax burden because they are in the indirect tax net. Last year we put in place a system whereby they had one-shot grants to minimum-wage earners and we also gave income allowances that benefitted 14,000 people who fell into the income range between \$13,000 a year and \$15,000. The reality is that,

if people are not paying direct taxes, direct tax relief cannot help them. We have to find a mechanism to cater, and I am very careful with my words, Sir, not just to minimum wage earners as we did last year but to low income people who fall below the income threshold. 12.00 noon.

In due course, Sir, I will be speaking to the nature of the more permanent mechanism that will replace the cash grants, that recognises that even though low income earners may not pay income tax, they none-the-less pay indirect taxes and will want a reverse tax credit that I am giving thought to as to how that should be structured. But more on that, Sir. I do not want anybody to get up and say that the Government is reducing its commitment to the eradication of poverty, Sir, that we are replacing a system that was set in train last year with something that would be of more enduring benefit and geared not just to minimum wage earners but geared, Mr. Speaker, to low income earners who are still in the net because they are paying indirect taxes and for whom direct tax relief is not a solution.

Sir, in relation to the capital programme, I just want to say, Sir, that there is a view being trumpeted by certain people that the Government should put a complete halt on its own public investments and let the private sector run ahead with theirs and I want to comment upon it as I present to this House the concepts that inform the composition and the structuring of Government's capital programme for the year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not subscribe to the view that a dollar spent by the private sector on investments is any more worthy than a dollar spent by the Government on its investments particularly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the virtues of public investment are not only poured out in their direct returns but in the complementary role that they play in creating an environment within which private investment can thrive.

It is short-sighted, Mr. Speaker, not to recognise the complementarity between public and private investment particularly as we move towards having a society that will depend more and more on services and for which an infrastructure designed to support high quality services rather than the past commodity production must become part of our future.

It should be, Mr. Speaker, obvious to the purblind that Barbados cannot go forward as a high quality tourism destination, nor a good place for us to live, unless we commit ourselves to find the funding for sewerage solutions in Barbados. It just must be done, Sir.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have to find solutions to our solid waste management. These, Sir, are necessary to build a better society but without them private investments

as well will falter. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we have to carry on the work that has been started now for a generation on coastal conservation, to make sure that our patrimony is not eroded by indiscriminate private investment along the coasts of this country.

We have to defend the coastline and put in place, Mr. Speaker, measures that will enhance the coastline of Barbados. These things must be done and the private sector is not going to do it.

Can we doubt, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there is a value in our investing in the replacement of the water mains of Barbados as is happening now through a \$25 million programme started by the Water Authority because we have to deal with the fact that the water supply is the most important single physical constraint to the continued expansion of Barbados and the most important single constraint to the orderly development of this country? That we have already at existing levels of activity every year utilised 90% of the available water supply in a good year to say nothing of what would happen to us in a bad year, and that public investment to replace all the mains, because we are losing about 60% of all the water pumped, must be done? That there must be a desalination plant, and that we will also have to think in terms, over the long term, of putting in special expensive facilities to treat the water from the sewerage facilities, not necessarily for domestic purposes, Sir, but to augment the supply available for irrigation?

Sir, these things are absolutely necessary and have to be done, but they also have to be done to help create an environment within which a healthy society can flourish and a responsible public sector can also evolve on a sustainable basis.

Mr. Speaker, the Scotland District cries out for continuous intense activity if we are not to put 1/7 of our patrimony at risk and for years, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was penny wise but pound foolish to believe that anything other than an integrated approach to the management of Barbados' Scotland District, anything other than that it was pound foolish, to think that it would work. Money spent on the Scotland District is money very well spent.

Equally, Sir, who can doubt that our future as an export service society will depend on how we transform Bridgetown into a thriving metropolis, a place that is attractive as a duty free shopping area, a place, Sir, that attracts a higher range of services and that the transformation of Bridgetown is necessary. To do so we have to improve traffic management around Bridgetown, completely reconfigure the roads around Bridgetown in an orderly fashion. Who can doubt that if we do that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will end up having a better society but also one in which private enterprise can flourish?

I do not subscribe to the view, Mr. Speaker, therefore, Sir, that the Government has to be deferential in saying that public investments rank as a lower rung on the totem pole than private investment, that there is a complementarity between public and private investment such that once that complementarity can be established, we can support higher levels of private investments if we have a strategic collection of public investments that reinforce them. That, Sir, is what we have tried to capture in the composition of our capital estimates.

We have tried, Mr. Speaker, to bring to account projects for which foreign financing in particular has been identified. We have, therefore, tried to bring to account projects that have a high social and economic return as was reflected in their impact in helping to create a stronger society but also in their impact, Sir, in supporting a stronger economy and with it higher levels of foreign investment.

What am I speaking about, Sir? I am speaking, for example, about the expansion of the Grantley Adams Airport where we have to face the fact that an airport designed in one period on assumptions of peak demand is now proving to be inadequate in terms of its capacity because the peak demand has come perhaps 10 years sooner than projected. This year we are projecting to spend \$28 million on the Grantley Adams expansion to build a stronger society, a stronger economy, \$32 million on the South Coast Sewerage project - who can doubt that we have just to do that - \$11.5 million on solid waste management, absolutely necessary, \$5.5 million on coastal works to make sure that our beaches continue to be our beaches and are fully protected. Thirteen (13) million dollars on road rehabilitation in general, \$10 million on tenantry roads -all across Barbados. 12.10 p.m.

May I say, Sir, that I really am looking forward to the day, I am speaking in the early 21st century, when through the combined efforts of the Ministry of Public Works Subsidiary Roads Programme, the efforts of the Rural Development Commission and the efforts of the Urban Development Commission, the confusion about who gets a tenantry road or who does not get a tenantry road becomes part of a political past. Let us agree to commit the resources and put this thing behind us and give the society the assurance that there is a programme in place. This matter of having a road is not something that should be in the political domain.

Sir, this also applies to Society in St. John and other parts of St. John as well.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Yes, Society is coming very well.

May I say, Sir, that we were discussing with the Chinese the possibility of additional funding for a tenantry roads programme. We have asked the Minister of Public Works to put all the roads that want fixing in Barbados as one project, as one programme. Let us find the funding for it and set aside the funding. I am talking, Sir, about tenantry roads in St. Peter, St. John and St. George. Put them all as one programme, one project and seek funding for it.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, St. George and St. John are the two most agricultural areas in Barbados and they have the worst set of tenantry roads because most of the roads are long roads.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I hate to intervene in the Right Honourable Member's opening presentation but it is well known that in 1989 all of the tenantry roads in Barbados which were in need of repair, were identified. The Government was seeking to raise, I think, about \$60 million from Venezuela. The project came to grief in the end but it had started. In my constituency alone we did five roads. All of that work has been done. All you need to do now is to re-cost it and identify the money and stop talking about it year after year. Just do it!

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the then Minister of Public Works was very scrupulous in dealing with roads in urban Barbados. I would agree that the then Member, a Mr. Don Blackman had a programme for urban Barbados but I can tell this House with assurance that the programme for rural Barbados, those long roads in St. John and St. George has never before been properly costed nor had designs drawn for them. This is a fact!

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, may I say that last year the allocation for tenantry roads was increased from \$1 million a year, which it used to be, to \$8 million and this year, under the Ministry's tenantry roads programme, we propose to spend \$9.9 million.

In the area of education, Mr. Speaker, the rehabilitation of primary schools and keeping them in good repair is an urgent matter if we are to be satisfied that the basic virtues in education are maintained. We have \$9.3 million in repair related maintenance in the primary schools.

This year we anticipate substantially upgrading the facilities available to fishermen. \$1.7 million is earmarked to provide facilities at Consett Bay and Skeete's Bay.

Mr. Speaker, it is the first time that designs have been done for Consett Bay and Skeete's Bay despite all of the talk there is now and we have now gone out to tender for the first time.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There has been old talk about Consett Bay before but there were never designs. Now there are designs and they are out to tender.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He says it is not his fault but the monies have been there lying idle for years from the European Development Fund. But we have designs now.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, there is \$2.5 million for the Cheapside Market. We are using the Chinese funds for this purpose.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Our capital programme also recognises the economic and social virtues of improving the conditions under which justice in this country is dispensed. Funds are being provided this year, Mr. Speaker, for the works on a new judicial service centre, a new judicial centre to be constructed in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, apart from questions pertaining to the improvement in the dispensation of justice, it has now been established by careful analysis that the way in which justice is dispensed and the management of the justice system can affect 15% of a country's economic activity. Delays in having judgements, delays in dispensing justice or the manner in which the judicial system is administered can have direct economic implications.

I do not see it as other than a substantial investment both in the improvement in the institutions of our civil society and a substantial improvement in the quality of our judicial care system for these monies to be spent.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is also true we need a new forensic laboratory and the European Development Fund has been good enough to agree to finance this facility in large part and some \$5.3 million will be spent this year on a new forensic laboratory for Barbados. It will be intended as well to service not only Barbados but the countries of the Eastern Caribbean. The Minister of Home Affairs will talk about the facets of this when he has the chance to speak.

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate an expansion in capital programmes this year that will allow us to carry out a number of crucial project activities, all of which are

designed to build a better society and more especially, Mr. Speaker, are designed to enable us to support higher levels of private sector activity. 12.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the overall fiscal deficit planned for the next financial year is less than the overall fiscal deficit that was projected at the start of the last financial year and even without adjusting upwards, the GDP is intended to give rise to a deficit of no more than 2V₂% of the GDP.

I have from time immemorial, Mr. Speaker, stressed the point that I am prepared to acknowledge that a deficit in the vicinity of 2V₂% of the GDP represents the kind of deficit that we can sustain in this country without doing violence to the balance of payments or without putting a strain on our institutional financial and human capabilities.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I could go to four too, but to go to four will depend upon certain reconfigurations of capital or the existence of large pools of excess capacity in the country that make it worthwhile. May I stress the point, Sir, that if unemployment was at 18%, for example, I would be thinking of a higher deficit to expand the scope for employment creation and perhaps I would decide to go to four. But I feel that 2V₂% is under the existing situation, given the institutional capabilities of the country, given the liquidity of the system, given the stock of human capital, Sir, that 2V₂% is what I should aim at.

I am thinking of doing so, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the context of bringing into account a very generous wage increase. So that at the end of the day, we will have a deficit that is manageable, that will not, in my judgment, overburden our absorptive capacity, will not put pressure on the balance of payments, and will not put us in an unsustainable growth path. The key, in many respects to all of this is the way in which it is proposed that the deficit is to be financed.

In the course of the last two years, you will recall, Sir, that because of the higher levels of liquidity in the local banking system, the Government has utilised substantial domestic financing to meet the deficits that have arisen.

In 1996-1997, the Government used \$216 million of domestic financing to finance the deficit. In 1997-1998 they used \$241 million in domestic financing. But because we recognise that there is a tightening of the liquidity situation, accompanying by a surge in private investment, our estimates of expenditure and revenue and our overall fiscal plan for the next financial year, Sir, projects a cut in half of our reliance on domestic financing to carry the country forward.

So that whereas last year, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we borrowed \$241 million on the local market, in the next financial year we are projecting to borrow only \$112 million on the domestic market, a reduction in access to domestic credit that can give the House the assurance that we carry out the purposes of Government activity without increasing liquidity problems in Barbados, or without crowding out the private sector from having access to the finances necessary for their own purposes.

So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the size of this year's deficit has to be considered jointly in relation to the financing of the deficit and we are this year shifting away from reliance on domestic financing to increased use of project financing and a bit of commercial debt.

One hundred and twenty-nine million dollars is intended to be raised as project loans to support the projects I have identified. I said that most of our capital projects, Sir, are projects that have already attracted foreign financing and we anticipate, Mr. Speaker, raising \$83 million in financing from the IADB in the next financial year and \$24 million from the Caribbean Development Bank.

It is also true, Mr. Speaker, that for the last two fiscal years, although we did make provision in one fiscal year to do so, Barbados has not raised any commercial loans abroad. We have not for two fiscal years. As a result, Sir, we have been able to bring down the foreign commercial debt and Barbados now has a very sound debt profile. We have also pushed out the maturity of the debt, Sir, and in the light of the existing circumstances, Government proposes to go back to the market this year to support the overall fiscal position by raising approximately \$80 million in commercial debt.

We are thinking, Mr. Speaker, Sir, of a debt instrument with a maturity of at least ten years, so as to avoid any short-term bunching in the repayments. But may I say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Barbados is one of the countries whose debt standing improved in the recent international turmoil arising from the East Asian problems and that we can be assured to go to the market, not having borrowed for two years, in the context of stronger economic fundamentals and get a debt instrument that sensibly fits our liquidity circumstances.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that at the end of the day, if financed in this fashion, we can accommodate the Government's needs, the private sector's needs and not put Barbados in an unsustainable debt situation and that any balance of payments implications of an expanded capital programme will be mitigated by this recourse to project financing and commercial financing on the scale envisioned.

If we were looking to finance this capital programme on local sources, we would have a problem.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The timing is not right. No, and we put in place, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and we are serious about it, the arrangements such that if the market becomes available and right for us to have a self arrangement, we will do it. But the market is not yet right and we are continuing to service the Barclays loan at thirteen and a quarter percent. Although it is very expensive, we are continuing to do it, but the timing is not right. The benefit that we could get in terms of the savings' of foreign exchange is not worth the risk and therefore we are not going to do it until the timing is right. We said that from the very outset, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I commend these Estimates to the House. I commend them on the grounds that they ^reflect fiscal prudence, they reflect a strategic focus to consolidate our economy recovery to spur it on, to seriously address issues pertaining to the repositioning of this society. They reflect a recognition of the need to build a more socially responsible and caring society. I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the results being sought by the Government in terms of a stronger, more robust economy will lower employment and more investment opportunities will all be realised. I see strongly the desirable relationship between public investment and private investment to make sure that our efforts at socio-economic engineering do not falter. The limit of the overall deficit is within limits of 2VJ* that I have always thought to be manageable. The financing of the deficit will, I believe, not lead to the crowding out of the private sector investment and can be supported particularly in the light of the restraints that we have had in the last few years of commercial borrowing from abroad. 12.30 p.m.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Government still has to be vigilant. I give the House the assurance that I will continue to monitor Government's revenue carefully and, should the revenue projections not be realised, there are discretionary expenditures that we can restrain. I give the House the reassurance that we will be conscious of the need to be sensible in how we phase in these desired programmes, conscious of the need to reconcile programme delivery with domestic absorptive capacity and at the end of the day, having come thus far in advancing the cause of this society, that we will not turn back.

In that spirit, Sir, I commend these Estimates to Parliament.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

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

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this debate for 1998 Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure I do not propose to be very long in my opening comments. I believe that harsh experience and the conditions of play require adjustments from time to time but that the Estimates debate is a better debate the sooner that Members can get to the Heads of expenditure and that sometimes though the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter likes to throw the criticism at me that my opening submissions make no contact with the statistics contained in the Draft Estimates, the point is that when one does make contact with them circumstances can change so dramatically in the course of a fiscal year, even in the context of economic stability, that sometimes it is a pointless exercise simply regurgitating or recycling information which on paper makes sense but in the context of what happens in the fiscal year does not make sense. I could very well get up in this debate this year and I could talk about the under estimation of revenue. I could talk about the size of the projected fiscal deficit; but that is not necessary in the context, in my view, of an Estimates debate because the debate should be essentially about the policies and the programmes which the Government has opted to pursue in a given fiscal year. Only where we as members on this side see those figures which* are presented in the Estimates as clashing so significantly with reality or as being an indication of recklessness or lack of sensible planning on the part of the Government should one start to deal with those statistics in any great detail.

The Minister has said what the size of the deficit is. We have had arguments about that. In the early 90s the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter liked to talk about me appropriate size of the fiscal deficit. At the beginning of a fiscal year those who deal with practicalities know that that is really a non sequitur, because if your revenue outturn is higher or if you^ capital works programme is under executed you still have to make adjustments if you have a philosophy about an appropriate size for a fiscal deficit.

That is why very often in these debates I tend not to get too overexcited about what is presented and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter often tells us that he has no fixed anchor in matters of this sort, he is not an adamant man. Therefore, what would be the purpose of our

engaging in a sophisticated debate, not on fundamentals essentially but on projections which by everybody's admission like the unemployment statistics are rather suspect?

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me begin at a point where the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about the question of economic judgment being not only about managing but managing boom. In fact, that is what is perhaps the more difficult part of economic planning, the question of managing an economic boom.

In relation to the information provided there is reason for you to declare that there is an economic boom. It is Robert Bridges who said: "Our stability is but balanced and conduct lies in masterful administration of the unforeseen." That is what this exercise is about.

The question arises, are we in Barbados out of the cycle of boom and bust? That is a question that every morning if you put on Fox News, every day on CNN-FM, on the BBC Business News, economic planners and technocrats are asking whether the world's economic gurus have in fact found the cure for the cycle of bust and boom. Well, they can debate that. We in countries like Barbados which are still vulnerable - even to bust in very isolated locales which may not be worldwide in their impact - have to be very careful that we do not get caught up in the euphoria of that analysis which we are hearing every day on our televisions and radios. 1.40 p.m.

Economic stability, Mr. Speaker, which provides workers with stable jobs and businessmen and businesses with stable reasonably predicted markets with reduced input cost is desirable. Government wants an economic environment which provides it with revenue to undertake social engineering, meet the basic needs of citizens for housing, health, clothing, education and the development of safe and secure families.

What we have to ask in this Estimates debate, and I believe all of our colleagues on this side are *ad idem* about it, is where is Barbados right now? Every time somebody in this country asks that, we get a long list of things we should be proud about and the Honourable Member for St. Peter was not sparing this morning in listing those things we should be proud of. The economy is in its fifth consecutive year of growth. There are more opportunities, a more dynamic private sector and strong investment.

Now I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that I did not myself appreciate the point which the Honourable Member was making about short-term speculative investment as distinct from long-term capital inflows or external investment. I was getting a bit mixed up because I do not think Barbados has ever had an experience with...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Maybe. Therefore if the Honourable Member wants to enlighten us on that, well do that but my experience in relation to foreign investment in Barbados is that by and large it has not been speculative. It has not been investment that has hinged on the adjustment of the exchange rate or the view that the exchange rate is going to be adjusted.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There may be people with that view. I have not come across them myself in my experience in this regard. Therefore I believe there is a strong case to be made, and we on this side do not deny it, for major foreign capital inflows into Barbados in the form of long-term investment. Do not ever let us doubt that has played its role and will continue to play its role.

Now, we may have different views about how that investment should be managed, about how, in the face of that strong investment, if it exists, benefits have to be distributed more evenly throughout the society. We may have different views about the rights and responsibilities of those foreign investors across the political divide. We may have different views about the source of the foreign investment. Those may be other issues, but nobody on this side would deny that foreign investment, and particularly investment which is in the form of long-term investment which would impact on our competitiveness in the tourism sector, in manufacturing, in the services sector, or even in agriculture, has been of great benefit to Barbados and should continue to be of benefit to our country in the future.

Mr. Speaker, in his speech this morning the Honourable Member for St. Peter, apart from maybe talking about the role of statutory corporations and the concern he may have about the way we treat our elderly, I was a bit alarmed that speaking on behalf of the Government he failed to acknowledge that despite the economic performance Barbados still faces some very serious challenges. And it is our task to determine whether the presentation of this year's Estimates, not the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Peter, but what is contained in every Head, in every programme and subprogramme in these Estimates, is going to come into contact with what we identify as some of the major issues which confront our country. For despite what the Honourable Member for St. Peter says about the relative contributions of each sector, traded and non traded, to the economy in 1997, it is also true to say, by any analysis, that this economy is not really firing on all 4 cylinders. It may be firing on 2 and spluttering on the other 2. So we have a 4-cylinder economy functioning really on 2 cylinders.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot tell me that he is satisfied about the performance in the manufacturing sector nor, for that matter, can he tell me that he really knows how to assess and measure the performance in the offshore sector because up to now, despite the growth in development of that sector since the 1980s, we have not been able to get a firm grip on measuring its contribution to the Barbadian economy except in relation to some other spin-off benefits like jobs and real estate purchases where direct information may be made available to the Government, the number of registrations and the other statistics which are made available.

The real point is that we are still very strongly dependent on the tourism sector, overly dependent on a strong performance by the tourism sector that in 1996 we were very dependent on a strong performance by the sugar sector which, I think, made a contribution of about thirty something per cent to the increase in growth in that year. So that it is still a bumpy ride for us and nobody can say that they are entirely satisfied that each of the sectors is making the kind of contribution that it could conceivably make to an economy the size of ours, experiencing the levels of growth with employment declining but not as dramatically as we would have anticipated from the kind of growth we are benefitting from so that all cannot be well on that front. We are still a four-legged animal limping on two legs in a sense. But that is providing enough momentum for us to have reasonably modest levels of growth, 3%, 4%. There are some countries in the Caribbean with tourism alone which are managing 8% and 9%.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, maybe. I am just saying that we have to understand what is peculiar about this economy, that we are hoping to have economic growth in Barbados that is balanced and in which four main sectors are making a contribution to that economic growth. It is not yet happening and Barbados still remains very vulnerable in a situation in which you could conceivably have some kind of problem in the tourism sector or for that matter...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You are quite right. What is happening in the Asian markets if it continues and becomes even more difficult the kind of competition you will face and the other challenges which would face an economy like Barbados could very easily throw us into another cycle of restructuring, re-engineering, downsizing, poking and prodding to get the appropriate level of economic performance that is desirable, so we are still vulnerable.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter almost acknowledged, even although he did not say so, that until he makes the adjustments which he proposes to make to account for the large sums that he has raked in from the VAT, that we are overtaxed. That is a fact because if we were not overtaxed there would be no need for those adjustments to be made to redirect benefits, however small, back to the most vulnerable sections of our society. 1.50 p.m.

I am not going to deal with that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has carried out a more extensive analysis on that but I think that what the Honourable Member for St. Peter says today gives us a clear indication that it is true that as a result of the implementation of the VAT, that the level of taxation in Barbados still remains intolerably high for those who are least able to bear the burden of that taxation. We have to be careful because in our country, like many other parts of the world, those at the top are reaping many more benefits, and are moving at a faster rate, improving their living conditions, getting substantial compensation packages, totally out of line with the sacrifice that those at the bottom are bearing. We have seen it in Government's attempts, very often, to redress that problem to attract people which they allege they need to have in many statutory corporations,

The differential with those earning at the top level in those corporations and those at the bottom, is testimony to the fact that the rich are doing well and that the poor in Barbados are not catching up, even the working poor, a phrase which the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has coined and pointed to in our recent discussions with the public out on the streets. The poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. That is a true worldwide phenomenon and it is something that in Barbados we have to be extremely careful of, because we live in a small land space which is heavily populated, and in which we have to be concerned about the balance in the relationships between those at the top and those at the bottom.

It is also not true to say that in Barbados in 1998 that there is less inequality than there was for example in the 1980s. In fact, there is more inequality and many of the indicators, some which the Honourable Member for St. Peter himself has pointed to, the concerns that the Government say it has about poverty and the deteriorating conditions in rural Barbados and in parts of urban Barbados, the disparity in incomes. All of these have led to greater inequality in our society and therefore one could not engage in an Estimates debate only for the purpose of focusing on what may be positive macroeconomics fundamentals unless you are going to deal with some of the concerns which reach deep into the society and make life for the average Barbadian increasingly more difficult.

Even those persons in middle income levels who are earning reasonable incomes feel less secure in 1998 than persons at comparable levels would have felt in the 1980s. That is partly the result of the attitudes private sector employers in terminable efforts of downsizing and restructuring and so on which have taken place in the private sector. It is also true that there is more insecurity in the public sector than there was during that decade. I will deal with that in a little more detail as I move on.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter again touched, but did not spend much time on the fact that in the Barbados as we know it today families are being shattered, that it is quite true that there is a need for greater focus on community programmes to improve the quality of life for our citizens, that crime still remains a major issue, for which I was surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Peter did not feel that in this year's Estimates he would have pointed us, or in his design of the economic programme for Barbados, he would have pointed us to what efforts the Government would be making in that regard.

Those who believe they are doing well in Barbados today cannot and will not continue to maintain those positions if those at the bottom are not also in some way benefitting. High levels of crime could have a devastating impact on the same tourism sector which is talked about and the vulnerability of it. An increasing alienation of problems in our society could also undermine any success which the Government hopes to reap from increased foreign exchange earnings, increased investment and that kind of thing. It is very important, because there are many countries in the world which have the same potential as Barbados, or more potential, which because they have been unable to deal with the several social problems which they face, and have been unable to deal with issues of crime and focus on unemployment, which is one of the causes of crime, they have not been able to realise that full potential.

Mr. Speaker, at a personal level, there are still a lot of people going to work in Barbados every day who feel that essentially what they have to cope with is a rat race, in which increasingly the focus, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter speak on it today, has been on competition and competitiveness, and not enough focus is being put on the word co-operation. People in our workforce are starting to believe... It happens in Government, it happens in the private sector. People are starting to believe that the be all and the end all of their existence in a firm, in a company, is the short-term gains that can be made from increasing competitiveness and not enough attention is being paid to the issue of co-operation. These may sound like... the Honourable Member for the City likes to say "shibboleths" and "platitudes", but they have a tremendous impact on the work ethics of people and the contribution to economic development. These are

also ways in which Government can, by sending the appropriate message, improve that work ethic and ensure that the benefits of the five years of economic growth are buttressed by certain values in the society, values in the private sector, values in the Government and values throughout the entire political and social system.

It is true to say that in Barbados in 1998 that employees are being treated worse, not better because of these attitudes. The tablets taken out to Mount Sinai with the prescription for economic success - competitiveness, pay title only to productivity instead of recognising the respective inputs that people working together may make to the success of an enterprise, locating the appropriate salary range for people at the top without recognising fully the importance of the contribution which those at the bottom may make to the success of the enterprise, focusing on reducing all input cost and particularly, focusing on reducing the cost of the labour input by whatever means necessary.

In times of boom governments have to be careful that the correct messages are being sent to the market about what is an acceptable approach to economic development and that the benefits have to be shared with every citizen in the country being accorded his due for the contribution that he will be making. Government needs to recognise that despite all of the public relations and the smoke screens about the many initiatives that it is taking, that some of those initiatives are simply not working. You cannot fool all of the people all of the time. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter himself acknowledges that we still have substantial social inequality in Barbados and we have the working poor in Barbados, which is something I will deal with shortly. 2.00 p.m.

We still have too many unemployed youths. It is okay to boast that unemployment has come down but I want to make bold to say that if unemployment does not come down in that band where we really want to get it down and where we really want to ensure that the skills of those people are making a contribution to the national effort we could as well not boast that unemployment is down because we will waste an entire generation and that generation, by the time it starts to make a contribution to the national effort, will have felt that it has been rejected and will feel that it does not have the skills appropriate to making any contribution to the development of Barbados.

So we have to ensure again that when we get close to words like mission accomplished, the mission of solving the job problem in Barbados cannot be accomplished if you have a band of young men and young women...

You go knocking on doors when you are out canvassing. I am certain the Honourable Member for St.

Peter meets them, young women sitting at a table. They have children already. They may be doing some smocking. If they are not doing smocking they may be simply sitting at the table in total frustration, living off the pension of a grandmother, living off the salary of a mother. They have O-levels and they are just sitting all day long in a house watching the Bold and the Beautiful and other programmes.

Young men who even though we feel they are not skilled, what really we have done is we have not really designed an economic system that can accommodate the skills they have. So we now have to get out to them. I am not sure they do not have any. They may not have the skills that we want them to have because of the economic system that we have but they do have skills and it is for us to draw out those skills that they have.

I am certain the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have to admit that when you start to introduce youth programmes for young people that people whom you previously thought were unemployable, who had no skills, have some unique talents which need to be employed in the national effort. That is what these Estimates need to be addressing and I hope that during the course of this debate these are some of the issues that we will come into contact with.

We still have uneven physical development in Barbados and despite the Honourable Member's best efforts at giving the impression that, for example, the tenantry road programme and so on is a new programme, we are re-inventing the wheel and if that is providing work for civil servants I suppose then we have to live with that. If re-inventing a tenantry road programme is going to provide work for somebody to do, then re-invent it. But all of the tenantry roads in Barbados that need repairs have already been defined, listed, measured, costed from way back, I believe in 1987/88. Finance was found from the Venezuelans for the first tranche which I think was about 30 or 40 roads. It was supposed to be in 3 phases but the first project itself fell through due to problems with the financing and the contractors Inversions.

Five were done in St. John. I do not know if some were done in St. Peter, Cliff Tenantry Road, Lemon Arbor, Colleton, Wakefield, Pool. And you are saying I do not take care of my constituents. That was between 1987 and 1989 alone.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have never quarrelled about that. I believe that as MPs we have a job in here to ensure that our constituencies are well served. If your attitude is that when the Dems are in, your people should not get anything and when the Labour Party is in, we should not get anything, that is not my approach. In fact

it is that approach that I have been busily criticised for on occasions but I do not want to get side tracked.

I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Peter that the ground work has been laid. Do not let anybody fool the Government that you now have to design a tenantry road programme in Barbados. The information is there. In fact I am so confident that it is there because 2 years ago the Ministry of Public Works wrote a letter to each of us as MPs asking us, based on a list they gave us of all the tenantry roads, to prioritise the tenantry roads. But they identified them. Now if you are saying that you now have to design a programme I would like to know how they knew that those were the tenantry roads that needed to be done.

Now, financing of it is a different matter. Now, if you want to make that point, if the Honourable Member for St. Peter wants to say, well look we have not been able to get that tenantry road programme going because we have not yet identified the finance or whatever, that is an acceptable point and I am saying therefore these Estimates should focus on that issue, not focus resources on redesigning the programme. It does not need to be redesigned. But that was not the point I was making.

I was making the point about uneven physical development in Barbados that those areas which by and large have been identified as areas of high economic visibility and connecting points for economic activity, have reaped the benefits but there are large parts of Barbados, St. Philip, St. John, St. Joseph, I cannot say St. Andrew now, perhaps St. Peter. I do not know. Maybe to the Boscobelle side, the eastern side of St. Peter which as we have constantly said in this Chamber need to have major resources devoted to them.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter did not make contact when he discussed the economic fundamentals with whether he believes that there are a large number of Barbadians earning low wages in this country which could be characterised as that group, the working poor, the people who shift from employment to unemployment for that reason. Sometimes they are better off earning unemployment benefits and staying home than they are paying bus fare and going down on the Harbour Road and elsewhere every day.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will have support for any effort to have put in place in Barbados an appropriate minimum wage but this is the time to do it. You could not expect to do that when the country was groping its way out of recession. So we have to be careful to do those things which need to be done now that the opportunities present themselves to us.

As I said already the Honourable Member for St. Peter did not focus his address on the level of violence and crime on our streets but more particularly in our schools and there are concerns about that which need to be addressed. There are still several issues in relation to health which need to be addressed and need to be focussed on by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. If taking all of the elderly people out of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and putting them into private care in which Government provided assistance or private homes in Barbados would have solved all of the health problems then I assume we would have done it a long time ago but the problems of health go much deeper than that. Some of them have been bedeviling us for a long time and some of these were issues which the Honourable Member for St. Peter would have said should have been put behind us many decades ago. Some he himself said he put behind us only 2 Estimates ago but they reared their heads time and time again.

Then we have major environmental challenges which Government needs to focus on. The challenge of water resources. The Honourable Member for St. Peter in 1994 launched a blistering attack on the Democratic Labour Party. It was a time of drought. He was not as understanding as we have been about the problems which the country faces in this area. The Minister was asked to resign, the House was asked to adjourn on a matter of urgent public importance and the Honourable Member for St. Peter was then grandstanding on the issue. 2.10 p.m.

He got into office and he said that this issue could be the major constraint to further physical development in Barbados particularly the tourism sector. I agreed with what he said and we have waited in vain for the Government to identify the strategies which it was urgently to employ.

I am not talking about the ones which the Honourable Member for St. Andrew pointed out were his solutions, like the Minister must resign and other trivia like that. I am talking about serious initiatives which will seek to address the major environmental challenge that impacts on the tourism sector. We have a galloping increase in the size of the tourism plant and the ancillary services, some of which are new environmentally to Barbados. We have not yet gotten a grip on the impact which those developments are having in our country. It is very important that Government focuses resources in these Estimates on assessing the impact of those developments and avoiding a catastrophe.

The beach - it is going to be important for the Government to say something and for us to have a development strategy which focuses on this issue of the beaches. I am not talking about private or public beaches. That is not the issue that I am dealing with in these Estimates, that will be dealt with later on. What I

am dealing with is the threat of pollution, the problems which are faced on the West Coast and the fact that in a very competitive tourism environment people can put out information about you that can have a very damaging effect.

In relation to the environmental problems on the West Coast, what they may be putting out may very well be true. Therefore when you deny it, it does not have the same force. I mean, you can count the rats and if you say you have 5000 rats, you can say, no, that is not true but last week we killed 1000 or something like that. But when you are measuring the contaminants or pollution or the bacteria in the waters, let us say, off the West Coast, some of our competitors can be ruthless in the way in which they deal with that kind of information. These are the things that we have to be focussing on. With a galloping tourism plant on the West Coast, we have to be even more careful about that.

Mr. Speaker, I have raised some of the concerns and there are many other which are going to come out in the context of this debate. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Peter has the luxury which few other Ministers of Finance would have had, to be able to pause and reflect on the resources which he has available to him which have come as a result of tremendous sacrifice made by the Barbadian people and to use those resources to carry out the formidable reforms which need to be carried out and also to spread that bounty as evenly as possible throughout the country.

That means that this Government and this House as a whole has to reflect seriously on the kind of Barbados that we want for the next century. That is very important. In other words, what is it that this Parliament, through these Estimates and through what we say in these debates, is telling the world and telling Barbadians that we want to see for Barbados as we move into the next century? Therefore assuming that we will continue this great fortune which we have been endowed with, what is it that we want to see at the end of the road? That is where the political parties have divisions in perspectives. In due course, we will make our position known. I am familiar with the approach of the Honourable Member for St. Peter to these matters. I will give him enough time to implement the good things but today is not the day for that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking from our own generation, I think we have to ask what are some of the key things that we have failed to do and to see whether this Government, whether the Estimates and whether the Barbados as we know it today is going to address some of those problems.

I made the point earlier that we have to cultivate the talents of our people. We have to stop walking around with this notion that because people are not skilled for what we

want them to do that they are not looking for work and that we do not have an obligation to so engineer our economic system to provide opportunities for them.

I hear people dismissing young people and saying that they do not want work. Many of them may have unique skills and talents which, as I have said already, our economic system does not adequately harness and get involved in the national effort. Government therefore has a responsibility to seek to pull as many of them as possible into the economic system. We should not use 'no skills' as an excuse. It may have its validity on some occasions but it is not true for quite a few of those young people who we allege are liming on the block.

There are creative programmes that Government can introduce to get them involved in the economic system. I am not romanticising but I am also saying that there must be opportunities there for them. Let us not assume that taking all of them up and teaching them to be carpenters or masons and to be involved in capital works projects in Barbados is going to be a solution to the problem of unemployment because many of them have skills beyond that, unique skills.

I am not talking necessarily about skills which you can teach in a classroom. There are artists who have never been to an art college or an art class anywhere. There are craftsmen and other kinds of skilled workers. I do not expect the Government to provide courses and training course for them. I am saying that in an economic system in which creativity has a premium and a role that opportunities will be provided.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a situation where knowledge and industries require higher levels of skills, the Government is going to have to embark on a major programme. In the Estimates the Honourable Member for St. Peter said, EduTech \$5 million. Five (5) million dollars could hardly do what we think needs to be done in terms of improving the skills at that level. I am not talking about basic education because much more needs to be done in that area.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I never went to a class but I picked up a computer and I moved around and learned what to do with it. The point is that if I did not have it available to me, I could not have improved those skills.

I think that Government needs to focus on the fact that a Barbados in which services, as I understand it, are going to play an increasing role in terms of providing jobs and opportunities, not just in Barbados but throughout the Caricom region, which is the attempt of the Protocol 2 to the Caricom Treaty that by enhancing the skills of

our young people to take part in this revolution where knowledge is going to be important. 2.20 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Now, I am not saying to just make resources available. What we want in this Estimates debate is an explanation of the strategy. I do not know where the strategy resides. You did not say it resides in the Ministry of Education. You said you were giving them \$5 million, but that does not tell me anything. It may very well reside there, I do not know. But what we want to find out is what is the strategy if there is one? What are the resources following the strategy? Or do we have a situation in which the Government is simply making these resources available without properly defining what strategy it seeks to be implemented? It is going to be very, very important. In this debate we may have an opportunity to get to those details, because I think that is going to be significant.

This generation cannot therefore avoid the importance of cultivating the talents of our young people. That is what we have to do. Previous generations may not have done it in the way they should have. We have also failed to keep Barbadians in work. That is a simple phrase, but when you think about it, it is true. The cycles of boom and bust have dislocated thousands of Barbadians over time.

We have swept unemployment under the carpet. I charge the Honourable Member for St. Peter with neglect in this regard, because from the outset he refused to put on the table - which was a signal failing of this administration - a job strategy. What the Honourable Member said was that it was in his head and as he saw things developing, he had a vision and you would move from this point to that point.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well the "543" was a strategy. You could criticise it, but at least you had something before you. And if the Honourable Member for St. Peter did not put a strategy before us, we cannot really say whether he failed or succeeded. A few editorials say that he got it down to the same level of employment as Germany. But, was that his target? Was that the goal he set? Is he satisfied that that is the outer limit which he should achieve?

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is what they said at the quarter. They took a quarterly.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can say that in your speech. You are entitled to say that in your speech. It would also be unprecedented for the Statistical Department to put a statistic in the Economic Report and then tell you not to believe the statistic because there were problems with the survey. That is unprecedented anywhere in the world. Do not tell me the 12 percent is unprecedented. What is unprecedented is that you have a Government...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member for St. John is inadvertently, Sir, misleading the House, because what was put into the Economic Report was put in not by the proper statistics, but by an officer in the Ministry of Finance, very much like how "Appendix G" was in the Estimates one year. It was not in fact an accurate statement either, but was put in by an officer in the Ministry of Economic Affairs. I thought I would clarify that, because it is not true.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well the Government is looking around for accomplices. "Appendix G", they are trying to rope in other people in their errors. I am not dealing with that now because that would not serve any useful purpose in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, by and large we have encouraged citizens to depend on benefits from Government rather than helping them to function as citizens. In the last- Budget debate, I pointed out that the Honourable Member for St. Peter seems more interested in moving people from work to welfare because of his concern that he was not meeting the targets in terms of jobs that he had set for himself, he was hoping to neutralise them. We have to be careful that we do not continue on that trend.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the third thing is that we would have changed our tax system such that the incomes of the poor have failed to rise in line with incomes generally. Now the Honourable Member for St. Peter alluded in part to that today and has said what attention he is going to pay to rediverting some of those resources back to those who are most vulnerable. The public sector in Barbados is an unending restructuring and constantly restructuring and as a result of this scenario many of our public sector workers are demoralised, including, policemen, teachers, nurses, doctors and civil servants.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But you should be the last to say that it is not true. The level of morale in the Police Force is at its lowest. Now, sometimes Members on that side of your Government do not recognise these points, but it is at a very low level.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What do you expect the President will tell you? You are the Minister. Do you think he will tell you the same thing he is telling me? You have to live in the real world. We live in a society and people tell us what they think we want to hear.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Precisely. So if the Policemen that you speak to tell you that things are good, I may be able to give you the same lip of those who tell me they are not good.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But the level of morale is not high and I am saying that is also so in the teaching service. It is also so among nurses, doctors and other parts of the civil service.

Of course, there are rumours that the Government wants to move more and more to contractual relationships with civil servants. This is something that we have to watch because the Government, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is supposed to be a model employer. When you replace relationships of trust in which people can perform in a task in some security and relationships of permanence with contractual relationships, you are sending the wrong message to other employers in the country. I hope that the Government does not go too far in its efforts to replace these relationships of trust which have existed with purely contractual relationships, because it will not be helpful to the morale of the public service. But we will hear more of that in the course of this debate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in relation to the private sector one will have to raise concern about the excessive restructuring and invidious pay formulae which apply in the private sector. Downsizing and managers concerned with deal making which have distracted them from the long term development of the corporation, much of the trust which is absent, much of the lack of effort in the work place and the insecurity that people feel is a result of that constant scenario of downsizing and restructuring in the private sector in which workers are very similarly dealt with. Then you expect those who remain to be committed and hard working in an enterprise which has callously let go a large number of people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question is, what should the Government be doing at this time? It should not be living in a dream world. It should be using this opportunity where resources are available to it to focus on some of those key problems which have bedevilled Barbados and the economic planners for a long time. 2.30 p.m.

As I said already, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that focuses on jobs. I return to that issue. The mission has not been accomplished and I want to remind the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter that the Government still needs to identify a strategy to deal with the problem of unemployment in Barbados. To shift people from passive benefits to active employment is very important and particularly that category of Barbadian who should be making a full contribution to our economic development.

The experience for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has been easy because the groundwork was laid. If you have a good wicket, you should not bat badly on it. I will tell you why. In most of those countries in which there is a social partnership - and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter must know this, Germany is one of them - in which trade unions, the private sector and Government are able to sit down together and work out what an appropriate level of wage increases would be for a given year, the problem of unemployment is slowly but surely being brought down. Where there is a national consensus on the rate of pay or pay increases they have been able to deal with the issue of unemployment.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is also true in Germany. It went up because of the two countries coming together but it is still rising but not from this point. When East and West Germany came together and they started the process of the social partnership they were able to bring unemployment down because they were able to get a national consensus on wages and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter inherited a programme, a protocol and elements of a social partnership where he was able to sit down and work out with the private sector, the trade unions and Government a national wage policy for Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that opportunity had been seized upon and that has contributed also in a substantial way.

There also comes a time when in the process of that social partnership one of the partners feels that they are making a greater sacrifice than the others. Government therefore has to be careful and the private sector because invariably it is the workers who feel that they are making the greatest sacrifices at the end of the day in these arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would not believe based on the presentation of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter this morning that there were any problems in relation to Government and accountability in the public sector but when you take a look at the Auditor General's Report once again a litany of criticisms for the way in which Government has been managing the accounting procedures in the public sector.

Last year, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter made a very bold statement that those things would be a thing of the past, that he would put in place the appropriate officers, well trained, who would be able to properly manage the budget of the Ministry of Education and comply with the Financial Rules. That throughout Government trained accountants would be put in place to ensure that there would be no misappropriation of funds and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when you read the Auditor General's Report it is true that the Ministry of Finance was the greatest offender by a substantial sum of money, which means that perhaps the Minister was spending more time watching other Ministries than his own. Some of the same departments have recommitted many of those offences.

I am alarmed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is the Attorney General and has to comply with the law. When the Auditor General writes to his Ministry there should be timely responses. The Honourable Members on that side have always made the point that the Minister is ultimately responsible. How is it that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was responsible in 1991 but all of a sudden the...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas gives the instructions too. When it comes to those building projects the Honourable Member for St. Thomas makes sure that he takes the appropriate level of interest in what is happening. If any errors are made, the Honourable Member has to take responsibility for them.

Coming from the Ministry of Finance which is supposed to have all of the modern technology now, well-trained accountants, hands-on public officers at the highest level and the Auditor General's Report points out, for example, that 22 memoranda were submitted to the Ministry of Finance, obviously asking for an explanation, and they only got back 16, The Ministry of Agriculture which had the worst report on its operations last year, imagine the Auditor General writes to them 62 times and gets 5 responses.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has to take control of that situation. I know that he cannot move men as he would like to move them.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. It would be asking the Minister of Finance to intrude unlawfully in the appropriate functioning of the Auditor General's office for the Member for St. John to ask the Minister of Finance to do what he is suggesting.

The Auditor General raises queries and Ministries respond to queries. The Minister of Finance is not even

aware when queries are being raised nor should he get himself involved in the work of the Auditor General's Department. I want to stress that point, Sir. The Minister of Finance should not get himself involved in the trail of work being carried out by the Auditor General and I will not barken to the advice being rendered by the Honourable Member for St. John in this matter.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, every Government has a minimum level of morality and the Minister of Finance has moral authority and that moral authority alone. I am only starting at that. The moral authority of a Minister of Finance must be such that that Minister of Finance must ensure that there is an ethos of accountability throughout the entire Government. Now that is at the moral level. The Minister of Finance and every other Minister where the Minister of Finance is the Prime Minister and a Prime Minister who promised to shoot generals but he meant below the rank. They are super generals. He cannot touch them. There is another level of general, that is, PS down. Generals were supposed to be shot and any Minister of Finance... when I was Minister of Finance I read the Auditor General's Report and your job is to make sure that Ministries respond to the Auditor General on a timely basis and that they cooperate with him. If they were cooperating he would, not have to mention it and it is our duty as members of this Chamber...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. I heard initially about how the Minister of Finance should seek to fetter the Auditor General. The Minister of Finance must do nothing that would fetter the Auditor General nor intrude in the Auditor General's carrying out his work. The process of the Auditor General raising queries and Ministries responding to queries is a function into which the Minister of Finance should not intrude.

The fact that a Ministry may not respond to a query does not mean that the query is not being dealt with but for the Minister of Finance to get involved when queries are being asked and about to be answered it is a very dangerous function that is being asked of a Minister of Finance. An independent audit must be carried out and a Minister of Finance must not get involved with it. At the end of the day I will act on the report but while the audit trail is being established, Sir, a Minister of Finance should not be in that. 2.40 p.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Now, Mr. Speaker, I talked about moral authority. I talked about law. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is abdicating his responsibility to this Chamber to require his Ministers to run their Ministries in such an efficient manner that when memoranda are sent to them by the Auditor General they respond quickly.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. This is not one for us to go down the wrong road on. The Chief Accounting Officer in a Ministry is the Permanent Secretary. I understand that some do not know that they are, but it is so. These matters never come to the Minister and it is wrong that Ministers should be encouraged to interfere in those matters. If I were the Auditor General I would be concerned that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to run interference in my independent jurisdiction. That is what he is suggesting.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, nobody voted for any accounting officer. The public of Barbados voted for representatives who had the potential of becoming Ministers, who had certain moral authority, and who can require standards from their public officers. The fact that a man is an accounting officer does not absolve him from having certain standards which, if he does not comply with them, you have the right and authority as a Minister to bring that to the attention of this Chamber. There is a Public Accounts Committee which has to take this report and summon those accounting officers and ask them, but that does not absolve the Honourable Member for St Peter from setting certain standards in his administration.

Last year we had an Auditor General's Report in here in which \$26 000 was paid to a company owned by a former Cabinet Minister to commence works on a public market.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Rule 7(d) states that it is the duty, and I want to repeat, Sir, it is the duty of an accounting officer to reply promptly to queries raised. The rule establishes relationships between, and I want to be careful on this, the Auditor General and persons designated as accounting officers. Queries raised do not come to other than accounting officers. Ministers are not part of that process. There is a clear rule.

I am saying now, Mr. Speaker, for politicians to be intruding in a process that is clearly defined in law will cast an obligation on a Minister that is unlawful and is also very dangerous. A Minister may, after the fact, but while the process is going on I am saying that the rules allow no role for a Minister. It says it is a duty, and let us keep it that way, Mr. Speaker. We can deal with it after the fact but that audit trail, I am saying, must be free of involvement by politicians. It is a serious thing.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has no basis for making that submission. The Honourable Member has taken documents that I have laid in this Chamber and sent them down at the DPP's office to tell the DPP to investigate me, but that is the DPP. If he can lock up one of us in here,

fine, but now it comes to the Auditor General, he has a hands-off approach. It is a different approach now. The same constitutional officer, appointed the same way, and he wants to send directions to him to deal with members of this Chamber. Now the Auditor General is dealing with matters directly under his Administration which the number of memoranda sent off...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do you know what the Auditor General also says? That invariably, the accounting officer sends these queries to a subordinate. The subordinate is not the accounting officer.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. They do not ever send them to Ministers. I have never seen an audit query during a financial year. After that report is published, I ask my accounting officer what is the position with this. He might say: "Oh, the Auditor General got it wrong. We were in the process of doing that at the time it was written." But I have never seen it. In strict constitutional theory, as the Minister responsible for the department, you have to accept some responsibility clearly, but in reality you do not see the audit queries.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, a Government must have a moral minimum below which it will not go. In response to every other point the Auditor General made last year, the Honourable Member for St. Peter said he was going to deal with it. He was going to put accounting officers in place. He was going to train people. He was going to advertise, reform the public service, amend the Financial Rules, et cetera.

The Auditor General now, Mr. Speaker, sends off requests to Ministries for information and the substantive Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister in whom the moral authority of the Government relies, says he is adopting a hands-off approach to that issue. That is the Auditor General's business. So we now have to use the route obviously of the Public Accounts Committee to send for those accounting officers and find out why memoranda have not been responded to.

The Ministry of Health had 32 memoranda, 19 replies; Ministry of Labour 8 memoranda, 2 replies. How can you have a financial system functioning according to the standards which the Honourable Member for St. Peter sets and yet when the Auditor General makes queries, the Ministries do not respond. I as a Minister of Finance would have to feel responsible to ensure that that improves.

I am charging the Honourable Member for St. Peter with neglect of his duties to ensure that his Government is efficient enough that when a constitutional officer of the rank of Auditor General issues a memorandum that

they respond in a timely manner and give the facts. To this day, the explanation to how a former Cabinet Minister's company received twenty something thousand dollars...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not only dealing with him. I can deal with a lot of others. In the Attorney General's office, mobilisation fees of 15% or 20% are being paid to contractors although such payments were not specified in the contracts. All of this is going on, Mr. Speaker, and these matters need to be dealt with. This is on page 76 of the Report.

The Honourable Members on that side are dismissing it now but in 1994 these issues were big, big issues which engaged the attention of the Auditor General. Thirty something million dollars in the Ministry of Finance - \$10 million alone in respect of the incentive awards to public officers. The supplementary requisition for quarterly allocation was not prepared so \$10 million was paid out without the requisition for the quarterly allocation being prepared. 2.50 p.m.

All of these are things that are happening. The Land Tax Department, Customs, Inland Revenue, Statistical Department. I am reading from the 1997 Report.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing 50 memoranda issued, 4 replies. Ministry of Housing 20 issued, 10 replies. This cannot be acceptable. It cannot be. The Ministry of Education, even though in 1996 there was a caustic criticism of that Ministry, 46 memoranda issued, 4 replies. The Honourable Member of St. Peter needs to tell us what is the minimum which he will accept from accounting officers and he needs to tell his Director of Finance that he is not going to accept these standards. That is what needs to happen because the work of the Auditor General in seeking to root out corruption and graft will end up being subverted, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if people are not held accountable and one element of accountability...

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur. On a point of order. I feared that this is exactly what this was leading to, because the notion of an audit query is now going to be held to imply craft and corruption which is not what audit queries are about. There is nothing at all in the Auditor General's Report of 1997 that speaks to corruption nor graft. It speaks, for example, to people not keeping vote books and duties of that nature, accounting officers charged with duties to do things, not necessarily fully complying with their duty in responding to queries but the notion of queries do not imply, nor has the Auditor General said there was

any evidence of corruption and craft. I knew that this was intended to lead to all of that - corruption and graft because there are queries. A query is only a request for further particulars. That is all it is about.

Very often the information is being prepared when the report is finished. There is no report of corruption and graft in this Auditor General's Report. I would say that categorically.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Auditor General's job is to so exercise his duties as to ensure that there is no corruption and craft. That is why when he points out that people are paid money before they do work it is our job in here to find out why they were paid. Suppose they never did the work. Would that not be corruption? Would that not be graft?

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point is that there are procedures put in place to ensure that. If some of those procedures were applying now at the Rural Development Commissions, or in the Tourism office in Toronto... Do not let us start to go down a certain road in here today. The Auditor General has not yet started to deal with those issues but if he started to deal with the honoraria and all of the other issues, the Rural Development Commission, and the role of employees in relation to contract... Do not let us go that route. Let us accept as did the Public Accounts Committee under the chairmanship of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, in its Interim Report of the Public Accounts Committee laid in this House on 22 June 1993, let us accept as he said in this Report. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said that it was typed on his computer.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. The Member for St. John has cast aspersions to the effect that people at the Rural Development Commission, and at a Government office in Toronto, are drawing honoraria to which they are not lawfully entitled. He said this in the context of a speech dealing with corruption and graft and linking the two, Sir, is a tremendous innuendo. The implication is that there are people at Rural Development and at Toronto who are drawing honoraria to which they are not lawfully entitled and that there is corruption and graft obtaining. I am asking, Sir, either for the evidence to be produced or that those remarks which reflect upon officers to be withdrawn from the record. I really must, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member for St. John seek to remove the innuendo?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said I am not going to deal with it.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you still make it clear, please?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What I said and will repeat for the benefit of the House, is as follows. I am not getting into the issue.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said I am not getting into it. If you want me to get into it then, Sir, permit me and let me get into it, if you prefer not "innuendo." Mr. Speaker, in last year's Estimates debate...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker I must rise on a point of order. It is not enough for the Member to say he is not dealing with it. By putting it on the Table of Parliament he has already dealt with it. I am saying that as has been the convention in this House, when aspersions are cast on the character, particularly of public officers, Sir, in breach of the rules that either the evidence is presented or the aspersion reflecting on the performance of people in their public responsibility is withdrawn. That is the proper thing, Mr. Speaker. He has put it on the Table but he does not want to deal with it because it is already dealt with by being raised in this House. I am asking for either the facts to be produced or the matter withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before you make your point. As I stated to the Honourable Member for St. John, could you proceed please eliminating the innuendo which, obviously, seems to be casting some kind of inference, some kind of speculation on public officers?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I was proceeding and the Honourable Member interrupted me.

Mr. SPEAKER: You were proceeding still continuing in the same light.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was saying in the 1996 Auditor General's Report, the Auditor General pointed out to a situation where a company had been paid money, twenty something thousand dollars for work it had not yet done. That is not innuendo. I quoted extensively from the Report. I am saying it is the job of the Auditor General...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, just let me clarify something here, please.

You are referring to the Auditor General's Report. One side is saying that the Auditor General's Report is mainly making queries.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You said last year?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, I am not dealing with that. I am dealing with the one this year. The Auditor General's Report is dealing with queries.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am trying to explain, Sir, if you will bear with me, that the whole purpose of an audit is to ensure that there is neither fraud, graft, misappropriation of funds...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am beginning to be a little confused. If the Auditor General writes in a report "I wrote last year to a Ministry and I have had no response" Sir, that is not a query. The Auditor General is stating that last year, not this year, Sir. He has raised queries this year but last year he wrote to the Ministries and he has not had a reply, and it is in this Report he is complaining to the Parliament that he is not getting responses from the Ministry. It is therefore the responsibility of the parliamentarians to find out from the Ministers why their officers are not responding to the Auditor General. It is not a query, Sir. I submit.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Auditor General said on page 38 as follows. 3.00 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the inferences that you were making relating to members of an office and members of the Rural Commission...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not dealing with that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have withdrawn...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not withdrawing anything because I am not dealing with it. How can I withdraw what I am not dealing with?

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. You did make a reference to members in an office in Toronto and at the Rural Commission where you seem to be implying that there were certain infelicities or fraudulent...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I withdraw that I said that I was not dealing with it then.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, no, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me deal with this please. The Honourable Member, I heard you refer to members in an office at Toronto and I heard you refer to members at the Rural Commission. The Chair understands that what

you were saying is that they were involved in some kind of fraudulent behaviour. I am suggesting to you, Sir, in the absence of any proof, that those remarks be withdrawn. I know how you had put it in your conditional way but the inference was clear as far as the Chair can understand. I am asking that you withdraw the words.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not sure what you want me to withdraw, Sir, but I withdraw what you want me to withdraw.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I never said that so therefore you cannot make me withdraw what I did not say, nor can anybody else in here.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. I am rising in relation to standing order, 10(b) to ask that the remarks not only be withdrawn but be expunged from the record because 10(B) says, Sir:

"Any member who desires to refer in debate to the character or conduct of any person in his official capacity must deliver to the Speaker written prior notice of the proposed reference. The notice must set out the facts on which such reference must be based and be signed by the member giving it".

You just cannot come into this House, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and cast aspersions on people in their official capacity without giving prior notice. You cannot do it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, either we follow the rules of the House or we are not going to follow the rules of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John has said that he has withdrawn the words. I am now asking that the words be expunged from the record where the reference was made to members of an office in Toronto and the Rural Commission.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not rise to question your ruling because I could not do that but your ruling came immediately after the Honourable Member ...

Mr. SPEAKER: My ruling had nothing to do with what the Honourable Member for St. Peter had to say. I should have said, after the Honourable Member had stated that he has withdrawn, that the words should have been expunged from the record so I did not say it then. Could we proceed, please?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a standing rule of my own that I do not intend to use

parliamentary privilege to cover me for anything I have to say. I said it outside too and I said it outside first.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Now I heard the Prime Minister got up a few moments ago and said he was raising something under standing order 10(b).

Mr. SPEAKER: I think he meant 28:10(b).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are not supposed to think in this respect. He was quoting from 10(b). I sat and looked for 10(b). Ten is order of Business and (b) is prayers. No, I am looking for this 10(b). He cannot get up in here and quote bogus orders in here. 10 is order of business and (b) is prayers. Immediately after that we had a ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member that would only go to show that I could not have been following...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will follow my rule of thumb. I will reveal it outside first and when I have dealt with it out there those who wish to take action can take it. I have the great fortune that nobody ever had to write a letter to me despite what the Honourable Member for St. Peter says about my innuendo. I have never received a single letter from anybody for anything I have said on a political platform and therefore what I say outside will be the same thing I will say in here. I do not extend it. I will deal with that matter, Sir. The Auditor General's Report, the level of accountability, issues of corruption, if I see them, issues of graft when I see them, outside first and then I will deal with them in here.

I want to make this point that the Honourable Member for St. Peter must not assume that an audit is simply a technical accounting matter. An audit is the first step in the process sometimes of ferreting out corruption, of ferreting out graft, of looking for misappropriation of funds, and it is on that basis that in 1992 the then Opposition said in the interim report on page 3 of the Public Accounts. Para. 14:

"There is ample evidence to support the Auditor General's findings. The Committee considers that remedial action which currently exists in law must be taken against accounting officers who continue to flout the legislative provisions governing the control of public finances."

And that Committee decided that as it considers the accounts of particular ministries and departments it will summon before it all accounting officers from all delinquent departments. In due course I will have to summon them.

I will go on to another paragraph. This relates to the Director of Finance and Planning. The Committee recommends and will recommend to the Director of

Finance and Planning that he exercise his power to impose penalties on delinquent officers unless satisfactory explanations are forthcoming. But leadership in these matters has to come from the top. And I am saying that any Minister of Finance has to set the standards which his administration will follow from there and the Honourable member for St. Peter surprised me today, Sir, when he resiled from the high standards which I thought he always aspired to in public life by saying that he was not getting into those things because of some perceived constitutional limitation.

A couple of months ago in Trinidad, state corporations were involved in all kinds of funny deals and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance as corporation sole summoned all of the boards, that is in Trinidad, and told them these are the standards.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That was before the audit. There was no audit. These are the standards which are acceptable to us and anybody who goes beyond those standards or falls short of them will be dealt with.

A strong signal needs to be sent from this Chamber and I wish that the Honourable Member for St. Peter, instead of fighting against the Opposition for more accountability and finding excuses and hiding behind what he believes the Constitution says, even when it does not say it, and hiding behind standing orders and so on, would hold hands with us and join with us in requiring public officers and accounting officers to let the Auditor General carry out his work if not people would justifiably say... 3.10 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. It is not a matter of my hiding any record. I want to make it clear that there is nobody who is more scrupulous than I am in ensuring that Accounting Officers must carry out their work and to deal with it when it is brought to my attention. The only thing that I feel that a Minister of Finance or any Minister should not do is to intrude in the process of a audit being carried out, during the time that that audit is being carried out. Including, intruding in the process of queries being raised and being responded to.

I do not believe that there is any proper role for a Minister of Finance or any Minister to intrude in that process of an audit being carried out during the process of its execution. He may, after receiving the report, Sir, ask for explanations but in the process of the audit, I see something dangerously wrong with a Minister intruding in it because he himself may be the subject of the query and may use his or her political power to frustrate the purposes of the audit.

This is why the law is so clear that it is the duty of the Accounting Officer to respond to queries. No Minister should be involved in that process and I am saying that we should not even be aware that it is happening because otherwise the process could be tainted.

I am not going to follow the advice of the Honourable Member, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Peter prefaces his presentation in the Estimates last year by saying that as each Ministry came to him, he looked at the Auditor General's report and asked for an explanation about what was happening. The point is that obviously those Ministries did not take the Honourable Member for St. Peter seriously. Despite what he is saying about he is the most scrupulous person, last year the same Ministry of Agriculture - No. of Memorandums issued 42, number of replies 1. The Attorney General - No. issued 48, No. of replies 18. Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Culture - No. issued 48, No. of replies 4. Ministry of Public Works - No. issued 51, No. of replies 1.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all I am saying is that by failing to set certain standards throughout the administration the Government is frustrating the works of the Auditor General's department. Because failure to reply to memorandum by Accounting Officers, puts the Auditor General in a disadvantageous position. Nobody is asking the Honourable Member to intervene and tell the Auditor General what to do. What we are saying at the end of the day Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that there are certain standards which must be set. If those standards were set and people did not see it as a free-for-all because the Government has money or some excess revenue that they can spend money as they want without accounting properly for that money, we would not be facing this kind of problem.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I look through the Auditor General's Report, as I said, it caused me grave concern and grief. It makes the work of the Public Accounts Committee even more serious because we then have to send for these Accounting Officers. There are dishonoured cheques which are never followed up. Can you imagine people issuing cheques to Government and there are dishonoured and then no further action is taken against them? There are also payment without award of contracts. Even though the Government increased the limit to \$100 000 for the award of contracts without going out to tender the Auditor General said that the limits were subsequently increased and as a result breaches during the year under review were observed but not disclosed in many cases.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is months after they have increased the limit and then the Honourable Member for St. Peter tells me that he cannot get into that. I am surprised at that response because I said that I would assume that

in an attempt to ensure that you have a philosophy of accountability and that the Honourable Member for St. Peter would join with the Opposition in ensuring that these things do not occur.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have other examples throughout the Government service in and out of Barbados which we will have to bring to the attention of the public over the coming months because these are very critical.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that I have dealt with this question of accountability and it is of much concern to me that at the beginning of this fiscal year we are going to sit down with the Government and agree to certain expenditure patterns and that people are going to frustrate the entire process by failing to observe the financial rules. And the Minister of Finance is not going to do anything about it. That concerns me. I believe that certain standards should be set in any administration.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the opportunity therefore presents itself, if we were to look philosophically at this year's Estimates debate. The Government needs to focus substantial resources, as I have said, on skills. People need skills to earn a decent living and to get an interesting job. We need an education policy which practically ensures that every young Barbadian gets a serious level of skills by age 18. I do not mean public relations, I mean a serious thrust in that direction. Every adult who has been dislocated need similar help. A major focus on skills is critical.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that I said there are still far too many Barbadians in need of jobs and the right to a job is not now a far-fetch scenario in our time. There are many countries which have looked at policies. For example, Mr. Speaker, Sir, many of the so-called casual jobs at NCC and at MTW and so on could be turned over in such a way as to ensure that a larger number of young people coming out of school and not finding a job, let us say, the first year that they are out of school, would be given an opportunity to work. Maybe on a six months stint or whatever. That is one way of ensuring that this cycle of rejection which they feel will not take hold of their lives and cause them to turn to other pursuits.

Unemployment causes more pain than just the issue of loss of income. It causes this feeling of rejection and it is very important that the Government focuses its attention on policies which avoid that element of rejection amongst those who cannot find jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has come in here time and time again saying how they looked at the entire welfare system and that they were rationalising the Child Care Board. A study was done and that study came up with the same thing that civil servants

sat down and decided many years ago about the rationalisation of the NAB and the Welfare Department and the Child Care Board and many of the other smaller social services units in the Ministry.

Still we come back in 1998 Estimates and find a situation, Sir, where the Government finds itself in the stranglehold of those very agencies which it said that it would emancipate the indigent and the poor and welfare recipients from. So we are no further. We have debates in here in which every Member of the House including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, have spoken about the problems in the social welfare agencies. We have called for reform and the Government has promised reform and now in 1998, without the reform, those agencies are given increased allocation. 3.20 p.m.

So the NAB, without the kind of reform they can deliver to the elderly in a better way has a budget increase by \$2 million. The Welfare Department, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are saying that those agencies and those people who benefit deserve increased resources but they also deserve more efficient, compassionate and direct ways to get those resources into their hands. That is one of the major concerns.

We have to ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter what is happening to the proposed reform of the Social Service Agencies, the Welfare Department, the NAB and the Child Care Board, and what steps are going to be taken to take people out of the cycle of red tape.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have sent requests to the Poverty Alleviation Committee. I sent two about three weeks ago. I received a letter three weeks later and no one has visited them as yet, this is three weeks. We were told that they were going to fast-track these things, that the purpose of this Fund was to lift the red tape from affecting these people, that they have a strict response to problems that they perceive are affecting them. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that when he was making these funds available in the Estimates that the object of it...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The only thing that I have said on this matter is that every case referred is to be surveyed by people who have the competence to do so. If he has written three weeks ago and the Ministry has written back saying that the matter is being dealt with, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that reflects the Ministry being on the ball. The case has to be surveyed, the requirement identified and the need met. This is another case, Sir, of a fairly scurrilous and an unfair onslaught on public officers carrying out their responsibility in a way in which I said it will be carried out, that there will be a survey undertaken of every case. Three weeks for a response, Sir, is far more than the Honourable Member

for St. John ever gave anybody from St. John on any matter.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was trying to get the exact words that the Honourable Member for St. Peter used. You see, these funds were supposed to be set up to put behind us forever, these nibbling little concerns and to free up people from having to line up in the Welfare Department, to free them up from lining up at the NAB, that the Honourable Member was setting up a fast response programme where the needs of the elderly and the poor and so on would be attended to quickly.

What has happened is that the Poverty Alleviation Committee is now an additional tier of bureaucracy. Letters are sent to the Director of Finance, who should not be dealing with that kind of thing, he then sends them on to Welfare, NAB and these other agencies to investigate them, which they would have done, had you applied to them directly anyway, and then they report back to the Poverty Alleviation Committee before any of the resources can be disbursed. So all the Poverty Alleviation Committee has done, is to add another tier of bureaucracy in the process, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Now where do I send somebody who faces some kind of challenge which the Poverty Alleviation Committee can solve? Do I send them to the Director of Finance? It would be ludicrous. This demonstrates, Mr. Speaker, Sir, exactly the kind of problem we have where the Government implements a number of these new programmes. What we need, Sir, is a state's benefit system in Barbados which gives people more control over their incomes and not just Welfare benefits and there are creative ways in which the Government can do that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I reiterate the point that in terms of the emphasis which the Government should have in its economic policy, coming out of these Estimates and the Budget, that the concerns it should be communicating to the private sector in return for the concessions and the benefits and the stability which this economy is delivering to them is to reduce the level of turnover. I do not mean turnover in terms of sales and so on, I mean staff turnover in their enterprises. It is not good for productivity and it sends the wrong message to those workers who are left out. Many of them are totally demoralised in the private sector.

You have large conglomerates in this country. The largest one, one year they go into duty free shopping, that is where their emphasis is. Two years later you hear that they are phasing out all those retail operations and focusing on something else. They leave ten or fifteen workers in place to run those operations and expect those workers to increase the productivity in the enterprise. By then they are totally demoralised by the shifting and the changes. There

is not a lot of serious long term planning by those private sector businesses which would ensure that they benefit from a period of economic stability themselves.

I believe that a new framework for companies which would promote stability and develop the potential of workers is very important and that the Government, through these Estimates and through the Budget also needs to focus its incentives to companies on those areas, areas that would promote the stability of the enterprise.

You know when I hear people say, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter says, "that is part of the business cycle," that is part of the business cycle which you inherit, but there are ways in which creatively through your policies, you can reverse a lot of those attitudes or at least start the process of reversing a lot of those attitudes in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, one would have thought that in this year's Estimates, a substantial resource would have been devoted to what essentially is a social and educational policy or programme which would restore in the communities, families to the critical role which they should be playing in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Peter, even though publicly he pooh poohed those kinds of things and today I heard him for the first time acknowledge that that is going to be critical. It is, the extended family, how we care for our elderly and the problems in our communities.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter may not know this from his own constituency, but he can do some investigating. During that time when the Transport Board could not provide buses in rural Barbados for people living in St. Peter, St. Andrew, St. Joseph, St. John and so on and parents could not get home, very often children coming home early from school, were left unattended for long hours. When they are left unattended, they head out onto the streets. What they find on the streets in many of our villages is gambling, all day long by young men and a lot of drugs. So their own family life is crushed. There is no family life, because the parents cannot get home early. There is no bus service and 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock they are now getting home. If they are not watching television there is nothing to be at home for and a lot of them go out onto the streets where the village life is gambling and dope pushing.

I drove into an area in my constituency recently and saw young boys playing cricket on a barber green surface and right next to them were another group gambling. The police had to drive through and stop drug dealing in rural Barbados. We need therefore to have a social policy and an educational policy. A policy in relation to children, child care and day care for the children of workers which would ensure that those children are closer to their parents

during the day or alternatively that they will be able to find quality time to be with their children.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that we need to care more for our elderly and that the Government is focusing its energies there. It needs to focus its energies more on supporting families in Barbados, not just by way of the tax system, but by the way of other creative policies which the society can agree on as assisting in building families and communities.

We may talk, and Mr. Speaker, Sir, the job of being parents for a lot of our young people in this country is the most difficult job they can perform. It is more difficult than the 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. job they may be doing, the job of being a parent. I believe that the Ministries of Education and Community Development need to work together on devising a programme which would actually get into the communities and assist in the skills of parenting. Of course, we know it is the easiest job to get to be a parent, but the hardest job to do. I think that is the direction that our social policy should be taking and I recommend it to the Government. 3.30 p.m.

We have called constantly on this side for rewards to be given to those who help in the community. I am not talking about annual awards where you give somebody a trophy. We need to have a policy in Barbados which assists and provides incentives for those people who help football teams on evenings between 3 and 5 o'clock or down to 7 o'clock, people who help coach basketball teams. There is not enough being done in the communities of Barbados. We have to find money in my constituency to get a coach to come up on evenings to coach football teams. Those are 11 young men who do not get any real benefits out of football other than the health benefits and maybe if they win a trophy or get to go around Barbados but they do not have any resources available to them. They are fighting an uphill battle to continue to keep those football teams going and community activity.

The same is true of basketball teams throughout Barbados which function as though the National Sports Council does not exist. Now more resources need therefore to be given to that Sports Council or to the Community Development Department or to the Ministry of Education to get more coaches, more people who can help the communities out on the street and those who volunteer in the community to provide certain services which benefit the community without the formal structure.

I am not talking about sending out community development officers. That is a waste of time. Let me not talk about youth commissioners either. I have never discussed the matter with the Minister of Education but that

programme has had no impact on my constituency whatsoever.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that there must be a way to target some resources in a reasonably controlled manner to reward those people who are already offering community work. We have a lot of Barbadians who go home on evenings and get involved in activities. There are many people who want to go back to their communities and help.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That alone is not working because there are some skills which you also have to bring from outside. Why should a fellow come back to a community to assist in setting up a community park and then when he goes to Simpson Motors to buy a lawn mower, he has to pay 15% VAT on it or go to purchase some garden forks or those kinds* of things? That is one area. Are there not other ways in which we can focus policies to assist those persons? If it rests exclusively on the role of Members of Parliament in constituencies, then you have to give them the resources to do the job.

We agree on this Side with Government's thrust in relation to the care of the aged. I think all Barbadians agree with that. We have to see what the elements of it will be but there are far too many Barbadians above the age of 80 who spend a whole day lying down in a bed. One person comes on an evening with food in an enamel bowl, changes a diaper, turns on an oil lamp and leave them in that bed until the next evening when they come back after work. Somebody may knock on an old piece of wood that if you knock too hard the board will drop off. There are elderly people in this country living with plastic bags propping up holes in their houses, many of whom the social workers are missing or have missed, many of whom when you bring their plight to the attention of the social service agencies they take far too long to respond. So it is not just those elderly who are in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that we need to focus on. I believe that there are hundreds of Barbadians living out there in communities for whom we have to target our resources.

We must not assume that it is just because there is a crush on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that all of a sudden there is a mad rush to deal with the pressure of the elderly. There are some elderly living in substandard conditions in tenancies in Barbados as I said, for years, and the only contact they have with life is if somebody comes and cooks a little food for them and brings it to them. The doctor from the polyclinic you can call him a thousand times and he comes once a year and any ailment you have you get one injection and that is the end of that.

I believe that in a modern Barbados that the focus of care for the elderly in the community, in institutions and so on is something that is very important.

We have to ask what is in the Estimates to deal with these kinds of issues. To some extent, apart from those areas highlighted by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter this is a business as usual estimates. We have had promises in relation to the tenantry roads, promises in relation to a massive programme to redefine social services in Barbados, promises in a whole gamut of areas of social and economic policy none of which have come to fruition but now is the time for us to do many of these things.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we must not get unfocused about the benefits of restructuring in the public sector. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter talks about the B ADMC. The BADMC sent home 400 workers, divested itself of a whole range of operations such that when the Honourable Member tells me that they have been able to get the deficit for this year down to \$V₂ million I am saying the Board should be fired because it is not even doing enough to generate a deficit of that amount. If they went from a deficit of \$5 million with the plantations with the Export Processing Unit, with the tractor scheme, with 400 workers which the Government said they did not need and the cost of that was \$5 million and with all of that shed from their operations, plus an injection of capital by Government of \$3 million, I think it was, which was the amount that was left from the loan after you cleared off the arrears and you have a deficit of \$V₂ million this year that does not tell me that the BADMC is more efficient. In fact, if you were to do it on a proportionate scale I believe that perhaps at the end of the day an accountant can look at the figures, the BADMC may be in a worse position than it was before the so-called restructuring.

How could the Minister tell us the restructuring is working after sending home 400 people and shedding almost the entire operation and it still has a deficit? I have to reflect on that, because I do not think that that is an accurate reflection of what has been happening in relation to the BADMC. When we look at the capital programme, here you have an institution where the Government is now about to embark upon a capital programme, for example, in the area of housing. It is doing so at a time when the principal contractors, assuming that the gentleman, Barbados¹ largest building contractor, who spoke to the engineers the other day said that they are doing so much in the private sector that Government should curtail its capital works programme, meaning that he cannot participate in the capital works programme. Now how is he going to assist the Government in putting in the sites and services programme where contracts are already signed with him? How is he going to contribute in any way to Government's capital works programme?

Then you have the other private contractors, many of whom are saying the same thing. They are not interested in building low income housing in Barbados. Many of them are not interested in that kind of work so Government is now going to enter the market with a capital works programme in which it is going to have great difficulty getting many of those contractors to respond.

I understand that one Ministry had to re-advertise contracts the other day. Was it the Ministry of Education?

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So the Government is now going to seek to get a major housing push taking place at a time when those private contractors say that by and large they are stretched out and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter's answer to that is not to say that he is going to therefore use Government's resources to spread construction work among many of the other contractors who are not now benefiting. The Prime Minister's response is to tell him to give the smaller contractors some of the work that he presently has. That is not going to achieve anything. It is simply not going to happen, but that is not the way the benefit of any economic success in Barbados should be spread. What needs to be done is that Government itself needs to redress the imbalances because he has pointed out there is an imbalance. 3.40 p.m.

When we were telling the Honourable Members on that side that there was an imbalance and it needed to be addressed they did not see there was an imbalance. They were siding with that same contractor saying he was being unfaired. He was the lowest bidder so he should get all the work when he is the lowest bidder. Now that we are in a situation where he cannot do Government work, the Government is saying, well, he is to pass on some of his work to small contractors when the Government itself should be putting in place a programme in Barbados in which it spreads the benefit of its capital works programme by a conscious policy among some of those contractors who are not now benefiting from Government work, and there are quite a few.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Auditor General cannot curse you if you follow the rules. The rules permit you to vary a contract. It is when you are playing politics and want to come later on and seek to impute Improper motives which is what happened when previous Governments varied contracts to pass on the benefits to a much larger number of people₀

Mr. Speaker, look what happened with the South Coast Sewerage Project? A blind man on a trotting

horse could have seen that the tender which was made in respect of that Sewerage Project that the contractor could not come in at that level. Now you have major costs overruns, the contract coming to an end and all kinds of problems.

The Government's policy then was that it had to award the contract to the lowest bidder because the Honourable Member for St. Peter had gone too far out on a limb in making this an article of faith that the Barbados Labour Party would always award the contract to the lowest bidder. And when the Democratic Labour Party varied contracts to try to spread the work among as many Barbadians as possible we were wrong to do that. So they came into Government, found themselves locked into a position, pursued that position and now in 1998 the Government is going to try to embark...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I have never gone on record as saying that the Government is only going to issue contracts to the lowest bidder because, very often, contracts are awarded for reasons that have nothing to do with the lowest bidder but for technical reasons. I have gone on record as saying that I would not have contracts awarded based on considerations of electoral financing.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is a nonsensical point. Mr. Speaker, we are making a serious point here and the Honourable Member for St. Peter can get up and sidetrack us. He can ignore the imperative of public office just as he abdicated his responsibility to ensure accountability by a Government. He can abdicate his responsibility to deliver a level of economic democracy to Barbadians in a time of economic growth which they deserve. He can continue to believe that the best way to do business is, as the Barbados Labour Party has so far pursued it, to award those contracts to the lowest bidder.

The Honourable Member does not remember what he said in the debate on the kola syrup. He forgets what he has said in the debate on the No-Confidence Motion. He has forgotten what he has said in other debates. He forgot what he said in his first year as Minister of Finance about the way in which contracts were awarded. He then said that all things being equal, the contracts would be awarded to the lowest bidder and has pursued that policy. That policy cannot necessarily be the most sensible policy so now the opportunity arises for Government to spread its work among a much larger number of contractors.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not seeing the evidence of that. I am talking about major projects.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have dealt with the issue of the tenantry roads but once again I want to make the point

that even in that regard there are a large number of constituencies in Barbados which have not yet been touched by the Rural Development Commission. In my own constituency, 5 street lights in College Savannah is the sum total of the work which the Rural Development Commission has done by way of capital projects. The Society Road is being built by the Ministry of Public Works, and I notice the Honourable Member for St. Peter, in throwing caution to the wind, pointed out Society Road.

Now, there is a problem with that project which I will bring to his attention. That project has not been properly designed. The Society Tenantry is on two sides, the side on which the Honourable Member for Christ Church West lives and then the larger area which is opposite the Codrington High School. There are a number of residents who live in the area on the left hand side of the gap leading into the Honourable Member's house, about 10 or so houses, and that is not part of the project. I am urging Government, since they have already mobilised and the contractor is in the area, to take a look.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That road would not touch him. That road runs parallel to the road to his house. In fact, the road to his house is paved. Where they live is not paved. That is the difference. He lives in a court. They live in a tenantry so the road to the court is paved but the tenantry has no water main and remains without a road.

I am pointing out that the Honourable Member, perhaps, picked an unfortunate one but that is the only tenantry road which is being done in the constituency of St. John, and that is also true in St. Philip South. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South can tell you about the lack of work which has been done by the Rural Development Commission in that constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I believe you need a more even and fair balance of the work of the Rural Development Commission and the Honourable Member for St. Peter does not need to come in here and keep promising. This is the third year in a row that the Honourable Member has said that he does not even look to see where they are doing roads when everybody knows otherwise. He does not check but there are many parts of Barbados in need of major tenantry roads.

Mr. Speaker, we want to get into the Estimates *per se*. Therefore in conclusion I want to say that it is my view that at this time the Government should be focussing as much as possible on a high skill, high employment, dynamic economy. That is what we should be focusing on achieving.

Secondly, these Estimates should focus on fairness, sharing the benefits of economic growth as fairly as possible among the many participants in economic activity as well as those who are marginalised out of the economic system. 3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government needs to provide a level of security, a stable economic environment, and an environment which is free of threats like crime, free of environmental threats. This is what these Estimates should be focusing on this year. The resources in these Estimates, Mr. Speaker, Sir, should be focused on providing skills for everyone, getting people from welfare to work, encouraging the private sector to go for long-term growths. In other words, to focus on the long term for their businesses, to pursue responsible macroeconomic policies based on consensus and, of course finally, Sir, I hope we may get to that debate, to ensure that Barbados remains a major player in the process of Caribbean region economic integration.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, Sir, what we are saying is that unless these Estimates speak powerfully to the fact that everybody in Barbados should have a stake and a share in economic growth, that everybody should enjoy the full incidence of their citizenship, we would not be achieving our goals. This is what the forefront of this year's Estimates debate should be about. I thank you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, when I first came to this Honourable House some twenty years ago the debate on the Appropriation Bill was the premier debate in Barbados, even more so than the Budget. The galleries were full. Large crowds were around to listen to the presentation of the Minister of Finance. I have noticed, over the years, a gradual decline in interest and I think it is largely due to the kind of priorities which find themselves in the press of this country.

There is little to generate public interest in the debate when in fact, as far as the interest of the average man in Barbados is concerned, this debate is in many ways more important than the present, or at least equally so, what I do consider to be the most important aspects of these Estimates. About four weeks ago I very carefully timed a release on what I considered should be the most important aspects of the Estimates because we are approaching a general election and I know only too well what has happened in the past in this country. Every ten years following a period of economic growth and expansion we have had fiscal policies in a pre-election period that have created serious problems for the country after the election. The general philosophy seems to have been if we win we have five years to deal with it and if we lose, it is somebody's problem.

My view is there is nothing more irresponsible that this Minister of Finance could do than to take this

particular attitude towards these Estimates. Therefore, I said in a release that this would be the first major test of his capacity to deliver the goods in a statesmanlike manner, one in which the country is put first and other things are set aside. Therefore, Sir, when I received a copy of these Estimates I immediately focused on the macroeconomic situation first because I think that therein one would see the elements of responsibility or the elements of irresponsibility. It would be crafted in the macroeconomic situation as presented by these Estimates.

Let me say this that generally speaking, I am not dissatisfied with the overall macroeconomic presentations in the Estimates, particularly as the deficit as projected would, as a matter of policy, be partially or significantly financed this year by foreign borrowing. I say this for this reason, Sir. We have significant liquidity in the banking system. We have a level of economic activity in the non-trading sectors which cannot be easily reversed and in the event in any downturn in the performance of the trading sectors, then problems can develop and therefore it is essential that this particular fostering be taken because I think it is the only appropriate one for the country.

Having said that, Sir, all of us would be making demands on Government expenditure and I think that those demands would come from the society as a whole and they could come from the Front Bench on the Other Side, the Back Bench on the Other Side and to some extent from those on this side of the House.

I can only urge that some degree of moderation be exercised in these matters because, do not forget, when we talk about reserves of \$600 million or \$700 million it could be there today and be gone within a matter of weeks. If you have a level of economic activity, which is somewhat unbalanced in a sense, particularly at a high level of economic activity then you can create a major problem that will draw down on those reserves.

We have just seen the experience of Trinidad and Tobago. I think in January one year they had \$3 billion in reserves. They were net lenders to the IDB and the World Bank, and by the end of the year they had difficulty in raising money on the international markets. You are talking about \$3 billion plus loans made to the IDB and so on, which were not included in their reserves.

My own view is that it is reasonable to say that the economy continues to grow, but I would have liked to hear the Minister of Finance address the level of taxation in the country. I think it is clear that the level of taxation is higher than what is desirable if we are to achieve a maximum rate of economic growth. The Minister of Finance does a little spin on that, and his spin is that the GDP estimates are on the low side and therefore the tax effort appears to be higher than it really is. Now, Sir, I would be very interested in looking at these new GDP

figures. As a matter of interest, I recall two years ago when I brought to the attention of the House that if you look at GDP estimates at 1974 prices that there was hardly any expansion in the Barbados economy over a period of about ten or fifteen years or something like that.

In this very House I was crucified as being contemptuous of the efforts of everybody during those years. Now two years ago we suddenly heard that there could be something wrong with GDP estimates, but I would hope that there would be a higher reason for making that assumption other than to reduce the tax effort by raising estimates of GDP. So, therefore, Sir, I think it is very important that the level of taxation be addressed. I have heard nothing of interest rate policies. I believe that that other key factor to maintain a low interest rate policy in Barbados is absolutely critical. 4.00 p.m.

Now there is one down side to that and the one down side is this. There are a lot of Barbadians who have money in savings accounts in Barbados and depend on the income from those savings accounts for survival. And therefore, Sir, I believe that the Government can contribute in another way to reducing the liquidity in the system by creating instruments which are as safe as the banking system, for example, housing bonds and so on and create an opportunity for these people to invest their savings in those bonds with a higher rate of interest than what they can get on interest on savings accounts in the banking system. The Government will get the benefit of the money whilst at the same time you would be able for normal economic activity to maintain a low rate of interest.

Then the whole area of energy policy, recognising that the major contributor to the cost of energy in Barbados is in fact taxation, it is not the cost of product. The Honourable Minister of Finance has a long way to go in respect of reducing the incidence of taxation on the energy sector.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That has nothing to do with me. All I know I did is I dropped the price of gasoline and diesel, the whole lot in 1986. As far as I know that is what I did in 1986, drop the price of the whole lot by reducing the taxes but it is very important to get that energy sector sorted out in terms of prices and the impact of taxation in the energy sector. And those 3 important components of lower levels of taxation, maintaining low interest rates and adjusting the cost of energy, I realise are 3 vital things as far as the Barbados economy is concerned to make sure that you set a firm platform for continuing accelerated growth in the economy.

Now, Sir, we have heard about the boom in private investment. Yes there is a lot of private investment in Barbados but I really want to see more investment by the ordinary Bajan in this country. We really need to sit down and devise ways and means whereby the capital available to the average Barbadian can be used more beneficially in the investment process.

I spoke earlier about savings accounts. Barbadians traditionally have their savings in property as well and most of that investment lies idle. A lot of that capital in property can be activated and made available to these people for investment purposes. Let me give you a simple example, Sir. In many countries there is a thing called reversed mortgage. Somebody has worked for a house all his life, he reaches age 70, he has paid off all his mortgage, then there is opportunity for him to get the house to work for him by having those facilities available. We have no such facilities available in Barbados and I am quite sure if you take the totality of wealth of ordinary Barbadians in terms of property investment in Barbados and you had the appropriate channels then Barbadians could raise enough money among themselves to get into some of the major property developments in Barbados that today people from outside, a small group here in Barbados, are making millions of dollars. Barbadians do not have the opportunity because of limited cash whilst together they own a lot of money. I am talking about billions of dollars. I am saying there are probably billions of dollars in property in Barbados owned by ordinary Barbadians but it is there sessile, it is there inactive, and there is no opportunity and no mechanism to mobilise that capital for the purpose of investment in the country. Now this is something I would like to see us do.

Then the whole question of special development areas. I have indicated that we may need to go into Baxters Road, Tweedside Road, Market Hill, St. George perhaps and other places and designate these areas as special development areas as well so that people in those areas can get the tax benefits as well.

Now, Sir, the problems that the Government will face, I do not think they are going to be problems at the macro-economic level unless there is a significant downturn in the international economy. The problems, I have no doubt are going to be at the level of implementation at the Ministries. That is where the problems are going to be. Let me give you a simple example and I want to look at the Health Ministry for a short period.

The Minister of Finance has indicated that he is prepared to make money available to private nursing homes, or make resources available to private nursing homes in order to help the problems of overload at the QEH with chronic cases. I do not think that would be the solution to the problem. All I am saying is this.

Knowing how these nursing homes operate I would urge that any resources put in those homes should be by way of trained personnel under the direction of the Ministry of Health because there is no way you can ever police a situation where people require 24 hour care unless you have people on the spot to make sure that whatever standards you set that those standards are implemented. But the problems in the Ministry of Health are far more fundamental. I have called again and again for a commission of enquiry into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and probably extended to the other health services. I am not talking about an inquisition. Perhaps if I were to say a Royal Commission then perhaps you would begin to understand what I am talking about.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: All embracing. An advisory commission or whatever you like. There is no point appointing a board unless the board has a mandate. You are not going to get a mandate that is appropriate unless there is a commission which has nothing to do with investigating anybody. It is a Commission that is going to examine the problems of the QEH and the secondary health services of Barbados, that is going to prepare a blueprint for the development of the hospital and the health services over the next 10-15 years. Then, in that context, you can talk about making changes. 4.10 p.m.

I saw the Minister the other night and whilst I was there where she was, it was communicated to me certain talk in London about the state of the QEH at the top professional level and relating to the teaching programmes and so on at the QEH. I heard the same thing in New York. I heard the same thing in Jamaica and I am hearing all these things around.

What I am saying is this. You have a Constitution Commission, so why not have one on health. Secondary health services - this would serve this Government and any Government in the future over the next 10-15 years. That is the kind of commission that you need.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You will need more than that. Not an inquisition! It is a Commission of Enquiry, a Royal Commission. If I say a Royal Commission you will understand. As a good old conservative you will understand what I mean. If I say Royal Commission everybody instinctively understands what I mean. You need a commission to enquire into the problems. You know why, Sir. I will tell you why.

There is not a single aspect of the operations of QEH which is not in trouble. There is trouble in administration

and with medical staff at all levels. There is trouble with consultants and junior staff. The number of doctors employed at the QEH last time I checked was more than 160. The engineering department, the nursing services, the physical plant, the infrastructural department, the X-ray department, the lab, the dispensary, the supply of drugs, the laundry, the kitchen - when you think about it, there is not a single aspect of the hospital which is not having chronic problems.

When you have a situation like that, it seems to me that you need to go back to basics and recognise that what happened at the QEH was that you moved the Barbados General Hospital basically to the QEH without any particular mandate. On to that you grafted a teaching problem and that now is running into problems because the original mandate of 1968 was never changed. When the teaching programme started it had never been re-addressed, it had never been dealt with again. You have just been drifting and drifting along and drifting into more and more trouble.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will give some thought to it. It will be totally independent and with top class people on it.

Over and above that the demographics of Barbados have changed fundamentally. What you are seeing in the QEH is a manifestation of the change of the demographics of the hospital. Sir, the demographics of the country. When you have a situation where you have a lot of patients acquiring acute care outside and inside, in a surgical department sometimes 75% of the beds in acute surgical departments can be occupied from time to time by long staying patients. The long staying patients are looked after inadequately because that is not the function of the hospital and the acute patients cannot be looked after properly. So you have a double problem. It is a dual problem.

That is why I will say again and again that the Government's policy towards the St. Joseph Hospital should be revisited. My belief is this, that you are going to need four or five St. Joseph Hospitals over the next 10-15-20 years to deal with this problem. Unfortunately, now we live in an age where you do not have to re-duplicate infrastructure like X-ray departments and labs and things like this. I can sit in my office, Sir, and I can do a procedure which I can have read 30 000 miles away on a telephone line and right in front of me, in five minutes, I will have the results.

You need to centralize those services and you need to get into an area which is making use of modern technology. All these things need to be addressed. The whole role of the hospital as a teaching institution in relation to other institutions. We do not want to get into

a situation where we have problems with accreditation down the road and this kind of thing like that.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Whatever it is, I could be interested because I think that it is a very important thing that needs to be done and there is no point getting involved in any major policy changes at the QEH unless there is such a long-term view with proper programmes set up and proper steps taken so that at the end of the day you could see exactly where you are going.

Sir, this is important. It is not only the chaos that exist there but also the fact that we are spending \$258 million. \$258 million dollars on health and what do you hear all day. You have the whole question of the drug services, the pharmacist are complaining, the doctors are complaining, you are driven crazy day after day, you cannot get this and you cannot get that. You have to write two and three prescriptions. I mean it is really total chaos! There is no question about it.

We have an opportunity, I think, to look at all these things and bring them together so that a clear policy position can be taken. This also impacts on the Psychiatric Hospital and other areas that are very important in the area of health.

However, Sir, this is a second reading and I would hope that I would be able to deal with this health problem in more details as we go along.

The second point I want to raise is the whole question of private capital influence. We have been fortunate in having significant private capital influence in Barbados over the past few years. I think that it is important to ensure that we do not pay too high a price for those capital influences.

I believe that some of the concessions which have been granted in the past, that they need to be revisited. Especially, looking at the kind of capital gains which some of these enterprises have been able to attract on resale. I think we need to look carefully and see whether they should not be making a more significant contribution to the public first by way of some form of taxation which does not alienate them but at the same time would allow a reduction in the issuance of taxation on the local population.

The Transport Board -1 have a view of that. That has been a disaster from day one. It has been a financial disaster year after year and it will continue to be a financial disaster. We over the years, Estimates after Estimates, we have poured money into the Transport Board. My own

feeling is this. That there is nobody in Barbados who can run a Transport Board. That is the problem.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: What I would do? I would just split it up and put a Transport Board for the north, a Transport Board for the south and a Transport Board for the middle of the country. They would be smaller units and more compatible with the management capability that you have available to you. That is my own feeling. Just as I have the same feeling and I have no doubt what is going to happen to the massive dump that we have down in St. Andrew. My own feeling is that every parish should have their own dump.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: What is wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with that. Let every parish have their own dump and if they do not have a location for a dump, they will pay the other parish to take their garbage. So St. Michael will pay St. Philip or somebody to take their garbage.

Let me tell you something. The reason why I say this is because we do not look at the management problems that we have for these big enterprises. When you look at the capital cost and the likely management problems that you are going to have, you are much better off going with smaller units that would suit the management structure that you have. This is why I believe that it is absolutely important that we should have in Barbados a reintroduction of local government.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member cannot have it both ways. He was going down the road very well when he said that we do not need to be duplicating the support services such as we have at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but now he comes outside of that and is suggesting that you want now to duplicate and triplicate and quadruplicate the Sanitation Services. That is a parochial mind set that has been overtaken now. 4.20 p.m.

I am also thinking of the management that we have available. I am also thinking of the need to reintroduce into the country some kind of local government by whatever name it is called. You can call it whatever you like. But I think it is essential to empower the people of Barbados and I could see a situation where the Urban Commission and the Rural Commission will largely be executive agencies of local government. But you have to empower the people if you are ever going to get the kind of community development that you are really talking about.

The point is that you have to address the issue of political empowerment of the people within their communities. If you do not do that, then you will never see the development at the level of social capital which is essential if you are going to achieve the social objectives articulated by the Minister of Finance in these Estimates. Whatever you do, so long as people perceive what you are doing in their communities as handouts from central government and they do not have any say in it, then you can have a problem.

I am a great believer and have no doubt in my mind that that is very necessary. I also believe that we need to put in place the recommendations of the Roett Commission. This has nothing to do with you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Roett Commission made the very important recommendation that you should have one ministry which will be in charge of all these social services, so that your right hand will always know what your left hand is doing, so that you can recruit people who have the expertise in these particular areas.

I see nothing wrong with a ministry like a ministry for the eradication of poverty by the year 2005, under which things like the National Assistance Board (NAB), the Welfare Department, the Poverty Alleviation Fund and all such things would come under that Ministry. Sir, if that is linked to a reintroduction of local government, where the local people in their communities can function in relation to that Ministry, I am thinking down the road, 20, 30 to 40 years.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You see what a lot of you do not understand is this, Sir, that when local government was abolished in Barbados, Barbados was not more than an agricultural village. This is now 30 years later and this economy has expanded tremendously. The role of the Member of Parliament of the future will not be doing what he is doing now.

Barbados is thinking in terms of getting involved in the OECS, CARICOM, FDA and all over the place. The role of the Parliamentarian is going to be completely different in the future, and somehow, we have to fill that gap, if you are thinking of preparing yourself for the next century.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Precisely. That is the point. Take for example, your work as a Minister, you are involved in foreign affairs and you are involved in tourism. Would it make a big difference to you if there was a political entity in your constituency which is responsible for the day to

day things that are taking place in your constituency, rather than you having to do it? Think about it very carefully.

The Parliamentarian of the future has to be legislator. This Parliament has to be transformed into place from which legislation emanates, because all we < now is rubber stamp legislation coming down from the Attorney General's office.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member appears to be addressing me. He was part of an administration that put an end to local government in 1969. I cannot believe that we are going to hear now about reinstituting it. We put statutory boards in place in the early 1970s. The mistake we made then was to give people those statutory boards with either retired civil servants or civil servants who then immediately put the same bureaucracy of the Central Government into the statutory board and blighted it from day one. But I am ready for going back to local government. I want that made clear.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with that point of order. I was not part of any administration in 1969. So that is the first thing. Secondly nobody was recommending the reintroduction of the type of local government that we had in Barbados in the past. We are talking about a modern form of local government.

Let me tell you something, Sir.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member for the City spends a lot of time around the United Nations agencies, around, about and inside, at the top and at the bottom and she should be the first one to know that one of the major recommendations made by the United Nations last year in terms of the development of social capital for the eradication of poverty throughout the world by the year 2015, a strong recommendation was that those countries which do not have any form of local government; at present, they should put one in place as soon as possible.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It not only came up there, but you sent representatives. You or those governments which did not have local government should put them in place as soon as possible. You, the Honourable Member for the City was a participant, either directly or indirectly in the conference convened by the United Nations and promoted by your Ministry in Trinidad and Tobago about six months ago which endorsed that position.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: May I borrow it? Sir, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has endorsed the position of the directional plan of action for poverty eradication in the Caribbean on 2nd December 1996 to the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication from 28th October to the 1st November, 1996, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, under her signature.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, conclude please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, UNESCO, she is always there; UNDP, she is always there; The World Bank, she is always there; IMO, she is always in Geneva; IADB, she is always there; CDB, she is always there; CARICOM, she is always there; UNICEF, she is always there; UNICH, she is always there; UNFPH, she is always there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.
4.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to lend my very strong support to the Schedule of the Appropriation Bill, familiarly referred to in this Chamber as the Estimates as it outlines the programme for Government's activities in 1998-99. It is interesting, Sir, to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central start his presentation by saying that he had a keen eye for looking at what the macroeconomic implications for these Estimates would be. Indeed, he could not say that he was not dissatisfied or, to put it in another way, as I heard it, he was clearly satisfied with the direction being set out by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in the coordination of their economic planning for these Estimates.

It was also interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition because he too, in his submission, clearly had absolutely no difficulty with the direction and the steering of the ship of State in respect of the macroeconomic planning of this Government.

I believe, Sir, that it is significant that having had almost some 6 hours of debate on this matter that we are yet to hear any form of dissatisfaction or any criticism in respect of Government's macroeconomic policy, in respect of Government's commitment to fiscal prudence, in respect of Government's planning and, in particular, I was particularly interested to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central refer to the fact that he was pleased to see that the profile for the sources of financing for the deficit this year were skewed more in favour of foreign financing rather than for domestic financing.

I believe, Sir, that we have before this Honourable Chamber therefore a sense of consensus today as to the manner in which this Government has handled the management of its economy, particularly in relation to the

Government's macroeconomic policies to the level of fiscal prudence that it has shown and it is significant that the deficit which is being projected for 1998-1999 of some 2.5% is at this point lower than that which was projected for 1997-98.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition is not in his place. I believe the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I listened to the entire speech of the Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable Member has suggested very strongly that there was, as a result of that speech, a consensus on the methodology and the macroeconomic policy of the Government. That is not true. That is a misrepresentation of the Honourable Member's speech. There is no consensus on the macroeconomic policy. He made a point on a specific issue. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that the Honourable Member got up and agreed with the macroeconomic policy.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has not after 25 years of public life understood the concepts related to macroeconomic policy and could not understand when in fact the Leader of the Opposition said clearly that he had absolutely no difficulty with that; that his concern was issues of equity and fairness in the distribution of what was created in respect of any growth in this economy. He was very clear in what he said.

Whether I believe what he says or not, perhaps I should then listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West on whether the Leader of the Opposition is a person who is worthy of belief when he makes a statement.

The point is this, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that we can easily come to that conclusion and what is significant about it is that we are committed to lay the groundwork for sustained economic growth. This Government when it was elected in 1994 stated that we would not wish to see Barbados return to cycles of boom and cycles of hardship, as has been the hallmark of our economic history since independence.

It is significant that even in the context where this Government is now in its 4th year that we have brought to this Honourable Chamber estimates which reflect a programme that still indicates levels of prudence and stability, fiscal responsibility in spite of the fact that governments before have been tempted to make comments, to do things or to enter programmes which would highlight to us that the silly season is upon us.

I believe, Sir, therefore, that that is an indication of the seriousness with which this Government is prepared

to honour its commitments to ensure that there is sustained economic growth and that there is the opportunity for all of us to be able to benefit from the fact that if we avoided periods of excessive growth and bad periods of difficulties that we can ensure that people in this country would benefit in the long run and that the society as a whole can get about the task of ensuring that the opportunities available for each and every Barbadian are such that they can benefit.

I am glad, Sir, that we have reached this stage. It does not mean that we are totally out of the water. There are those who would wish to suggest that there is a level of overtaxation in the economy. We have indicated in here over and over, even with the outturn of the figures from the value-added tax, that we believe that we cannot continue to tinker with a taxation system, given the fact that we ended up in the very position that we were because of over 20 years of tinkering with rates of consumption taxes and other elements of our taxation system.

Equally, it is important, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we did so to the detriment of our productive sectors ensuring that they were burdened and that they were incapable of providing the level of stimulus to the growth in the economy that we needed.

We felt also, Sir, that it was also important that our strong management of the economy had to be coupled with a commitment towards significant planning for the development of our human resources in this country. I want to say that I believe that we have come a long way since 1994 towards fighting the problem of ensuring that as many of our citizens can benefit from proper and suitable human resources training, both from the perspective of basic educational development and equally from the perspective of post-secondary vocational training and indeed professional training.

We have undertaken, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a programme over the last 4 years that is extremely ambitious and one which I would like to say that preliminary indicators have shown a reasonable level of success. When we came into Government in 1994 we had a situation at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic where the enrolment of that institution was 1 400. Today that enrolment is somewhere in the vicinity of 2 450. We have a situation where when we came into Government the enrolment at the University of the West Indies was somewhere in the vicinity of 2 800. Today, Sir, that enrolment is somewhere in the vicinity of just under 3 400, an increase of over 25%.

We have a situation today, Sir, where our enrolment at the Community College has moved from 1993-94 at a level of 2 200 to over 2 985 in 1996-97. All of this, Mr. Speaker, is happening in the context of the number of

persons in each age cohort every year declining. To give you a perfect example of that you only need to look every year at the number of persons sitting the common entrance exam. Because with the stabilisation of our population, we have been seeing decreasing numbers of young people within the population which has resulted in a surplus of places but at the same time that we are seeing that decrease in primary and secondary education we are seeing an increase in the enrolment at the tertiary level. 4.40 p.m.

That is the very thing that we would wish to achieve as a country. Indeed, Sir, it is consistent with the goals set by the CARICOM Heads of Government last July at the Montego Bay Conference. I find it particularly interesting because not only has there been an expansion in the numbers being enrolled for training in our post-secondary institutions, but we have also looked at questions of quality and revision of curriculum, the re-tooling of plant where necessary, and the rationalisation of programming at these institutions to meet the needs as determined by an economy whose structure has changed, and will continue to change in the direction of the services sector as we move into the 21st century.

This Government has also been instrumental in ensuring that the University of the West Indies will establish before the end of this year, a School for International Service, that will provide professional training and retraining for persons engaged in activities in the international financial services sector, in areas such as software engineering, and to be even ahead of the pack in areas such as data mining which is now expected to come into its own within the next five to ten years across the globe.

The seriousness with which we hold this commitment is evidenced by the fact that myself and the Minister of Industry met with the leadership of Carnegie Melan University as recent as four to five weeks ago, and we have agreed to draft a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education, the Government of Barbados and the Carnegie Melan University with a principal focus being the provision of materials, the provision of lectures, and the provision of systems to allow us to be successful in our attempt to establish the School of International Services, to be a world class institute in the provision of training in the area of the services sector. We believe, Sir, that we have the capacity through that institution, to provide the level of training that is absolutely necessary to ensure that those persons participating in the economic sectors which must be the hallmark of this country's growth in the 21st century, that they have the capacity to have received the best possible training, and therefore to be properly competitive with any other area in the world that is providing such training.

We feel also, Sir, that it is not sufficient alone to tackle the problem of the expansion of post-secondary training and retraining just by the expansion of numbers, or the improvement of curriculum and the improvement of course offerings. There also has to be a retooling of plant. The very nature of technology within our society has meant that a lot of the goods and a lot of the equipment which is used are now powered by means of technology, that unless our youngsters are trained to be able to understand the basics of this they will not be in a position to service much of this equipment that is within our midst.

It is for that very reason, Mr. Speaker, that this Government over the last three years has undertaken a phased programme of the retooling of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and this year in the Estimates when we get into the more detailed discussion, you see yet again, we have made substantial provision to spend over \$800 000, Sir, on that retooling for this year alone, in respect of its plant and equipment at the Polytechnic. You know, Sir, I listened keenly today to the Leader of the Opposition who I think was correct in his assessment in respect of the need for us to produce a high skilled, high dynamic economy, and to be in a position to provide the level of training to our people so that they can populate the jobs that are necessary in order to have that achieved.

He then went on and made some very strong general comments about the fact that youth and employment in this country was not being tackled with properly and was still a major problem, and that even if unemployment was coming down as a whole, youth and employment was not doing so.

The statistics in the Central Bank Digest of Statistics put a lie to the impression that was given in respect of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. If you look at the Statistical Digest for 1996 which is the last available one to this Honourable Chamber, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will see that in respect of the levels of unemployment in absolute numbers among the age groups... I want to take my time and read them out, Sir, because it is significant. In 1993 there were some 5 400 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years old without jobs in this country, 5 400 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years old.

Sir, in 1996 that number was down to 3 400, a drop of 2 000, a drop of almost 50% in the under 19 category. That is buttressed by the statistics of increased training and increased availability of jobs as a result. Sir, in 1993 there were some 6 700 young people between the ages of 20 - 24 years old. The Central Bank Annual Statistical Digest for 1997...

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Six thousand, seven hundred (6 700) young people between the ages of 20 - 24 years old unemployed. By 1996 that number was down to 4 600 young people - a drop of some 2 300 in the 20 - 24 age group, a drop in excess of one third. In the 25 - 44-year-old age group...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order I am not against the Honourable Member making the point. If I were in her position I would make it but if you look at the age cohorts and the comparison of years, by the time you got to 1996, nearly 75% of those people would now be in a different age cohort, so it is not the same people that we are dealing with. What I am saying is that there is a band of people, and they increase in age every year, that is being left out. If you look at the statistics, you will find that band. AS they move up, they are the people who are facing the rejection. I am not talking about youth unemployment as a whole so maybe you misunderstood the point. I am talking about a band of people who are moving through the system whose skills are not being used at all. That is what I am referring to. 4.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I accept the clarification by the Honourable Member as to what he was referring to but I still wish to make this point, Mr. Speaker. That band to which he is referring really cannot be referred to as young because if they were young they would have to be under the ages of 30 or 35, and the Central Bank records its statistics in a cohort of 25 - 44 years old so even within the 5-year period that we are referring to, if they are 5 years older, they would still fall into the 25 - 44-year-old category because 40 years old, according to the United Nations and all the Ministries of Youth Affairs in the Caribbean, do not constitute young in terms of youth employment or unemployment. Therefore, it is for that reason that I am not being selective in what I present to this Honourable Chamber.

If we look at the facts in 1993 some 15 800 persons were out of work in the 25 - 44 age group and by 1996 that number was down to 10 300, a reduction of 5 500 people, almost 50% again. The point that has to be made is that if we want to look at it under 44 years old, there has been a reduction of some 9 900 persons. To put it another way, some 9 900 persons more are being employed in this country today in the under 44 age group than were being employed in 1993. If you want to look at it in respect of persons only under 24 as entirely young people...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House on the unemployment statistics. The Honourable Member is quite aware that the 2 300 people that were claimed to be employed were not truly employed but moved from being unemployed to training and I can show you exactly how the 2 300 people were arrived at.

In 1994, sixty-four hundred people were studying at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the UWI and the Barbados Community College. At present, 8 700 were studying at those institutions and if you take 6 400 from 8 700 you will arrive at the 2 300 people.

Thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is the exact point this Government has been making, that people who are under 20 years old, we believe that they must be exposed to a level of training that allows them to be able to go to jobs that are available and be able to ensure that they do not have to go cap in hand for bus fare and lunch money...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The last time we saw something like that from the Barbados Labour Party is when they created the voluntary idle.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point of order is that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. She was making an entirely different point when the Honourable Member rose on a point of order like if she is in the Appeals Court where she talks fast on her feet and shifts the argument.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not manufacture these statistics. On page 210 in the Annual Statistical Digest of the Central Bank of Barbados, available to every member of the public, will clearly show a reduction in numbers. An impression is trying to be given by the Democratic Labour Party that we are not doing anything for young people, that there is still a massive problem among young people in this country.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that not only have we expanded training but the levels of employment that have become available to young people in this country have increased substantially. In addition to that, it is of a nature that is sustainable. It is not sending people for bus fare and lunch money, but it is giving them the opportunity to be able to do everything that each one of them on that side or this side can now do for ourselves. And who are we to benefit from opportunities to provide for ourselves and ensure that other young people in this country cannot have the same opportunities? I am saying, Mr. Speaker, it is disgraceful. When we talk about the 1991-94 era, the one thing we do not talk about is how that period of hardship impacted on training opportunities in this country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Between

1991 and 1994 more persons in the public sector had training in one year than this Government has given in three years. This Government has stopped training completely and should not come in here talking about training. The Honourable Member should ask any public officer how difficult it is to get training.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who he is talking to because he clearly does not know that we have increased the number of teachers who go on training leave and study leave every year. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, I do not want the Honourable Member for St. Michael West to feel that he can derail me like how he tries to derail everybody else.

Between 1991 and 1992, Mr. Speaker, the enrolment at the Polytechnic dropped from 1 629 to 1 311. More than 300 people were denied training, the same plant, the same institution, the same campus and you all trained less than 300 more than you did in 1991. At the Community College, 200 less students were admitted in 1992 for training than were admitted in 1991, all during the period of stabilisation.

I want you to understand this. When we entered the problems with the IMF that debate in this Chamber was September 1991. Admissions for schools, as you know, Mr. Speaker, are finished in April or May so the true year that you would see the impact of those cut-backs would not be 1991 but 1992 when they were fully in place having come to this Honourable Chamber in September 1991. So let us not talk about whether we are providing for a fairer Barbados. Let us not talk about whether we are providing opportunities in Barbados. Let us not talk about whether there should be greater equity coming out of the structure of these Estimates to provide for a Barbados for people coming into their own into adulthood and that this should reflect not only a level of equity but also a range of opportunities for people to be able to provide for themselves.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has held faith with its commitment to ensure that we are capable of allowing Barbadians to be able to provide for themselves. But, Sir, it does not stop there. We believe that it is not sufficient for us to be providing a top level of education that has benefited only 40% to 50% of our population. We feel that Barbados has a moral commitment to itself to ensure that as close to 100% can benefit from the primary and secondary education that is available in this country.

We also feel, Mr. Speaker, that the only way we can achieve that is by understanding the reasons why people

do not learn or have failed to come out with any form of certification. The Ministry has been committed to implementing a range of strategies to determine the reasons why students were not learning in that bottom 50%. It does not mean that the ones in the top 40% to 50% are not doing well. They are doing well. What we do not want is the establishment of 2 Barbadoses. We do not want the establishment of people who have the capacity to excel in certain areas of activity and other people who cannot even rely on their own skills or themselves to provide a living for themselves. 5.00 p.m.

We therefore implemented, Sir, tests for physical testing, for hearing, for sight, for speech. The only country in this hemisphere, Sir, to have done it across the board for all its primary school children. We have found, Sir, that some 6% to 8% of the children have serious problems and we are in a position to refer those children to the Ministry of Health so that they can have the opportunity. It has been going for some 2 years, Mr. Speaker, Sir. So impressive has the programme been that UNICEF and UNESCO approached the Ministry of Education along with Nopa University and want to be able to use this as a model...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member, Sir. In order not to mislead the House the Honourable Member would need to put on the record that the department in the Ministry of Health that could do the audio testing first had to be set up, we had to train the person and for the first time we have the capacity to do the kind of testing which the Honourable Member was able to do. You can ask the Minister of Health, she would be able to help you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful for the one or two people the Ministry of Health had to add to the 10 or 12 that we had to train in order to complete the task of testing every child. But it has been significant and it is a programme that I think all sides of this Honourable Chamber should be aware of because it is a programme that has meant that those 6 to 8 out of every 100 children who do have those problems have been able to have them corrected. But it did not stop them, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We have also introduced something called criterion reference testing. The whole concept that when you move into secondary school and sit your common entrance examination for the first time that that is the first form of national testing that even begins to let us know where you are in relation to others in your same age or range ability. What we have done, Sir, is to divide the test that allows us to be able to go in when a child is 7 and go in when a child is 9 to be able to see what are the child's strengths, what are the child's weaknesses and to have the time to correct them. This is buttressed by removing the iniquitous piece of legislation that we had that required children to sit an exam only at 10 years old or 11.

We know, Sir, that children do not develop at the same rate and therefore there has to be a wider range within which you can allow a child to determine whether he or she is ready to move on to the next stage. There have been a number of policies which I would hope to go into, Sir, in detail when we come to discuss the head of Education in these Estimates, that have been designed to show the quality of basic education which we are putting out is best. And all of this, Sir, has been formulated and brought into the context of what we have called the education sector enhancement programme, EduTech 2000, which Government is hoping to implement from this year.

EduTech 2000, Sir, is simply about how you can improve the rate of learning of a child in an environment of the school in circumstances where you enhance the teachers' capacity to deliver that type of tuition and training and it is being done, Sir, by different strategies, by ensuring that the physical environment within which the child has to function is a fit and proper one and to that end, Sir, the physical rehabilitation plan for all of our schools over the next 5 years will have to be undertaken as a first requirement. We would hope to spend some \$80 million on the rehabilitation of schools, primary and secondary plant, in the next 5 years.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. In respect of the institutional strengthening, Sir, the question of curriculum reform we have devised, Sir, a new programme for tourism studies. We have devised, Sir, a new family life and health education programme. We have devised, Sir, a programme for black studies. We have devised a revision of all of the basic subjects at the primary level and for the first time, Sir, we are hoping to make all of these curricula available to parents in this country. They may have to pay a small fee for the booklet to offset the price of printing so that a parent such as the Honourable Member for St. John, or a parent such as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East can buy the curriculum, know what it is his or her child is supposed to have learnt during the course of this term and be able to track his or her development according to what is there in the curriculum, clearly known as an attainment target set out so that the tracking of learning is not simply one that is undertaken then by the teacher.

There is also the question of parental education. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about it in his speech again. This Government put over \$100 000 in parental education training where we trained over 1 100 parents across this country in 1995 to 1996, long before the family values, families first, was on TV every night for us to see.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: If you give us the names we would train all for you because we believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the process of parenting is not something that people necessarily naturally have and that there are certain things that people must be exposed to in respect of being able to help them in the process. It is a difficult job and very often there may be problems with a child that have not necessarily been diagnosed properly and a parent therefore is incapable of being able effectively to deal with it.

The third element of EduTech 2000, Sir, has to do with the infusion of technology as a process and part of the learning. It has nothing to do with a child learning how to use the computer. It has to do with using the computer to be able to learn mathematics just as you would use a textbook in addition. Learn English just as you would use a textbook. In addition learn Geography just as you would use a textbook. In addition all it does is to create another opportunity for the child to be able to access information and to be able to use that information in an analytical way.

We hope as well to encourage what is known as more project based learning so that children are allowed to learn in groups, that they are allowed to be able to work collaboratively with one another because that is the kind of world that we are living in and if we can do this and in so doing make teaching child centred where the child is the focus of it, not whether a teacher has finished teaching a syllabus but whether the child has acquired the competencies that should be on the syllabus when the teacher is finished teaching. 5.10 p.m.

Those are the kind of emphases with which I know you, Mr. Speaker, are well familiar and which we believe are absolutely essential if we are to continue to fuel the level of economic growth that we have been seeing recently largely because we need the people to man the sectors that are going to propel those engines of economic growth. Unless we do it now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will not have them in the year 2005. We will not have them in the year 2010 nor will we be able to continue to talk about expanding enrolments at the post secondary and tertiary levels, or to talk about reductions in employment in the under 20, 25 and 45 age categories.

I sincerely hope, Sir, that we will have an opportunity over the next few days to go into these matters in greater detail because I believe education is the single greatest area that has to be conquered in terms of making economic growth to this country, sustainable over the next 30 to 40 years. Our educational system is already* at a 30-year handicap in respect of where our economy is in terms of its

diversification and I look forward, Sir, to that debate in the next few days.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair and Mr. Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the increased enrolment at tertiary level education institutions is really consistent with the view of the World Bank and other financial institutions, that the average cost of teaching should fall over the next five to ten years.

Therefore, if we increase the enrolment levels with the same teaching staff, we have effectively increased the productivity or efficiency of the institution.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of elucidation. The teaching role and the teaching complement has in fact expanded at all of these institutions and therefore to suggest that the enrolment of students is simply to meet a criterion of the international financial institutions is not only bordering on being dishonest but would also suggest that this country would not want to continue its high commitment towards attaining the highest possible education to its citizens. It is only through education that the majority of us has gotten anywhere in this life, Sir. I would hate to think that the Member is advocating that the people from St. Michael North West should not be benefiting from increased enrolment.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is not surprising that the policy being adopted is very consistent with the attitude of the international financial institutions. So, I would not expect a commensurate increase in the teaching staff. The ratio of teacher to pupil or pupil to teacher must have increased.

The other thing that is fascinating is that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic which has an enrolment of 1 400 could have been operating at such low capacity that within the space of two years that enrolment moved to 2 400, an increase of 1 000. I would really wish to visit the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic to find out precisely how that was accommodated in the physical space of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. It seems to me that you are actually saying that they were operating, I do not know its full capacity, but they would have been operating at about 55% of their full capacity and just by a magic wand, we were able to increase the enrolment. That is not really my thing but I just wish in this debate to ask some questions.

Are we satisfied that these Estimates will contribute to a restructuring of the economy of Barbados? Are we satisfied that these Estimates will allow us to see the

kind of shift away from agriculture, retail and distribution in the government sector to service-oriented services, tourism, computing, managerial services and the like?

In fact, in the 1994 reply response to the Budget, the then Opposition Leader, now the Prime Minister of Barbados suggested that the way forward was to increase jobs in the offshore sector by as much as 10 000 over the next five years on the basis of a suggestion made by the then Deputy Central Bank Governor. What I am saying is that when you look at the Barbados economy and you analyse it, you cannot say that the job creation of which we are boasting can be identified as a result of a specific policy or a set of policy matrix on the part of this Government. I cannot say whether or not these jobs have been created in the offshore sector. Not many have been created in tourism, we have not seen the emergence of small businesses in the area of computer managerial services and the kinds of areas for more skilled persons in Barbados. I am at pains to understand whether we can say that these Estimates fit into a strategy outlined by the Prime Minister on assuming office in 1994.

Therefore, when I look at it there has to be some sort of economic transformation in Barbados to achieve job creation, to achieve sustainable growth, to ensure that we are guaranteed of a safer foreign reserve position, to ensure that we can increase our savings and investments, to guarantee that we can attract sufficiently large levels of investments in Barbados to guarantee a sustained future in terms of creating jobs for those unemployed out there. I am saying that it requires a Government that has clearly stated a matrix of policies consistent with the desire to achieve a given objective of economic growth and development.

In that context, I therefore wish to contrast the Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Peter, who is now the Prime Minister with the Member of Parliament then in 1994. This is really a speech about PM versus MP, if you will, the Prime Minister versus the Member of Parliament. I am expecting to see a particular strategy being outlined.

Let me start at the beginning of this exercise by asking the question. Has the Prime Minister achieved the objective of reducing taxes in Barbados consistent with his views when he was a Member of Parliament and not Prime Minister of Barbados?

In 1994, the tax take out of every dollar in Barbados was approximately 28 cents. In 1998/99 the tax take out of every dollar would be 36 cents. Over that given period, a short four-year period, we have seen an increase in the taxation or tax burden on Barbadians.

Asides,

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course in this country.

I now quote the Prime Minister as Opposition Leader from page 4767 of the 1994 Budget Reply:

"Now we feel, Mr. Speaker, that tax reform in Barbados must be guided by something broader than that, for this country is over-taxed to begin with. If our tax reform is guided only by the principle of tax neutrality; that is changing the composition of taxes so that at the end of the day the new taxes give rise to the same amount of revenue as the old taxes, if you accept as we accept and the Government accepts, Sir, that the country is already overtaxed, tax neutrality, as a principle only means that the Government is giving the people of the country the very simple choice as between being beaten by a bull pistol as distinct from being beaten by a dog whopper. It is a simple choice, either you get beaten by a bull pistol or you get beaten by a dog hunter. That is all it means." 5.20 p.m.

I wish to ask the Prime Minister of Barbados, have you succeeded in reducing the level of taxation in Barbados in a way that conforms to the objectives that you have outlined for growth and development in Barbados? Is it not on the basis of your comments necessary for you to ease the burden of taxation on Barbadians? So that should be a principle which the Prime Minister adopts because, he as Opposition Leader suggested that we were heavily taxed and overburdened in 1994. I have been able to just effectively demonstrate that we have seen an overall increase in the tax burden since 1994.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am not sure if he is using a bull pistol or a dog hunter, but certainly, he concluded in over taxing the people further. So, he needs to explain that to me. I really am just asking a few questions. That is, has he really designed a matrix of policies to change the economic structure of Barbados in a way as to guarantee job creation, sustainable growth and overall development for Barbados?

Now, in 1995 in his Capital Expenditure Programme the Prime Minister is on record as saying and I quote again at page 794.

"I subscribe to the belief, as I said earlier that the age of showpiece projects is over and we have tried to put in place a capital programme in which there is one big ticket item and that is a sewerage project which will account for about some \$20 million in the Capital Programme, but a large number of other capital activities, stretching all across the sectors

and the ministries, many of them two million or three million to reprove the quality of life and to deal with real problems have been conceived to help stimulate employment to the extent possible through the Budget."

The Prime Minister is here saying that he is not into big ticket items. Yet still in the presentation this morning we heard about a project for the City. We heard about a project for the Scotland District. We heard about some other project costing in excess of \$20 million. So in a very short space of time we have seen a reversal on this whole question of what the Capital Works Programme should look like and that is that we should not have expenditure of the order of Sherbourne as he further demonstrates later in the presentation. We should confine the expenditure to one big ticket item of approximately \$20 million and then a number of small other Capital Works Programmes.

Therefore he is also in this suggesting that Capital Works Programmes do not in fact ensure large scale job creation and I will quote from the same page 794.

"We feel that we can, without putting the external position of the country at risk, increase our spending on capital projects with a view to stimulating job creation, not large scale as a result of Government capital activity."

The Prime Minister here admits that Capital Works Programmes in Barbados do not necessarily generate large job creation. Therefore, he is saying that as a Government, the present Government would not indulge in these large Capital Works Programmes because, for one they do not generate a substantial amount of jobs and they could put substantial pressure on the foreign reserves in Barbados. We have a situation then in which we are here questioning the position of the Prime Minister of Barbados as it relates to reshaping the economic structure of the economy.

On the question of foreign financing in the Estimates, we were told by the Prime Minister of Barbados that he has a strategy as it relates to foreign borrowing and he clearly outlines the strategy. He said that his borrowing from commercial sources overseas will be determined by the limit of his foreign amortisation payment. That is his foreign principle, repayment of principal on loans. So that in any given year he would only go to the commercial market overseas to the extent of the amount of money that he repaid in foreign debt service of the principal in that given year.

So that if you were to look at the Estimates prepared since 1995, in each case, as we see on page 8, the normal project or the commercial component of foreign financing would always be equal to what you see on page 5 of Table 8. It will always be equal to the portion on

amortisation which is under debt servicing and that foreign component. For instance in 1997/98 the approved Estimates under foreign amortisation was \$98.3 million. Therefore according to the principle outlined by the Prime Minister, his borrowing for that given year which we see at page 8 of Table 10, would have been \$88 million under the Approved Estimates for commercial borrowing. Now in a very strange way this principle is not invoked in the financial year 1998/99.

On page 5 of the Estimates under Foreign Amortisation, the Estimates suggest that foreign amortisation for the next fiscal year will be \$69.7 million. Yet still when you turn to page 8 of the Estimates, Table 10, you will see that the commercial loan which will be sought, 1998/99 is of the order of \$80 million. It therefore means that in a very short space of time the Prime Minister has moved away from the principle of limiting his commercial bank borrowings from foreign sources to his repayment of principal on foreign loans in a given fiscal year.

Some may say that it is negligible because it is only \$11 million more than what is projected for repayment, but I am saying to you that having outlined a principle, the principle should have been invoked for the fiscal year coming and that once you begin to exceed the limit which you impose and break the principle, the excess could be of any magnitude. The thing here to which I am referring is the principle that the Prime Minister outlined in 1995. That in each year, from 1994/95 fiscal year onwards, his foreign borrowing would be limited by the capacity of his repayment of foreign debt of the principal in that given fiscal year. Now again that has not been followed in these Estimates.

I am not as optimistic as the Member for St. Michael South Central that there has been a shift away from domestic financing for 1998/99 to foreign financing, because since 1995, we have been told repeatedly that the emphasis would be on foreign financing and that we would not be accommodating the fiscal deficit by way of printing of money and sourcing financing from domestic sources. For example, in the fiscal year which we are in now, in the Approved Estimates we were supposed to get \$176 million in foreign financing. We have been able according to the Estimates to only get \$32 million in foreign financing. Now that simply means that there was not any deliberate strategy but that we had to turn to domestic financing as a means of accommodating the deficit which we incurred or will incur for 1997/98.

If you were to go back, as I said, from the main section of this Government in 1994, this has always been the case that foreign financing will be the major source of financing in a fiscal year, but has not been realised. To date it has not been realised and I do not expect that in

the coming fiscal year that the Government is going to realise foreign financing of \$209 million in any case. I do not expect this to happen. What I expect will happen therefore is that Government will have to depend on domestic financing in the form of debentures, in the form of Government savings bonds or even by way of Ways and Means or the printing of money at the Central Bank of Barbados. It cannot be escaped. 5.30 p.m.

I am therefore not optimistic that the Government of Barbados has in fact achieved designing a programme which would have ensured economic growth, which would have ensured the growth of foreign reserves, which would have ensured prudent fiscal management, which would have ensured lower energy costs, which would have ensured lower interest rates. Therefore, I need to question whether or not we are really engineering our economic outcome or whether or not we are simply arriving at the destination and then saying yes we have achieved this objective, by looking back and saying we have done so and so to reach our destination.

I am not convinced that the Government has really set about to lower interest rates in Barbados. I am not convinced that the Government has set about to lower taxation in Barbados. That has not been achieved. I am not convinced that the Government has really done something to lower energy costs in spite of the recent announcement because I am saying that given the present trend of oil prices across the world market that we could have reduced the cost of gasoline much lower than we have done.

It is not theoretical. You have repeatedly accused excess taxation as the reason for increasing the high levels of prices of gasoline. In fact, at page 4770, the then Opposition Leader quoted extensively that in 1990 the price per litre for gasoline was \$1.15 of which 42 cents were consumption tax. It was increased to \$1.27 of which consumption tax was 54 cents and this continued over a 5-year period. By 1991 the consumption tax on a litre of gasoline was of the magnitude of 91 cents.

What we have seen is a dismantling of the operations of MOBIL and a restructuring of that whole arrangement so I thought the fact that Government would have been in a position to pass on the benefits of the new company to the consumer in addition to passing on the reduction that has been arrived at as a result of reduced oil prices across the world. Those of us who see CNN daily or who read the international papers know that oil prices have been trending downwards for the last 2-3 years.

Therefore, when you look at the reduction it tends to look pretty good which happened two weeks ago. We cannot say that it is a direct consequence of reduced taxation neither can we say that it is a direct consequence

of reduced oil prices and that the combination of the two should have resulted in a much lower gasoline price per litre than which we are now having in Barbados. So I am just asking the question. Has this reduction in the gas price been a result of the new arrangement with the oil company or is it a result of the reduced oil prices worldwide?

I am now therefore asking Government to revisit further the whole question of the cost of gasoline in this or the next fiscal year.

Government therefore cannot say that it has employed a strategy of low taxation because we have seen increased taxation in Barbados since 1994. Government cannot say that it has truly employed a strategy of lower energy costs because we have not passed on the benefits to the consumers and to the business enterprises in Barbados. Government cannot say that it has pursued a strategy of low income costs because we have not seen that happen either and, in fact, what happened in December of 1994 is that Government increased the savings rate by 1 percentage point since assuming office in September 1994 and we have not seen commensurate reductions in interest rates across the board.

What we have seen have been market driven changes. With the excess liquidity in the banking system over the last 3 years, we saw the Treasury Bill rate at the Central Bank being reduced and we saw a reduction in the time deposit rates. But this was not a direct consequence of action on the part of Government because there is only one interest rate which is now administered by the Central Bank and that is the savings rate and that was never reduced by the Government. So it has to be that the interaction of supply and demand forces out there in the money-market, caused reduction in interest rates only temporarily but they have not been a deliberate strategy on the part of Government to reduce interest rates in Barbados. So that has not been attended to either.

We heard this morning a whole discussion surrounding the Common External Tariff and the reduction which has been agreed to but yet we have not heard any consideration at all being given to the impact of VAT on the tourism sector in particular. It was so easy to determine that what happened to the accommodation sector by way of VAT would have caused an increase in the cost of accommodation and the overall cost of a package by tour tourists in 1997.

When you look at the experience of Almond Beach which suggested that because of VAT they lost about \$2.5 million. Almond Beach attracted 35 000 visitors to Barbados in 1997 and there were about 470 000 visitors to Barbados in 1997 with an average length of stay of about 6 to 7 days. Now if you look at that it means that Almond Beach represents about 1/12 of the overall tourist

arrivals in terms of numbers. If that is so then you can see that for the entire hotel sector the overall tax burden to the hotel sector - let me just assume that all other hotels are like Almond Beach for the sake of simplicity. I know that is not true but I am making the assumption. It therefore means that for last year hotels in Barbados paid in excess of \$35 million in taxation.

Therefore, when the Prime Minister came to Parliament and presented a Budget which said that he is not thinking about any tax totality, that he is thinking about introducing a tax system that actually reduces the tax on Barbadians, he then said that what he is doing to the tourism sector would have caused a relief of \$35 million on the tourism sector in Barbados. It therefore means that if the Prime Minister, when he introduced VAT was suggesting that \$35 million would have been given back to the hotel sector, and there is now evidence that, in fact, the hotel sector has paid, at least, \$30 to \$35 million in excess, it therefore means that overall the burden on the tourism sector has been approximately \$70 million. It has to be the case. You were saying that you gave them back \$35 million and that you are no longer tax neutral in your tax system but you actually reduced the level of taxation in Barbados. 5.40 p.m.

The evidence has now been seen by all Barbadians that VAT has not been tax neutral nor tax reducing but VAT has, in fact, increased its take by approximately \$240 million beyond what was expected from VAT and that the tourism sector has not benefited from the introduction of VAT. That should have been easy to understand from the inception. It has taken the technocrats quite a long time to mislead the Prime Minister of Barbados and it is time that he looks at his technocrats, not me.

We hear talk about excises. I am not a businessman but my very good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is a businessman. Now, prior to VAT the excise taxes were imposed at the port of entry, the C.I.F. value. Under a VAT system, you not only impose the VAT on the import value but you impose the VAT on value-added so, therefore, things like whisky, rum, brandy, all those things should have increased in cost and substantially so too.

Therefore, if you are saying that food and beverage is another major component of the cost of a package to the tourist, then you are saying that the accommodation side was increased in cost. You are also saying that your food moved to 5%, that is the hotel and restaurant tax, to 15%. You are also saying that on things like brandy, rum, gin and other hard stuff the overall cost to the tourist would have increased. In essence, it was quite easy to predict that VAT, as we implemented it, would have caused an increase in the overall cost to the tourist.

I am satisfied, notwithstanding the overall increase in arrivals, that hotels have not done better in 1997 than they did in 1989 at the previous peak of arrivals, and it is simple. There is no way that the wage cost, the cost of utilities, the cost of maintaining the grounds and other costs in the hotel sector could be less in 1997 than they were in 1989. There is every way in which hotels have had to discount their rates in order to attract visitors to Barbados in 1997 so that even if there might have been a couple more visitors in 1997 than they were in 1989, the actual profitability of the hotel sector would have been more substantial than in 1997 because of the differences in cost over the 7-year period.

I do not see how the President of the BTA cannot understand that simple point, that in as much as he might have had more tourists, because of the cost compounded by the increased VAT, that you would not have realised increased profitability in the hotel sector. You cannot use the argument of arrivals to suggest that we are better off in the tourism sector in 1997 than we were in 1989. It is a very simplistic argument that cannot be pursued logically. It is too simple in its form. It is also crazy on the part of the BTA, but I can well understand why they would have the concerns they have.

My concern, and I will end on this, is that any estimates which we now have in Barbados should be concerned with changing the economic structure of Barbados and it can only be done as a result of a systematic set of policies deliberately designed to achieve economic growth and consequently economic development in Barbados.

I am not convinced that these Estimates will go any way toward job creation. What we have perhaps done is we have once again swollen the ranks of the Government sector, disguised employment to demonstrate that the economy is doing what it is not doing, because you cannot prove that it is creating the kinds of jobs we would like to see so I have no reason to believe that we are transforming the Barbados economy to achieve sustainable growth. I have every reason to believe that the major target is not only developing the human resource but managing the human resource which we have to develop. So while there should be increased training there must be increased management and overall we have to utilise the technology that is available to us.

In short, while we can boast of increased enrolment at tertiary level institutions, we can also see that there is a bias in terms of the gender and that there must be concern with the amount of enrolment of females versus males at these institutions. Let us not be trapped into believing that we can only look at enrolment as a gauge or measure of where we are going in terms of training but we also have to be very concerned about the differences between

the genders and that that will constitute a major challenge to any Government in the years ahead in Barbados.

On that note, I finish by saying that we continue to be overtaxed in Barbados as a result of the VAT and other tax policies. I am not very sure that we are really sitting down and strategising on a programme to achieve sustainable growth and development in Barbados. I would wish to see in the upcoming Budget a number of policies which can reverse some of the excess taxation on Barbadians either mainly by way of addressing the income tax side of the taxation for the coming Budget in Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to address a number of social issues relating to these Estimates. It is very important, Sir, to look at the dollars and cents figures in these Estimates. Many times we have to look at the social factors which impact on the poor people in the various communities with whom we interact as Members of Parliament.

Sir, I therefore want to address first of all the matter of employment. I am hearing that we have all this increase in employment but as I go through the streets in Parish Land, Gall Hill, Vauxhall and Silver Hill, the Pine and those places, I still see many youngsters without work. I am asking myself where these jobs are. When I reflect too on the fact that the Government could boast about sending home 400 workers from the BADMC...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, Sir. The Government has not boasted about sending home 400 people. I am not even sure that any amount coming to 400 had actually been sent home. 5.50 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter, Sir, today in the House said that there was great efficiency demonstrated in the fact that people had been laid off from the BADMC. He said that, Sir, and the figures that I know, Sir, that 400 people were sent home from the BADMC. The Government is now boasting saying that this reflects to how efficient they are in sending home 400 people.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: On a point of order. I was here and heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister make the statement that the BADMC has moved from a position of an annual loss of \$5 million to a position this year that it would show a loss of half a million, and that there has been greater efficiency in the management and there has been privatisation of certain sections of it. I have not heard him make any statements of boasting about having sent home anyone. The Government's position cannot be misrepresented. My friend may have an interpretation of

what he wants to say but he cannot attribute it as a statement from the Government.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I would have thought that if 400 of the poorest people in our community were sent home I would have seen pain on the Minister of Agriculture's face. I would have seen pain on the Prime Minister's face.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. Four hundred people were not sent home. That is an exaggeration. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I have seen no sign of pain on the faces of any Member on that side. As a matter of fact it was spoken in the context that it was a sign of great efficiency in sending home people - the poor black people of Parish Land, of Fairy Valley, of Fair View of Coverly, of Kingsland and those people who I see everyday as I drive around that area. These are the people that they are so proud about sending home to make the BADMC more efficient. That is what they are talking about, Sir. It has not only been said in here. It has been said publicly by the Chairman of the BADMC. He has boasted about how efficient they are in sending home workers at the EPU and all of those places, but these are the people who I see when I drive around Fairy Valley and Fair View. I cannot feel proud about it, Sir. I have to say, Sir, that I always felt that if you were going to send home people from an institution you would find some opportunity for them. The great Intel when it was sending home people called them in and spoke to them about training for new opportunities for going to work at other places but that was not done, Sir. They were not called in and told to look for new opportunities. They were knocked off like a hoe handle and 400 went home - just so.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. He continues to mislead the House. The Honourable Member's involvement in this institution was after having been made Chairman, and he said "I resign because I am not competent to do it. Let somebody who can handle that handle it".

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that any Minister, any chairman with insight, would understand that if you are going to send home people you must find other opportunities for them. I therefore felt that any person having a knowledge of different opportunities in agriculture, would have been able to spot the new opportunities in agriculture, and so be able to set it up and place those people in that. But instead of that happening after the appointment of a person who had knowledge in

agriculture, instead of the person using his skills to recommend new areas of opportunity where these people who are going to be laid off will be going into, instead of doing that, my understanding is that instead of doing that, he looked at himself. I will not talk about that. I am not getting into that at all. So the vision was that the people who knew about agriculture would be able to discover new areas to agro industry but instead of discovering these new areas, they felt that their jobs was to simply come with a hatchet and cut off all the people, poor black people from Parish Land, Fair View and all those people and say nothing about it.

I started to look at these new industries and I discovered that I did not have the skills to look at this agro industry. Those who had the skills were supposed to do it and they did not do it. I think they should resign too. There are too many people who have resigned to do nothing about anything when it comes to poor black people. They have resigned themselves to doing nothing and even when they have to be pushed because they have the skill to do it, they are so resigned to doing nothing because they are in the culture of nothingness, that nothing is done, a culture that allows a Board not to meet for a year.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member speaks and refers to the BADMC. It is not true that the BADMC...

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member is better at what he was saying when he spoke on resigning. You will note that the whole nature of his statement is resigning, resigning. Let him talk more about resigning.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: If the Honourable Member wants to say that they did not meet for a year I have no problem with that. They met regularly but there is another Board which we all know, the National Assistance Board, did not meet for a year. They were resigned to doing nothing. Especially if you are looking at provision for the poor, provision for the elderly and you imagine that this state of nothingness, this state of inertia should be allowed to obtain and they did not meet because it did not matter. Those poor and aged did not matter, Sir, so much so that when I sought help for an 83-year-old man I was given all kinds of stories. The man had a truck load of clothes and he did not use them. He had money, all kinds of stories.

This tells us that when we are looking at poverty alleviation... I am going on to that now. I see a figure for poverty alleviation, Sir. We have to understand what we mean by poverty first of all, what it is, what is the source

of the poverty and how we are going to distribute to those people who are poor. It is a man of 83 years old who is not working, will not work again. Is he rich because he might have \$10 000? Is he rich because he might have \$20 000 to spend for ten or how many more years he has to work? These are the things we have to look at. What is poverty? Is a lady who lives by herself, a single parent who has five children, is she not poor simply because she is working as a maid for a few dollars? These are the kinds of things we have to look at. Sir, it is okay to come with all of these fancy "fandangle" theories but I am concerned, Sir, about whether these things will work. I wish to look particularly, Sir, at the catch word the new "fandangled" word "EduTech". I will speak about it later, Sir. It sounds good. I like how it sounds. You are spending \$5 million on EduTech for this year, a pilot project for fifteen schools out of over a hundred schools, so the children at fifteen schools will benefit from this new "fandangled" EduTech while those at all the other schools will not benefit. They will just hear about it and be envious of it and be relegated. In two to three years time when the equipment becomes obsolete because of changing technology, we will have to start over again. 6.00 p.m.

Sir, we had the days of children sitting and listening to Rediffusion, that was part of the technology in that time. We had ETV and the equipment remained up there in Government Hill and now we have EduTech. So it will be left to see what will happen to those computers especially in an age when computers are fast becoming obsolete. I want to find out when we spend this \$5 million what would happen 2 - 3 years down the road when the equipment becomes obsolete.

At this moment, Sir, we do not understand the full implications of this EduTech. It sounds good. It is nice P.R. The P.R. has preceded the programme. I like how it sounds too but as I sat and thought about it my vision would not allow me to dream about how it would work in the long run because of the fact that computers become obsolete very quickly. We have to look at things like repairs and training and all of those things. It is good to see that we are thinking but it is not only just to think, we have to think in practical terms.

This brings me on, Sir, to this thing of packing down the curriculum with all these things about black studies and tourism studies and so on. Sir, from my knowledge of how time-tabling works, I want to find out how they are going to fit in all these things from my knowledge of how time-tabling works. I am saying, Sir, black studies are relevant, tourism is relevant, but I am saying equally as well, Sir, that a lot of these things are being done in the schools by the enlightened black teachers that we have. Any practical teacher does it in the school when he is teaching English, when he is teaching history, even when he is teaching P.E., teaching music. This is done as a matter of course.

A person once told me, Sir, that black studies should be taught, but it should be taught to white people. They need to be aware of black studies. We are black we know about it already. They need to understand the psyche of the black man and it is more relevant in that context than to speak to enlightened black teachers and tell them that they are not teaching black studies. All enlightened black teachers teach black studies in the school programme as far as I am aware.

Sir, we are talking about youth and the development of the communities but, Sir, how can we develop the communities when we are not hearing any programmes coming from the Minister who is responsible for community development? All studies on communities, Sir, will tell you that there is declining involvement of the youth in community activity. What this therefore means is that you need to provide community leadership. You need to provide community leadership for these youngsters. You need to produce leaders for these communities.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, we cannot treat people working in community development lightly. We cannot treat Youth Commissioners lightly, Sir. If Youth Commissioners are really to do their job they must be trained to do it first of all. Secondly, they must have the facilities.

I have no problem with a youth commissioner having a car and a car loan and travelling allowance. I have no problem with that, if you have to drive around and do the job of coordinating the communities. We also have to understand that communities have changed and while you might have the traditional communities you also have the developed areas.

As communities change we need to look at programmes similar to neighbourhood development programmes. We need to look at establishing organisations within those communities which would then feed into the central system but none of these things are being done. We have gone through areas that do not have a central emergency organisation at the district level. They do not have youth groups any more. They do not have community organisations like before, Sir, and these are things that need to be looked at. You only find that in places like Pinelands and Parish Land but there is a decline in the number of youth groups as we know them, Sir.

The Youth Director he will tell you that and all the modern literature throughout the Caribbean is telling you that. They are also relating this as well to the feeling of failure which a number of these adolescents have because they are not doing well at school and therefore they will

come out and just be involved in informal groups rather than being involved in the formal groups within the society. This is something that we need to look at. We need to have a whole revamp, a whole re-think of these community development officers, these youth commissioners and all that. We have to refer to the research that is going on throughout the Caribbean, the research that is going on that deals with these issues instead of using these old systems. We are going to look at setting up a community centre but what happens? When you go to the community centres you find many of them shut up because you do not have the leadership being provided and no programmes are put in place to keep the youth active which means we have to know what they want and we have to have the right people there to encourage them to use the facilities that are available.

You also have to look at the structure of the community development centres. The youth do not like these closed up things. They like the more open air things and something which will incorporate sports at the same time.

Sir, I also want to address the psychology of dealing with public affairs. The Right Honourable Prime Minister, when he came to office, in his first budget speech which he made in 1995 he said,

"Under the new Barbados Labour Party Administration there will therefore be renewed opportunity for our people, whether as individuals, as families, as corporate citizens, within the private sector or as agencies of Government, to apply their considerable aptitude, knowledge and skill in constructing a just society. We will not follow the example of the unwise steward and hide our talents under a bushel."

He also went on to say,

"The task that lies before us, indeed the task in which we must embark is one that puts a premium on national integrity and loyalty".

I therefore, Sir, want to ask a simple question. It has been brought to my attention, Sir, that you now have representing Barbados overseas, in New York a non-Barbadian. In Germany, Sir, the director of Europe, you have a non-Barbadian. The first one was the manager of the New York office of the tourist board, the BTA, the second one the Director of Europe Tourist Board, two non-nationals. I am hearing whispers that these are Caucasians and I am being told that the Manager of the Toronto Office is also a Caucasian. 6.10 p.m.

I will deal with the foreign component of this question.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am looking at what the Prime Minister said. He said that he wanted to encourage national integrity and loyalty. This is what the Prime Minister said. He spoke about our people and if he is speaking about people, I am speaking about the foreigners.

In addition to that we also have the Vice President of Marketing who is a non-Barbadian.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East. I would like you to stay in your seat and keep quiet and let the Honourable Member for Christ Church East make his presentation.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Sir, I was in my seat all the time.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael East, you are interrupting the Member for Christ Church East. I am trying to tell you that.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I accept, Sir, but I was trying to attract your attention to indicate that some degree of disrespect was being brought to the House. The Honourable Member cannot shout across from her seat like that. You did not see it, Sir, so I was trying to attract your attention.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have made your point. The Member for Christ Church East, will you continue please?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am saying how can we expect to encourage national integrity and loyalty if we pick, one non-national, two non-nationals, three non-nationals, to be in charge...

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: On a point of order. I wish to put in the record that you are threatening to put me out for sitting down here. You cannot do that.

Certain remarks made by Mr. B. M. TAJTT were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: We are saying that there are one non-national, two non-nationals, three non-nationals. This cannot be by coincidence, Sir. This has to be part of a policy. Are we having a policy which says that a national cannot sell this beautiful land.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Are we saying that, Sir. I think we have to put an end to that. I am putting it in the record that I will not be supporting that, Sir.

Sir, this view that I have is not new. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph would well remember that in 1994 on November 8th, I think it was, in this House, when auxiliaries were being appointed, I said that anybody who does not feel the pain of Barbados, cannot sell Barbados tourism as effectively as someone who knows the blood, sweat and tears of the people of this country. I said that in 1994 on the Back Bench. I have not come with this idea all of a sudden. This is how I feel about it. I feel strongly about it, Sir.

Somebody has to speak about it and I have determined that I will speak about it and that it has to stop. When you have a Tourism Authority that have people who have been in the field for as many as 15 years and some over 15 years, Sir...

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, there are people in the BTA who have been around, many of them for more than 15 years and you mean to tell me that they do not know how to run a tourist office? You mean to tell me that the people who you know are no good but you can deal with people who you do not know. And you are telling me that this is foolishness that I am talking. You have so many people who are experienced and have a track record and these are people who were there when Barbados reached its peak in 1989 and now there are no good. You have to go for foreigners? That has to stop, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am not talking any foolishness. I know of people who can do the job and they go out there and get people who do not know as Gabby sang in his song, people who do not know a breadfruit from a pear, who do not know Baxters Road from Oistins, who do not know Miami Beach from Brandons and you expect them to sell Barbados tourism. People who are putting Barbados upside down. That has to stop. I have said enough about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I go into the Casualty as we used to call it at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I see people in there all night, I have to feel the pain of the poor, Sir.

I remember a few months ago, an old lady about 70 years old got into an accident at Welches Road. At 8.00 o'clock I went to the hospital and up to 12.00 o'clock the old lady was still there. She then got admitted into the inside and she only got attended to at 2.00 o'clock. This was an old lady 70 years old.

She was driving the car but others who were in the van that was struck, well, they remained there until 4.00 o'clock. I am saying that if you are talking about all the ills of the hospital, you are not dealing with them until you deal with that. This is the main problem at the hospital.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I did not see any white people in there. That poor black people have to sit around from 8 o'clock the night time and some have to remain until 8 o'clock the next day and still they are not attended to.

We can do all that we can about the QEH and not recognise that this is at the heart of the problem because we tokenise our people and come with fancy slogans and believe that is the thing. I want to see a more efficient Casualty. Whatever you do, you ain't do nothing until you deal with that. That is the kind of thing we want you to look at.

Sir, I want to look at security of schools. We have been talking about this for years. The BUT is still talking about that and I understand that there were supposed to be more security guards at some of these schools. They tell me that security is supposed to come under the Ministry of Defence.

I look in the Estimates and the amount of monies voted do not reflect to me that there is any intention of increasing the number of security guards to schools. That is bare talk. Indeed, Sir, I believe that there should be a separate division of security to deal with security around schools. There are over 100 schools in Barbados. This means that at any one time you have a captive population there to deal with and you are going to tell me that you cannot have a separate division to look after security of schools? You mean to tell me that? 6.20 p.m.

The next thing I want to deal with is health, Sir, when it comes to children. There is a need for repairs to equipment in the School Meals Department, but when I look in the Estimates, the increases do not reflect any intention to look at improving the equipment in the School Meals Department. It means they are going to get the Report from the Auditor General and are going to dismiss it like they dismiss all the rest of the reports as indicated in here today. They need equipment and the Estimates do not reflect any urgency to deal with improving that equipment, the facilities and all that.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am not dealing with licences yet, but I have not heard a reply yet as to whether

these places are licensed or not. I am dealing with the fact that we need to have proper equipment if we are dealing with a vast number of children, Sir.

The final thing I want to deal with is this idea of segmenting this whole school population. You have this alternative secondary school. You have this school for new children at risk, in addition to Dodds, and you have all kinds of segregation. It becomes a state of segregation when you have people pushed all around. I want to hear a report of what is happening at that Alma Parris School. Has it proved that that is the direction in which we should go especially in view of the fact that they should be mainstreaming instead of segregation of the students?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am therefore saying that the Estimates need to reflect a more deep rooted look at the fundamental problems that confront the people of Barbados. If the Estimates do not do that, there are just figures on paper, and we need to look at it and despite protestations from those who do not care, especially about poor black people, I will still make my case whenever I have to make it.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find it very difficult to come immediately behind the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who has ranged far and wide, speaking on matters in agriculture when he had the opportunity to Chair a Board in Agriculture and admitted himself to be incompetent and resigned from that.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said I was incompetent. I said that I felt that there was somebody else who could do the job better than I could. The records and Press releases would confirm that. I never said I was incompetent.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Clearly the Honourable Member admits what I am saying, even if the language he uses is slightly different. He then continued to canvass very hard for the job at the BTA which I heard he has been promised if the Dems ever return to office. He ranged far and wide. It was very interesting.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. It is improper for any Honourable Member to impute improper motives to another Honourable Member.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying that the Member is speaking in this House in pursuit of a job. That is what is improper. It is contrary to the Rules of the House and the Honourable Member furthermore ought not to be insulted to suggest that somebody has been promised a job. There is everything wrong with it and as an Honourable Member in here, I say it ought not be allowed, Sir.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I really cannot determine how to address what she has said, except to say that it is totally untrue first of all and secondly to make the point that I, if I wanted that job, I could have had it years ago.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I truly hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that during the course of these Estimates we will get to debate in detail the Ministry of Health and the Environment. We debated it during the Estimates in 1995. I was away in 1996. Last year, the Heads were called and we had every intention of getting to it, but the way the debate turned out we did not and I very much hope we will get to it this year.

Everybody in Barbados, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, is an expert on health and education. If I may frame the difficulties in the Ministry of Health, specifically in the QEH because this is what people focus their attention on. If I may frame it in a way that is totally non-partisan, because I truly want to define the problem as I perceive it.

There is in Barbados one hospital for the delivery of tertiary care. That is the reality. There was at one stage, another hospital. What it was for, it is hard to determine, since it never had more than seven patients at any given time, but I did say that I wanted to frame the comments in a non-partisan way.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I will be very patient with the Minister, provided the Minister does not deliberately mislead the House. The Minister knows that her statement is untrue about the St. Joseph Hospital and if she is going to advance an argument she should advance a serious argument about their position at the St. Joseph Hospital, but do not make sweeping untrue statements about it, because it does not reflect properly on Parliament. I will listen to her if she wants to be serious about the debate. Let's be serious about it.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to QEH, we have a hospital which has now existed for well over 30 years. It was a hospital, the location of which was identified and conceptualised by a Barbados Labour Party administration. It was a structure

that was completed under a Democratic Labour Party administration. The management structure that was put in place then, and which exists now is therefore a management structure that dates back to the 1960's when in fact we are moving toward the 21st century.

We have, over time, had a number of diagnostic studies which attempted to define the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We have been weak, and when I say weak, I am speaking of successive administrations, in terms of the implementing of the findings of those studies. We have a structure that exists with no middle management.

During the years of structural adjustment and during the years that the St. Joseph Hospital was opened, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital vote was cut by as much as \$12 million. That is a fact. We have an Accident and Emergency Unit which has functioned with problems over many years. For those of us who care to remember, if you cast your mind back 20 years there have been problems in relation to long waiting times at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Over time, no new management structure such as would carry the expanding hospital services and system has been put in place. Between the period 1992 and 1995 because of the burgeoning... 6.30 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member but the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said that no new management structure was put in place but I recall about 18 months ago the Right Honourable Prime Minister coming to the Barbadian public and saying that he was putting a new management structure in place that would do all of the things that the Honourable Member is talking about.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I stand by what I said. We had a change of bodies but not a change of structure and there is a fundamental difference between the two.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Inter-American Development Bank financed a study which was carried out by the Pan American Health Organisation on the structure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. A report was made and subsequently the structure which was recommended was put in place. There was, for example, a financial comptroller. Immediately the Government changed, the financial comptroller was moved to the Prime Minister's Office and thereafter the trouble began. The Honourable Member ought not to say that she found no structure. There was a Financial Comptroller at middle management level among others and that was a result of an expensive study carried out by the Pan American Health Organisation.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There was a financial comptroller in place. A substantial study was made and the sole recommendation was not to put in place a financial comptroller, and the notion that putting in place a financial comptroller, one person is a total change of management structure is nonsense. There was no change of the management structure. I found a financial comptroller in place there and there is still a financial comptroller in place today.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The study made recommendations of a broad kind. It made recommendations about an engineering department which was put in place. It made recommendations of a financial comptroller which were put in place. It made recommendations about management and there was a post of Deputy Hospital Manager that was created that never existed before. The record will show that there were substantial recommendations and they were put in place and the Honourable Member came in like a hurricane and removed them.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am making the point that to add one or two models to an existing structure does not represent a change of structure in an environment where there is no middle management. To this day, there is no middle management structure at the Q.E.H.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There was senior management. Even with the changes that were made, no middle management was put in place. You have a hospital that employs in excess of 2 000 people without a human resource manager. That is unheard of anywhere else.

You have a situation where a hospital needs to be a quick response system but it exists within the framework of a bureaucratic structure the nature of which does not allow for rapid responses. If you want supplies in a hurry you have to go through the Central Purchasing. All of these are issues which we now have to look at if we are going to define where it is. We, as a people, are hoping to carry the hospital.

You have a situation where special support services like the laundry, like the labs and so on operate essentially as an 8-hour department rather than a 24-hour department when you have a hospital that provides a 24-hour service. You have nurses who work in the Accident & Emergency or Casualty in the same way as if they work on the floor of the ward when the A & E is a dynamic kind of environment requiring a different structure.

For years, if you go back to look at newspapers articles and I have gone back 10 and 15 years, year after

year, you will see the same problems being repeated at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because we have not changed fundamentally the system. We have tinkered with it.

You have on top of all of that new departments being added to the hospital all the time. Programmes being expanded. Ten thousand people more between 1992 and 1995 accessing care in out-patients¹ clinics particularly for chronic diseases. At the same time, you are not expanding the nature of the administrative or managerial framework to carry adequately the hospital structure. All of these are changes that need to be made and which I want to speak to at length when we come to debate. I can see that it is going to be very bitter.

I really wanted to choose this period to speak to a very narrow issue in relation to what the Ministry of Health and the Environment will be doing over the next year. I have mentioned health specifically and I want to make the point before I leave the global hospital.

We tend in our political culture because it is easy for us to do so, to say and indeed the Minister does carry some responsibility - blame the Minister. It is the Minister's fault. We do that. We do it when we are in Opposition and you do it now that you sit there. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will tell you and I think he would be honest enough to do so - that a newspaper article appeared, a major newspaper story, during the time of the Democratic Labour Party tenure in relation to - and there were several, many with problems that we have now, some different - the hospital coming down to one pot.

You get up and you quarrel and you say how can the Minister let this happen, because this is what we do in a political culture. We feed a procession out there but when you see something like that happening within a hospital structure it tells you something about the nature of the management structure that exists, about the nature of the system used for ordering supplies, because it might not necessarily be a problem of funding. Since we have come to office, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital vote has been increased by about \$20 million and that is a fact. That is an incontrovertible fact and you pick the Estimates up and you can see the figures for yourself. It is a question therefore, of how those monies are administered. What systems there are in place for proper administration of the difficulties facing the hospital and to what extent individual department managers are focussing on the problems and creating the solution for them.

As Minister, you are policy director. You conceptualise the framework, but it is the people in the trenches who must do the implementation. And it is against that background that I wish to move and to say that when I speak on them during these Estimates, I am going to frame my comments against that background,

against looking at what has happened at the Q.E.H over 20 years whether it has been problems with interns, whether it has been problems with medical posts, whether it has been problems with one pot or toilet paper and coming to where we are now and then moving from that to go to where it is we hope to go.

I believe that since this Hospital has to service all Barbados at every social level but particularly those who are poor who have no other option then we must make sure that we get it right. I hope during the course of these Estimates, and again during the Budget, to lay out the broad framework how we are going to be taking the Hospital forward. 6.40 p.m.

I began by saying that I am framing my comments on the second reading in relation to one specific issue and that is the issue in relation to a matter mentioned by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in his opening remarks, the elderly. Barbados has a very large elderly population and I want during the course of these comments to make Parliament aware of two new initiatives which have been put in place for care of the elderly in Barbados. I have not spoken about them outside this Chamber before so I am taking this opportunity to speak about them today and to speak to the Chamber about other initiatives which we are taking.

The elderly population today stands at 31 012 over the age of 65. They constitute 11.7% of our population. We have and we expect in the year 2000 that we will have 31 462 people over the age of 65. This figure is about 11.7%. By the year 2010, according to PAHO Estimates, we expect the percentage of elderly to move to 12% of the total population of Barbados. That represents a substantial number of people for whom we have to provide health care.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am framing the background for the initiative.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. James South is misleading the House, that is, the Honourable Member has stated that the population of the elderly happens to be 31 012 people which happens to be 11.7% which gives a population of 265 000. I want to know where and when the population of Barbados has increased to that number?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: With the number of elderly whom we have today they present peculiar problems, problems in relation to transportation, problems in relation to health care, problems in relation to the

provision of social services but in health care, the area in which I am going to concentrate, the problems are severe.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Those are the figures provided by PAHO. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not believe we should quarrel about the percentages. The fact is that the elderly population...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I think the Honourable Member is misunderstanding what my colleagues are trying to help her with. If 31 000 add up to 11.7% then that is tantamount to saying that the population is nearly 300 000.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, today the elderly population over 65 in Barbados stands at 31 012. In 2000 we expect the figure will be 31 462. If, in fact, Members on the Other Side work the percentages out and get them to be 11% or 10%, that is not the issue. The reality on which we have to focus is that each one of these numbers represents a person for whom we have to provide care and services, and that is what I want to focus on.

What we are doing in relation to the elderly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we have at any given time at the QEH 40 elderly persons who have had care who do not need to be hospitalised within the acute care setting but who cannot be sent back home either because their families have abandoned them and refused to take them back, or because they were living alone, or the conditions in which they were living were such that you cannot send them back to their homes.

There are residents in the St. Michael Geriatric Hospital - 386 people. There are on a waiting list for admission to the Geriatric Hospital in St. Michael, 386 persons. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am trying to get the figures here.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not like to interrupt the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. When the Government was changed and the Honourable Members over there became the Government, they found in place a programme at the Geriatric Hospital for expansion of the geriatric beds. They shut that down. They said on the Floor of this House that they would not continue, and the Honourable Member is on record saying that she is not going to have any recreational facility built at the Hospital for people to play games.

Furthermore, Sir, there is an institutional study in the Ministry that projected to the nearest person the number

of geriatric patients there will be in Barbados up to the year 2030 and provided rooms at the Psychiatric Hospital, the Geriatric Hospital and St. Joseph Hospital.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we did say, to correct the inaccuracy put out by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, is not that we would shut the programme down at the Geriatric Hospital. It has not. What I inherited...

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We did not say we would shut the programme down. What we inherited was a plan to build a high tech gym and a kitchen for \$5 million. What we determined was that there was no need for any high tech gym for old people. You needed a multi-purpose site facility that if they wanted to watch a picture you could put in chairs and they could watch it, or if they had to do low impact aerobics or something suitable for the elderly. It will be built.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I was making is that there are in excess of...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member did not include that there was another ward to be completed in that project.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, let the Honourable Member continue, please. Continue.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are well in excess of 300 persons in the Geriatric Hospital. In all in Barbados there are 748 persons in the public geriatric facilities of Barbados. There are roughly 510 in the private geriatric facilities.

What we are hoping to do is two-pronged. First of all, the plan to which the Honourable Member speaks, it is critical that we take some of these elderly persons out of the QEH wards. It costs \$50 per day to keep a person at the Geriatric Hospital but at the QEH it costs roughly \$500 a day so work out the cost of keeping persons at the QEH as opposed to moving them into a geriatric facility. 6.50 p.m.

The plan for continuing the expansion of the wards at the geriatric hospital in St. Michael will continue and therefore until April 20 or thereabout of this year, or possibly by early May, we are going to be able to open a refurbished wing of the Geriatric Hospital which will provide for an additional one hundred beds. It will take forty persons who are in the QEH at this time, who do not need to be there and other persons who are on the waiting

list. There are 700 persons on a waiting list trying to access geriatric care in Barbados and it will satisfy part of that demand, though a small part. That is the first component. We have a new wing which will give us an additional one hundred beds. It will open early in the new financial year.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The refurbishment is complete. The equipment is purchased and we are dealing now with staffing issues. The second component of this plan brings what we call an alternative approach to care for the elderly. As I indicated earlier, there are some 510 beds in the private geriatric service. New beds have been bought. New equipment has been bought. It is our intention to enter into an arrangement with private nursing homes in Barbados because we have been able to find that there are 275 vacant beds and therefore what the Ministry is going to do, is to make an arrangement with the private geriatric facilities to take on some of those elderly persons, particularly those who are on the waiting list, to access geriatric care. We think that we can fill, based on the numbers waiting, all those beds.

We will give to the care givers or the owners or managers of the facility, a subsidy for caring for the elderly, and concessions on materials like pampers and so on which the elderly have to use. That is going to be negotiated and worked out, what subsidy they will get and what this package of concessions will be. We recognise that a number of things have to be done to facilitate this arrangement. First of all, we have established and will be improving an assessment team which will be resident at the St. Michael Geriatric Hospital. There is one now.

Every person who is seeking care as an elderly person will be assessed. Those persons needing acute care will go into the St. Michael Geriatric Hospital but those persons who do not need acute care, but who only need someone to powder them up, to talk to them about their grandchildren, to comb their hair and to give general care, but not acute nursing care, will go in to the private facilities. Government is going to concentrate on giving the acute health care while the private facilities will be giving more residential care than acute care. We are going to establish an accreditation team for nursing homes.

There are a number of nursing homes that people are complaining about which are not run up to a certain standard. Those persons who commit breaches... we have instructed the Attorney General's Chambers four weeks ago or thereabout, to start the drafting of the new legislation for the regulation of nursing homes in Barbados. As a part of this package there will be new legislation governing the regulation of nursing homes in Barbados. Persons with whom the Government enters into a relationship will not be able to get people from us unless they reach

accreditation requirements. All of this will be in the new legislation. There will be a broad-based accreditation team based on the Fire Service to assess for fire hazards comprising nurses and doctors, public health inspectors, people who have a compendium of skills, to go to each of the nursing homes to ensure that the team which we are going to constitute will be very different from any team that currently exists because there is some accreditation. The new team which will come in as part of this legislation will be very different from what is in place now. Protocols for care will be established. It will also be absolutely essential for each of these nursing homes...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I got so many interruptions. These accreditation teams will set what the level of care will be. There will be a specific requirement for the ratio of care-givers to patients and beds. Often people complain that there are not enough care-givers in institutions, or that the persons who are there are not trained.

We are also going to divide the nursing homes into two broad categories - those which are providing almost a type of acute care and those that are merely residential. Out of that we will then see what the ratio of staff has to be - staff to beds, staff to patients in each kind of institution.

In the meantime, it would be also absolutely essential for each of these institutions to have as part of their management team a doctor, a nurse and persons trained in gerontology. Anybody at the moment can open a nursing home without having any specific training or specialist care in the area. I want to ensure therefore, that the fact that these facilities are open will not just give rise to all kinds of a group of mad people rushing into the area because they see a need. That is why we are going to have this very careful accreditation teams, with the power to do surprise visits to ensure that no abuses are being committed. There will be very stiff penalties for the breaches of the legislation or breaches of the provisions required.

We expect that this new initiative will give rise to entrepreneurs coming into this area. We expect that it will create jobs. We expect that a number of persons who are not now able to access care, either because they do not have the financial resources to get it to the private sector, or because there is no space available in the public sector, will be able to find space. It is going to cost us roughly 200 to 275 people which is the number of beds that we will have in the first instance.

We expect that over time a number of other initiatives are going to converge with what I have announced today -

the extension of the Geriatric Hospital and the coming on stream of a relationship with the private sector which does not now exist.

Part of the difficulty in Barbados is that those persons who have elderly people, where the people are senile and so often do not have somebody to watch them during the day - they do not mind taking care of them at night when they are at home, but there is nobody to watch them during the day. One of the things that we want to do is not only to look in terms of expanding the Home Help Services, because some of the elderly are ambulatory. It is a question of finding something for them to do during the day when they would be alone. We are therefore looking at a plan to expand the Rehabilitation Services Unit and the Occupational Therapy Unit at the geriatric hospitals throughout the country, so that a larger number of persons can come in during the day essentially for day care. That only exists now at the Geriatric Hospital in St. Michael. What we want to do is expand the service throughout Barbados and we anticipate that a large number of those persons who have difficulties with their elderly during the day will access that service as opposed to putting them into residential or domiciliary care. 7.00 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have given you back your time for interruptions. Will you please wind up?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in creating this new initiative the Barbados Labour Party Government is really giving effect to its Manifesto commitment to establish greater systems of care for the elderly. This new initiative with the private sector has never existed before. We know that if we are to do it that it is going to have to be properly regulated and controlled including outfitting these houses with facilities for wheelchairs and so on. All of this is going to come within the legislative framework.

Nursing homes will be given a year from the date which the legislation comes on stream to have their facilities properly outfitted and to meet the requirements of the legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that cohort of elderly persons are going to find that new initiatives are going to come on stream which are going to cater specifically to their needs.

SUSPENSION

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

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 7.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in considering these Estimates it is necessary to look at the type of economic background that has been in existence prior to the laying of these Estimates. Between September 1994 and now, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the encouraging signs of increasing unemployment where in consequence of a number of positive measures made by this Government, more and more Barbadians, including young people, are getting a chance to be employed.

We also see in this background, Mr. Speaker, the spectacle of healthy and increasing foreign reserves and Mr. Speaker this is a very good sign for the reason that in a small open economy where lots of our technology must be imported, where lots of our raw materials must be imported and where a wide range of imports come into our country, it is necessary to have a level of foreign reserves that could sustain that type of import activity. And when talking about these foreign reserves, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to look at the question of foreign reserves being earned. I really want to make something of this, Mr. Speaker, because if we are in an economy that is going to be going anywhere at all and going to be driven by positive policies then it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that our foreign reserves be earned.

I seem to recall that in this country at one point we had the spectre of a situation, Mr. Speaker, where there were attempts to attract inflows of foreign money to this country to boost our foreign reserves in a situation where they were not earned. What I am saying now, Mr. Speaker, is that through the performance of the economic sectors that earn foreign exchange we are in a situation where we have been able to ensure that we keep our reserves at a very healthy level.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, in considering the economic background that has informed these Estimates, we also have the situation of very prudent debt management where Barbadians can be given the assurance that under the direction of the Right Honourable Minister of Finance we have been able to manage our debt well, we have been able to reserve moneys to apply to the servicing of these debts and we are in a situation, Mr. Speaker, where even if this Government now had to go anywhere and borrow we are a creditworthy country once again.

We also, Mr. Speaker, must bear in mind that Government has not now, but some time ago, so managed its finances as not to require to use the overdraft of the Central Bank and not to require to print more money. These are some of the economic indices, Mr. Speaker, that lay behind these Estimates and inform these Estimates.

I am of the view that the current allocation, the current money which is being sought from this Parliament is going to go a long way towards ensuring that the types of economic programmes that have already been instituted by this Government will be allowed to continue and to bring some prosperity to this country.

We have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where if we had to consider specific programmes as they are highlighted in these Estimates we must look at the question of a number of programmes and I would want to begin by looking at education. We in Barbados have for a long time placed a considerable emphasis on training and on education. We in Barbados are of the view that a people properly educated are going to be able to be a productive people in the work place. We are also of the view that a people properly educated and trained would be able to make themselves more marketable and do some justice to their plight on this earth by being in a position where they would be more understanding, where they would appreciate a number of things in life and where they would be able, if properly trained and educated, to so earn their way in this world as to be able to attack problems like poverty and ignorance.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a type of misconception in this Honourable House yesterday. We would have heard that \$5 million has been targeted for the EduTech programme and unless I was hearing wrong I got the distinct impression that those Honourable Members who were critical of the allocation seemed to be saying that the \$5 million would not have been sufficient. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that this \$5 million is not the entire cost of the EduTech programme. In any event, Mr. Speaker, the EduTech programme...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, I believe, is misleading this Chamber. What was said yesterday, I believe it received some concurrence on that side, is that the Government has not yet fully said what the EduTech programme is and therefore nobody knows whether the \$5 million is sufficient or not because if it is chasing public relations as distinct from a solid programme it is a waste of money. If however there is a programme in place then we have to hear what it is before we know whether the \$5 million is sufficient.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the EduTech programme, the details of it, what it is intended to accomplish, how it will be structured, has been much publicised in Barbados. If the Honourable

Member for St. John does not want to listen to the details of that publication that is a matter for him but the details certainly have been made public.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. It is a customary thing that when we discuss what goes on in this House we are discussing what goes on in this House and I am a Member of this House and I have no recollection of ever having been told, given or circulated with any details concerning EduTech.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, when I was saying that I got the impression that some Honourable Members indicated that they were in the dark about this thing I was never making any direct reference to anything the Honourable Member for St. John said. But at one point when the Honourable Member for St. John was not in his seat another Honourable Member said, and I do not now remember which Honourable Member it was. It was not the Honourable Member for St. Michael West because I do not think he has spoken in this debate. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe I heard some Honourable Member say that \$5 million for an EduTech programme had been insufficient. The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, in fact I really want to make 2 points and one is that the EduTech programme is going to be a programme that is going to be phased in in stages. 10.10 a.m.

In other words this \$5 million had been allocated from these Estimates to get the programme off the ground and get the programme going. But there will be subsequent allocations, Mr. Speaker, not necessarily coming from within the Budget.

The next point I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the programme as conceived is going to make a lot of difference of how children in this era and entering the millennium perceive education and are prepared for the world out there. I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it would be wrong for anybody to say that the introduction of computers in schools and the exploitation of computers as aids to education would lead to a situation where other fundamentals and other basics in education are lowered.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that this Honourable House some months ago considered the whole question of a White Paper on education and looked at the whole question of examining the needs of individual students in a situation where in the past we may have seen a situation where in schools a lot of activities have so gone on as not to take into account the special needs of the individual system.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that we mentioned in the White Paper on education that each child matters. I want to say that even though we are moving into an era

where we are going to make use of computers in schools, we will still, Mr. Speaker, be concentrating on educational programmes in the schools that would allow children still to deal and to be exposed to the three Rs, to be exposed to things like science and general studies and such like.

So that if any Honourable Member feels that the EduTech programme is going to be a substitute for existing programmes in schools that would be a wrong idea. In fact the whole programme is designed to complement what is going on in classrooms at this point and not to get rid of those programmes that have long been in existence.

I refer to this whole question of EduTech and education because a careful perusal of the Estimates will show that the commitment of this Government to education is something that we promised the people of Barbados and we certainly are going to make sure that we are not going to disregard or ignore the demands of those Barbadians who need to be trained.

I am heartened, Mr. Speaker, that every available indication shows that the intake of students at institutions like the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has actually been increasing. In circumstances where before we took office in 1994, the intake had actually been decreasing.

I make these observations, Mr. Speaker, because as I was in my seat yesterday, I heard Honourable Members make reference to our programme of education and training in such a way as to leave the impression that we had abandoned what we, in this party used to be doing for education. Nothing can be further from the truth. Our commitment to education and training remains determined to ensure that the people of Barbados who go to educational institutions receive the type of instruction that would ensure that in the long-term our human resources, are so developed as to be able to carry this country forward.

Having spoken on education, Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that another highlight of these Estimates, is Government's determination to attack the problem of poverty. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that during the course of this Estimates debate that we come to deal with the whole question of agriculture. My attitude and approach here on this second reading, is not to repeat anything that I propose saying when it comes to the specific heads.

In other words, I do not think that as an Honourable Member in this Honourable House, I am precluded from speaking generally on matters of State that do not necessarily bear directly on my Ministry. So I am speaking about the Estimates in second reading, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think that it will be fair to me for

Honourable Members to suggest that I should be confining all that I am saying to the portfolio...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, and by extension since he is an Honourable Member of this House, he is misleading himself. He is under apparent mistaken belief that his ministerial responsibility does not require him in a second reading speech to give us any broad outline concerning the portfolio which he performs on our behalf.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Honourable Member should know that the point of order does not allow you to even make a suggestion as to what a Member can say. Proceed please.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we also would observe by examining these Estimates that the Government remains committed to ensuring that proper health standards are maintained in this country. Last evening my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James South, outlined particular programmes relevant to improving the plight of the aged.

I make bold to say that in addition to doing what we are about to do for the aged, we are also going to continue doing our utmost to ensure that the various matters pertinent to health care for which Barbadians are asking for improvements are addressed. And I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that so long as these Estimates are approved, the allocation for health is going to go a long way toward making sure that the health and well-being of Barbadians are improved.

I want briefly now, Mr. Speaker, to look at the whole question of poverty alleviation. We in Barbados have for years been seen as a people living in a country that is a developing country. And the impression might, be given therefore, Mr. Speaker, that because we are doing better than many countries our size, because we have come a long way in bringing improvements to the quality of living of Barbadians that all is well as far as the condition and the capacity to lift the ability of people to meet their expenses are concerned.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding whatever progress would have been made over the years, we still have, in Barbados, some pockets of poverty and these Estimates set out, Mr. Speaker, to continue the Poverty Alleviation Programme that has been started under this administration.

I make bold to say that from my interpretation, in excess of \$2 million is going to be targeted as money to be spent in dealing with this question of poverty. As a person who has been able to see the condition of a lot of people

especially in urban areas, I would expect that urban people, many of whom cry out for improvements in their condition of life, would be able to benefit from Poverty Alleviation Programmes to the same extent as those people in rural Barbados who are sometimes, because of the social structure of rural Barbados, better able to deal with difficulty than some people in urban Barbados.

In rural communities, we have this tradition of the extended family. We have this tradition of strong community life, so much so that a poor and indigent person in a rural area might very well find that he or she is the beneficiary of some generosity from a neighbour, a cousin or an aunt or uncle. In urban Barbados, it seems as though relations are a little more impersonal and those people faced with the problem of poverty in urban Barbados seem to have it harder than those in rural Barbados. The reason why I say so, Mr. Speaker, is that having gone through a lot of St. Michael I see vestiges of poor housing and inadequate housing and I would like the poverty alleviation programme to address these concerns. I went through areas like Brittons Hill and areas like Sisnett Avenue behind Martindales Road recently and went all over the area around Belmont Road and Carrington Village and I was a little amazed that in 1998 we have overcrowding and congestion and sometimes some evidence of slum type settlements. I would want Mr. Speaker, to stress that being aware of this type of situation in Barbados our Government is going to continue to do its utmost to attack this question of poverty. 10.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude now by making reference to a remark I heard yesterday that seems to suggest that we in this Government had not been taking the programme for tenantry roads forward. I do not know whether it was the Honourable Member for St. John or whichever Honourable Member but I did get the feeling yesterday that there was some suggestion that we had not been doing enough to improve tenantry roads in a situation where a lot of ground work was done on tenantry roads.

I have seen a list of the tenantry roads in Barbados and there are several. Indeed, there are inlets and rights of way to people's houses not currently called tenantry roads but which can be developed into tenantry roads and there are some of them too. Because of the pattern of land settlements in Barbados, we often see situations where 8 and 9 houses are put down, the people have no real road, they use a little walkway which eventually becomes a beaten path and then cries out to be developed into a proper road.

Having seen the totality of the tenantry roads in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, and having heard about the actual costs, I can say that the last time I checked with the technical people to find out what it would cost Barbados

if all the tenantry roads were fixed, it would cost \$400 million.

Therefore, it means that at that high cost we would have to develop a programme for the improvement of tenantry roads that is an implemental programme where we do the programme in phases. I cannot see us being able to mobilise and locate \$400 million overnight which, I believe, might be even higher now because of all these tenantry roads.

What I think we need, Mr. Speaker, is that in addition to looking to tenantry roads we need to go through Barbados and see those newer tenancies, and by tenancies I mean settlements of 5 or more houses where people have been given permission by landlords to come on land and where there are no proper facilities. In this country we have a situation where because of land shortage, because of poverty, because of people being unable to buy land, people often take from landlords the barest minimum. You do have settlements in Barbados still that have no proper provision for water, no proper provision for lighting and no roads, not because of the fault of any Government but because in their desperation to find a house spot or buy a house spot Barbadians often take land which needs to be developed into a village.

I recommend under my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, that wherever housing settlements are occurring, all the infrastructure is put in up front so that by the time housing settlements are laid down what needs are to be met have already been met.

Mr. Speaker, later I propose to come back. I do not propose necessarily to come back on that, to look at the overall policy of the Estimates. I propose that when I get the opportunity to examine my Head to speak specifically on agriculture and I hope to be able to inform this Honourable House as to the status of agriculture during the proceedings.

With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply obliged to you. Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely grateful this morning to be able to take part in a debate like this. I want to start by going back to the Estimates of last year and I am dealing with something I said during those Estimates, that is, I warned the Prime Minister that when he presented the Estimates last year that he was underestimating revenue and overestimating expenditure. I told him at the time that I did not fault him because it was a good accounting practice to underestimate revenue, but I told him it surprised me to see that a trained economist was prepared to go the way of an accountant and not an economist.

I am extremely grateful to have today in front of me the actual words I spoke last year and I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday in this Assembly admitting that the revenue last year was understated and that the expenditure was overstated. I quote from my own words:

"I am saying from the outset that the revenue..."

Mr. Speaker, this is a Parliament that has over \$200 million in excess revenue and I expect better equipment when I am speaking.

"I am saying from the outset that the revenue for the financial year 1997 to 1998 is going to be considerably higher than estimated by the Prime Minister of Barbados and that the expenditure in these Estimates is going to be much lower than estimated by the Prime Minister. One cannot fault him if he has adopted the policies normally adopted by accountants where you underestimate revenue and overestimate expenditure. I am glad that he has been a converted person and that he has been following the accounting trends and principles and he has now moved away from the economic trends and principles."

We are happy to see that after the Prime Minister has listened to me for 3 to 4 years that he is prepared to move away from his training and listen to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Mr. Speaker, what is fascinating, Sir, and as you know it was the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who demanded from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture to remove the farm lands from the B ADMC and put them to the BMC. I sat in this Parliament yesterday and heard the Prime Minister saying it was a great idea and I thanked him again for implementing another policy of St. Elmo Kellman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a stage in this country that even though the revenues are high and the foreign reserves are high this country is heading in a direction I do not like because when one looks at how the revenues are being built and how the foreign reserves are being accumulated one must stop and ponder if we will be able to continue building our reserves the way they have gone over the years.

This one-shot accumulation of revenue can only create problems for this country and it can only send wrong signals and I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that we need to stop now and ask ourselves if we can continue patting ourselves on the back or whether we need to implement programmes that will sustain the reserves at the level at they are now and the revenues at the level that we have today.

When one looks at the tourism growth this year one must ask oneself whether we will be able to continue to

get the level of the numbers that we have this year next year and His answer has to be no. If we are to do something about it I am filing on this House to get hold of an honourable gentleman who owns a piece of land to the north which happens to be Six Men's and look at a project that the gentleman has been trying to implement now for 25 years. 10.30a.m.

It is true, Mr. Speaker that part of that project has gone to the south of Six Men's and another part will be going to the north of Six Men's, but I am saying, Sir, it is one of the most innovative projects that I have seen for a long time. It is a project which I call the genesis project or the Broomes project.

I am saying that this is the first time that a country like Barbados which happens to be 95% black is serious of adopting a policy where they are prepared to target the black tourism market I am saying that that project enunciated and presented by Mr. Broomes should be a project that the Ministry of Finance should be studying today because after the British leave in March our tourism will be going down and we will not be able to tap into the black tourism market of the United States.

We keep pointing out that our tourist arrivals are falling and we are prepared to do anything to make sure that we reverse the trend. I am saying that the genesis project is the project that should be implanted in tourism to make sure that the black tourism market is tapped in a real way; and not only the black tourist market but the religious market which is very wide. The Government has been able to give us that information and the Government need not go and employ all sorts of people in the United States who do not understand our problems in the Caribbean and then we come next year and say that because we do not have the English visitors that our

We are in a position where for next year, Sir, I want to know if the Government is going to do to make sure that we are going to avert the decline in tourism that will occur next year. We will not get any one-shot British visitors coming next year as we got this year.

Aside,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: These Estimates are predicated on what is happening now. Estimates for 1998 - 1999. We must deal with the particular issue at hand. Up to this morning, Sir, one of the top high flyers was on the radio admitting that we were doing well in the German market and we have a problem with the

German market now, we have a problem with the U.S. market and next year most likely because we do not have cricket we are going to have a problem with the English market.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Rubbish? You call it rubbish.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I have to assume that there must be some rationality for statements that are made in this Chamber. This is not the corner shop in St. Lucy. We are now into the realm, not even of speculation, of fantasy. We do not want the Press now running out to say that we are going to have a bad year in tourism out of the U.K. You are just about to talk about a decline out of the U.K. I keep making this point that we have to stop beating up on tourism in this way. Visitors come here and they see us now in our own media beating up on tourism. What do we expect them to do? We have had the best year ever in the history of the island. Nineteen ninety-eight is a foolishness, and I bear some responsibility.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, you know what is amazing? In 1994 this same speech was made by the Minister of Tourism when he said that nobody denied that the speech was a safe speech. Nobody denied that the speech was a safe speech. Nobody denied that the speech was a safe speech.

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cafe deal with the logic. If you get up in this and tell me if it was good and if it was bad in 1998 was obvious that something would have created the job for the tourist. What is wrong? Can't you understand logic anymore? I am saying that the Minister of Tourism needs not beat her chest. What the Honourable Minister needs to do is to put policies in place to ensure that our tourist arrivals do not fall in 1998 - 1999. I am saying to the Honourable Member that the only way the Honourable Member can do that is to tap into the US market and the black market and the religious market, to say the least. The Honourable Minister is giving valid and solid evidence that they are being accused

Mr. E. St. E. ICELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I that the Minister is being accused, and they will continue to be accused until the Minister of

fault me for making those assumptions, because it is in the interest of the country to make sure that we get that particular growth. You know, Sir, that when you get a one-shot what effect it has on the country the following year. Anybody who understands economics will tell you that it has a negative effect and you need to do a tripling of what you did the previous year to make sure that you sustain what you are doing.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we also have another problem, Sir. That problem is that previously we were doing well in our agricultural industry. We have gone to mechanisation, and mechanisation even though it has reduced the cost of reaping cane, it has created another problem for us. Mr. Speaker, if anyone who pays attention to any first crop cane and then look at the second crop and third crop, would realise that we are now in a serious position where we cannot get four crops from a first crop anymore.

They are using the mechanical equipment to plant cane. We are creating a rooting; jroW\$m, Whoever the mechanical harvester cost they are pulling the cane ratoon crop to be worse than expected. We need, Sir, and I am going to deal with this extensively, Sir, to get to the agricultural Head, what we need to provide funds for cane harvester, Sir, but by the time the equipment that is planting the cane is enough so when the harvester comes, it is not enough.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, Sir, these very Estimates we have given, Sir, for the type of activity that the Government is doing; Sir

Mr. D. St. E. correct, Sir,
The Government is replanting, but not for a long time.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member obviously is mistaken. There are some plantations which cannot be replanted, Sir, in a mechanical manner, like for instance, the Government Trust has made use of the Government grant for planting manually. Some are not planted, some are now opened to being mechanical means. The Government is saying that the Government has not made any grant available, both for force back occasions so that the cane crops can be doubled and has been bringing more land under cultivation. Unfortunately, El Nino has affected us this time, Sir. 10.40p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN; Mr. Speaker, it is in (his Assembly. I am not disputing that.

by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, but he is missing the major point. The problem is not with the canes that are planted manually. The problem is with the canes that are planted by the machines. I have explained to this House that the canes that are planted by the machines, whenever the mechanical equipment comes along it pulls up the roots and everything which is creating a problem for the country.

You would see a field being ploughed this year, Sir, and two years down the road, after it has been replanted, the same thing is happening again. You are seeing a situation where you reap the first crop canes and you cannot do it to the second because there is nothing there to be reaped. That is all I am saying, and we cannot continue as a Parliament to spend such large sums without tackling the problem. I am trying to give the solution how to tackle the problem and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture is asking me to give the solution again; I have just given him the solution and I will repeat it. It is that the Government can implement it and make sure that the sugar production could increase.

I am asking that all those plantations which are now planting sugar cane using mechanical equipment that enough money will be budgeted to "stop" the mechanical equipment and the Government cost that they would have if they used the equipment and the manual planting of cane that they be subsidized to that level so that the Government can sugar crop.

I can give you an example; Sir, if one were to go to Bromfield and look at a field of canes going to be harvested where the Naval Base used to be, one can see that last year Bromfield Plantation was able to get a good sugar crop from that field; Sir, but if they cannot even use the mechanical harvester, it is a rooting problem. The top is removing the root from the ground and there is nothing to grow and we need to deal with that. That is a serious problem, Sir.

Sir, we also have another serious problem and that is with the small farmers. In December those agencies that sell vegetables were allowed to import vegetables in this country even though we were warned of the El Nino effect. We have a serious situation that when the farmers were able to make money, they had to compete with foreign vegetables. But in January, Sir, when they had the drought, those same farmers had to fight for their crops.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is not properly because our farmers had to wait for a year because of the lack of water, importation of vegetables also El Nino. We need to have a fireproof place.

to make sure that if we are going to continue to look after the interest of small farmers that the policy is such that there is nothing wrong sometimes with having a scarcity of vegetables in this country. Market forces are allowed to play with other things so the small farmers must be allowed to get that opportunity to help build up their reserves at some point in time.

The small farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project must be allowed - and now Government is divesting some of its assets, I am saying that the Minister of Finance needs to sit down with his Minister of Agriculture and that the Minister of Finance must find out from those farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project if they are prepared to buy the property they are living on because some of them, the condition of the houses are such that they should really move out and go and rent. We need to offer some of those farmers the right to buy the land and the houses so that they could repair the houses and they can use the land as collateral so that they can go to the finance agencies and raise the necessary capital they need to raise.

There is also another serious problem, Sir. Because of drought, they have been able to accumulate a lot of losses and a lot of debt to the BADMC. I am saying they should be written off because Government has to decide whether they want the farmers to accumulate losses or whether they are prepared to let the farmers go on their own, those who are prepared to do so. They cannot continue to complain about the amount of money owed to them by the farmers if they continue to lease the land to them when the farmers want to buy the land. I am saying that a serious approach needs to be adopted at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project and on all of those in Barbados where farmers are leasing land from Government and that the farmers must not continue to complain, give solutions and not be heard.

The farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project have been asking for them to have the right to use the well at Crab Hill Plantation. I think it is time enough, considering the situation we have in this country, that the farmers be given that right. They are not producing for themselves alone. They are producing for the country and they deserve to be treated better.

We are in another situation, Sir, where yesterday we were told in this House that the unemployment situation in this country has decreased and nobody will dispute that when one looks at how the decrease was accumulated. We were given some statistics in this House yesterday, Sir, that in 1994 the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic had an enrolment of 1 400 and that by 1998 it increased to 2 400 which is an increase of 1 000. The University of the West Indies had a 2 800 enrolment and it increased to 3 400, an

increase of 600. The Barbados Community College had an enrolment of 2 200 and it increased to 2 900, an increase of 700.

Mr. Speaker, we saw 2 300 people moving from being unemployed back to training. Statistics are funny things and anybody who is prepared to use their brains can tell you that training has taken away 2 300 people from being counted as an unemployment statistic. I have no quarrel with that but I expect that when statistics are given, that fact is given also because I have been saying this in the House of Assembly and I have been accused and abused of providing wrong statistics but yet yesterday I can hear a Minister telling me that the unemployment number has been decreased by the young people of this country and for some reason the figure happens to be 2 300. The same 2 300 that went into training is the same 2 300 that has been reduced for the number of young people in this country who were unemployed, a wonderful statistic.

We are at a stage in this country, Sir, and nobody can fault Government for thinking about a way to move people from off the street corners and put them back to training but I have a particular problem. I have said in this Assembly already that you have to be careful how you build double hope in this country. Sometimes we do things believing we are doing it in the interest of people only then to realise that we are building a false hope because when you take people, you send them to school and you tell them to go to school, learn well and you will get a job. They come from school and they do not get a job. Then you take them again and retrain them and then you get another problem where they went to school, they were retrained and they still cannot get a job. You are creating a particular problem for the future generations of this country and we should really stop and think. That is why I say that anytime anybody in this country comes with a beautiful idea, it should be used because it can only be in the interest of the country.

In housing, it is no doubt that a large sum of money has been spent by people building houses in this country. There is no doubt. I would not deny that but when you divide the number of houses by the number of people building the houses the ratio is very poor. I am saying that if you had that same amount of money spent on poor people and you divided the ratio you would have had a very high ratio.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Just continue to address the Chair.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that when poor people build houses that employment

increases faster than when it is done by rich people because a rich man building a \$40 million house is a one-off shot but when poor people are building it is a continuous force. That is what we need in this country. Something that is continuing to keep people employed. 10.50 a.m.

I am saying and I have repeated it, Sir. That people in this Parliament seem not to understand that building one road in St. Lucy alone can create 20 houses. That building one single road in St. Lucy can create 20 houses and it is time that if Government is serious about the unemployment rate they should build roads where people are prepared to build houses. That is very important.

Sometimes we go and we resurface roads that have been done already, that are good, forgetting that when we do that we are not going to get one single house there. But if you go into a place like St Lucy, like in Hope Road or an area like that and you put down a tenantry road, I can guarantee you that in less than one year, you can get over 20 houses.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we are at a stage in this Parliament, where poor people must be allowed to get houses and where they must continue to develop their land and build houses the way they know how to do it. We must stop patting our backs and shoulders about people building \$40 million houses because at the end of the day, we still have the same social problems in this country.

I must congratulate the Prime Minister for adopting some of the policies that I gave him last year. I am saying that these Estimates will not achieve everything that we need to achieve but that they are starting to go in the right direction but they need to do a lot more.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister introduced this debate on the Estimates of Expenditure. He threw out an interesting question. How will these Estimates assist in the process of re-positioning Barbados to make it more sound and competitive in the global development and in the global market place?

I am satisfied, Sir, that everything that I have seen of these Estimates which are before us today, strongly indicate that there are 'spring-board'¹ for the 21st century. I would wish to speak to one or two of the ways in which I believe that these Estimates do in fact assist in the process of re-positioning Barbados so that it becomes more competitive. I want to start off first, Sir, to speak some words about tourism.

Because in Barbados, everybody goes to school, every Barbadian assumes that he or she is an expert on education. It seems to me that because we live in Barbados, everybody feels that they are an expert on tourism. And so they should be. That is why a case has to be made for getting tourism on to the curriculum in the education system in this country.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. John does not want to hear me talking about tourism at all. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to just speak a little bit about the tourism sector and its place in this economy. The Central Bank of Barbados, Sir, - not me, not the Barbados Tourism Authority...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Heckling is coming from out there because they do not want to hear me talking about this. This is a subject that they cannot handle.

Sir, not me but the Central Bank of Barbados in its most recent press release reviewing the year 1997, as we heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister said yesterday, made the point that the Barbados economy is enjoying its fifth consecutive year of growth with real GDP and expanding by an estimated 4.3% in 1997.

The Central Bank Release goes on to say that real activity in the tourism sector rose by an estimated 10.3% owing to a significant rise in long stay arrivals late in 1997 which increased the overall average length of stay. It went on further to say that average length of stay rose an estimated 5.1% during 1997, largely because of the higher proportion of visitors coming from the United Kingdom and other European countries particularly now Scandinavian countries. It pointed out that the share of visitors from the United Kingdom and other European countries was 42% in 1997 compared with an average of 39% for the previous five years.

Now I want to stop there for just a moment because people who should know better are walking about talking and writing in the newspapers and other arms of the media to the effect that we are putting all of our eggs in one basket. Thirty-three percent of arrivals out of the United Kingdom cannot be putting all of your eggs in one basket!

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want us to be beating about the bush. You have heard it from the mouth of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs yesterday. Tourism is the sector that is paying the bills in this Barbados and I reiterate my call for Barbadians to stop blindly beating up on this sector but rather to be looking to give

encouragement to the sector and to all those who work and make a contribution to it.

I hear a lot of uninformed talk - I heard it in here yesterday about appointments. I have no apologies to make for appointments. Not to the Democratic Labour Party people who had an Englishman as a Minister of Tourism and who put Mr. Peter Rock...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West knows it well. He proudly performed on behalf of Barbados and we got the rid of him in a Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Honourable Member is discussing appointments. The Honourable Member is then saying Peter Rock. Peter Rock owns a public relations company. The Honourable Member should distinguish between the company and a white woman as the head of a department.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, I am not distinguishing between that. I have to say what I have to say. You are not going to tell me what to say.

The public relations company working for the Barbados Tourism Authority out of the United States at this time is a black company. Under the DLP it was a white company. So I do not want to hear about it and I do not want to hear about these distinctions between who is what colour and who is not.

I know what my job is as Minister of Tourism. This is the sector that pays the bills. This is the sector that performed beyond its own projections last year. We projected for \$1.3 billion. At the end of December we were told it was \$1.4126 billion and now, Sir, I can read that in fact it may well be nigh on to \$1.5 billion. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, just let me speak to this whole business of these appointments. As I say, I have no apology to make for anything. 11.00a.m.

I have just come back here from the International Tourism Bureau which is held every year in Berlin, the biggest tourism bureau of its kind. All of the Caribbean is there just like all of the Caribbean is there at the World Travel Market in London in November of every year. In fact the Caribbean likes to have its stands all together so that what we do is create a Caribbean village.

You will recall, Sir, that Barbados, the first time ever that a Caribbean country ever won a prize in respect of a

stand, but last year Barbados, for the first time ever, won one of the 2 prizes given for the way in which the stand presents Barbados tourism product. I am sorry, Sir, and I have asked the BTA but I think they moved too late this year to bring some media people. Every time we go to these fairs we need to have in our delegation some media people so that you can see for yourself, Sir. Every single one of our competitors, and remember, Sir, we are each other's competitors across the world in this now universal industry which is the second largest industry in the world and certainly the most competitive.

Every single one of our competitors in Europe has a European manager. I do not know where we get this idea in our heads that you have to be a Barbadian to be able to sell Barbados in Germany and in Italy and in Japan and wherever. The industry simply does not work like that. In fact Barbados found itself at the IDB this year as the only Caribbean country with a European Manager who was black and fluent in German. Mrs. Petra Roach is now the Manager for Europe for us. Very proud of her we were and the envy of other Caribbean countries that we could achieve this.

Yes, fluent in German. She is a linguist, West Indian born. She speaks 3 languages very fluently and she is a black Bajan. But we do not hear anybody lauding this and giving her encouragement and this young woman did a magnificent job if I may say so, Sir, at the 1997 ITB.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go on to make a few more points here. The data ...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, I am not defeating myself. I am making the point that out of ignorance you do not know what you are saying.

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading die House, Sir. The Honourable Member just got up and criticised this side for criticising white people for being heads in the other departments and has now come to this Assembly and admitted that the black person who happens to be a Barbadian in Germany, how wonderful a person she is. So it is clear to me that the Honourable Member does not understand what she is speaking.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What is the point he is making? The overall manager for Europe, including the United Kingdom is a non-national. She has just gone into this job and she is doing it admirably.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know what my job is. I know that in the end it is the bottom line that is going to matter.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the bottom line is what matters. There is a board at the Barbados Tourism Authority in whom I have confidence and I am not going to be looking over my shoulder at them. I am satisfied with what I have seen coming out I am satisfied that the data available for this region for the year 1997 showed that Barbados out performed all of the other matured destinations. That is a fact.

It is important though, Mr. Speaker, for me to speak a little bit about the North American market and in particular the USA to make people understand. Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Barbados like every other destination in the world and in the Caribbean has a finite number of rooms. In Barbados we used to boast that we had 6 000 rooms when in truth and in fact we only really had 4 800 rooms that you could properly offer to people. I am pleased to say that since this administration came to office we have seen an increase in rooms. We see new rooms coming on stream. We are seeing rooms refurbished both on the west and the south coast and now even the south east coast coming on stream.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What? Not the 571 that came on last year.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me say a word about the United States. As I said we cannot tell hoteliers whom to sell their rooms to. This is what has happened. This is the reality about the tourism market in Barbados. Hoteliers prefer to sell their rooms to the United Kingdom and to Europe because they are dealing with a longer stay visitor and a bigger spend visitor. In other words in the US market they have to work twice or three times as hard because you are dealing with a shorter stay visitor and a smaller spend visitor. So it is easier to fill a room with somebody for 2 weeks as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East well understands these matters and have to look for 2 such people to fill your room for a month than in North America to have to look for 4 people to be coming for 7-night stays to fill that same room for a month.

Now, the fact is that whether you want to accept it or not from the time that tourism began to establish itself in Barbados, this is going back to the 1940s, the UK has always been a highly specialised market for us. There is something about our product that is highly attractive to them. They like the small hotels in Barbados which are intimate and cozy where people return year after year. Barbados has the highest return factor for visitors in the Caribbean. Thirty-nine per cent of visitors who come to

Barbados come back, not only once, but twice, three times and several times. So our product has a great attraction for Europeans.

Now that is a fact. What has in effect happened in Barbados over the past at least 10 years is that we have been seeing this constant decline out of the United States but you have to look at the acceleration of Europe because you only have a fixed number of beds and if you fill them up with Europeans you do not have them then to offer to the US market. 11.10a.m.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Wait and listen and learn something for a change.

In effect what has happened and you have to be very careful how you articulate these things. But hoteliers are treating the US market as a secondary market. They go to that market after they have filled their rooms, or failed to fill their rooms with visitors out of the United Kingdom and other European continental destinations.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is this that even if today I have the increased air lift, I do not have the bed capacity to increase numbers out of the United States. The cure for what is this decline, and I must halt here to say, Sir, that for the first time in ten years we have had increases out of North America, the United States of America for four consecutive months.

We saw increases in October, in November, in December which was the best December ever in the history of tourism in Barbados and in January 1998 the best January in the history of tourism in Barbados, again we saw increases, 13.2 percent increases over January of 1997.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all sorts of people are opining as to what is the solution to arresting the decline out of the United States market and there is no one/single answer to it. Air lift has got to be part of the answer to it. But an important part of the answer to that is that we need more hotel rooms in Barbados. What has happened is that in the peak months which tend to be the Winter months, although do not let us overlook an interesting thing that happened in Barbados in 1996, the best month for arrivals in 1996 was August. It tells us what Crop Over is doing. It also fortifies the fact that we get more CARICOM business than any other destination in the Caribbean. In 1996, August was the best month for arrivals.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is not so. Look at the stats. It was the second best in 1997. We did not have

the hurricanes then. But December just went through the ceiling and became the best month in 1997.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The stats are here. You do not have to believe me. These are stats put out by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO).

Mr. Speaker, Sir, just as I have been pointing out that these small intimate hotel plants that we have in Barbados, people do not realise, the average sized hotel we have in Barbados is 40 rooms. The people come back time and time again, they are known on a first name basis, people look out for their children and they bring granny, and so on and so forth, granted that type of class is attractive to Europeans.

What is attractive to Americans, are the big hotels with big lobbies all in marble, big rooms, two big queen-sized beds in each room and so on. What we have to do is to look now to introduce in our product offering in the accommodation sector, rooms enough that would be attractive to that market. There are many other things as well attractive to the United States market that we are addressing at this time. The whole structure of the vacation in the United States market has changed, Sir, in the past several years.

People forget that in 1995, I think it was, President Clinton held for the first time ever a Tourism Conference in the White House. None of us in the Caribbean were invited. CTO tried its best at that time to get a tour through the door, but could not make it. Look and see, every one of the 52 states of the United States of America is pushing tourism.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Some of those other things that went on in the White House, if he was in the Caribbean he would be looked upon as a hero. We do not take on those things. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fact is that every single state in the United States is promoting tourism.

You only have to look at CNN to see it. Florida, Texas, North Carolina and the other States. It is the number two industry in New York. The President goes and have a vacation in Montana and everybody wants to go to Montana. You hear that Alaska is the last frontier and everybody wants to cruise in Alaska for three months of the year.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is a fact. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there has been a change in the way

Americans have a vacation. Americans are moving away from the 7-night package and appear to be more interested now in 3-night and 4-night packages, the extended weekend.

Now for those destinations which are close to the mainland like The Bahamas, Caymans, Jamaica, the appeal will be great. But when you are as far south in the Caribbean as we are, we have to work that much harder to attract most people. But the fact is that we have our market share there. There are people there who will pay to come south to Barbados for a three or four-night stay and we have not got to be tailoring our promotion to attract that market share.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I need beds. The fact is that in the peak season the majority of beds in Barbados are filled with Europeans. What the Barbados Tourism Authority is engaged upon now, is looking to offer niche markets in the off-peak season. We see the gospel people coming in May. The Crop Over brings its own clientele in July and August. June and September perhaps are the only two shoulder months left in the industry in Barbados and only them now, and you are still getting occupancy levels up in 55 and 60 percent in a shoulder month, the months when, you know, people are cleaning up and painting up and so on in Barbados.

So that the answer to regain a market share in the United States is multifaceted, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and it is something that we have to pursue actively because we wish - and this is policy - to maintain that balance. We do not indeed want to put all of our eggs in one basket. I remember, last year, Sir, in February, for Honourable Members who are following these things, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East will recall, American Airlines pilots only threatened to go on strike. In the end, over those four days of discussions, Mr. Peter Dolara of American Airlines told me, last month, that it set back the industry ten years. Because all of the jets that they had on order when the strike was threatened, they lost their place in the queue. They had to go to the end of the queue like everybody else. So now they are not going to be able to bring their fleet up to where they want it until possibly 1999 or the year 2000. We are feeling some of that now. Other people in the Caribbean are feeling it more than we are.

The reality is, Sir, that we have to try to keep that market share in the United States. What has in effect happened is that there has been a flip over between Europe mainly the United Kingdom and the United States where the United States used to be our major market. For the last two years now, the United Kingdom has been our major market.

I remember in February of last year when, the American Airlines pilots were threatening to go on

strike; my counterparts in Jamaica and the Caymans were giddy with worry, telephoning, going crazy, and do you know why? Because 85% of their tourist packet was coming out of the United States but in Barbados we were smiling all the way to the bank because 32% of our traffic was coming out of the United Kingdom and we knew that BA was still flying, BWIA was still flying and Air Jamaica was coming on to fly. 11.20a.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, nobody has to persuade us in the Ministry of Tourism or in the Barbados Tourism Authority about the paths that we keep. The majority of our competitors in this region have got most of their eggs in that one basket. We are singular. Barbados is not called the singular island for nothing in that we have that mix.

Now in a regional effort some of our competitors are saying to us show us how you made it work for you in Europe. Now a lot has been said about the management scheme at the BTA and how it did not work. Mr. Speaker, it worked exceedingly well.

When I first went to the Ministry they had a plan for the United Kingdom which was focussing on London, Greater London and Southern United Kingdom. It was not giving us the return we were looking for, and if it was one thing that we got out of Mr. Tom Hill, it is that he devised a new plan for the Midlands and North. Do you know where all these UK arrivals are coming from? That is where they are coming from. The Midlands and the North of England.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We have the figures.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would not accuse the Honourable Member of misleading the House, but she may not be privileged to information that would help her to understand the point that she is making.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: She is misleading the House inadvertently because she is not aware of information.

The UK market during 1986 was significantly lower in production than the U.S. market or the Canadian market. The Democratic Labour Party introduced a programme. The Minister at the time was the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who was Minister of Tourism and he introduced a programme with the Air Tours company which developed the Midlands in the UK and in the north significantly to the extent that we saw an immediate turnaround in the fortunes of the UK market and by 1989 the

UK market had replaced the US as the major producer. So it had nothing to do with Mr. Tom Hill. The area that the Minister is talking about, since 1989, there has been a shift in where the business has come from.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I keep saying in this House - I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. George South is not in his seat - many years ago a similar exchange went on in here and it was about the Grantley Adams International Airport at the time and the same thing was happening. The Democratic Labour Party was saying it was their idea and the Honourable Member for St. George South got up and made the point that you cannot land an airplane on an idea. It is who built it and put it there.

The fact is that it is not true that the United Kingdom overtook the United States as Barbados¹ major market in 1989. That did not happen until 1996, and the figures are there to prove it.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am going to challenge the Minister to produce the information.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. The Minister made a specific statement and I am challenging the Minister to produce the records.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No problem but the Minister is misleading the House and I am saying that the information that she is giving is false. I will produce the information.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point I am making here is that I believe that even for the period when we had certain people on that team they gave to the Authority useful performance. The Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Finance who at the end of this month is going to be leaving has to be given credit for the fact that for the first time ever - nobody takes notice of these things - 25% of the vote that goes to the Barbados Tourism Authority is spent on administrative. You cannot even find that in the private sector of Barbados today. I do not care how hard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East found it to believe when we came into government in 1994 tourism was not performing well in any market-place. Today it is the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to point out that this sector in Barbados touches the lives of virtually all of us. It is one of the largest employers in Barbados after Government. It is a fact of life.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am going to bring the proof to you before the debate is over.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fact of the matter is that tourism touches almost every other sector in this Barbados. The linkages of that to education, health, transport, agriculture, international transport, labour... There is no person on this front bench, no Minister of the Cabinet who cannot speak to the linkage of the sector to the portfolios that he or she is responsible for.

I am pleased and like to think that Barbadians are pleased too at the way in which the industry has leapt forward in these recent years. I believe that the year 1998 is going to be another good year for tourism despite the pessimism of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who wants an airport but I do not know who would be landing at this airport if we do not do well in 1998 in tourism. 11.30a.m.

The Honourable Member is suggesting that because there will be no test cricket next year in Barbados in 1999, that therefore we are going to have a decline out of the United Kingdom. I have never heard so much rubbish in all my life. He is talking about out of the U.K. Last year we did not have the English here playing any cricket but last year, Sir, we never had so many arrivals out of the U.K. as we did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can the Honourable Member conclude?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to hearken to your ruling and I will take my seat, but during the course of this debate, I am going to come back to that sector. I thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, last year I did not participate in the Second Reading, and I did not intend to participate this year because I feel that the Estimates of Expenditure ought to be that time of the year when the Ministers who have responsibility for administering some aspects of the affairs of this country, are given an opportunity before their colleagues and before the Parliament, and indeed the country to give an account of their stewardship.

I believe that large Second Reading speeches dealing with policy issues by all of the Ministers go no way toward utilising the time allocated for the Estimates in a manner that is of the greatest benefit to the community and so, Sir, as a contribution to that I have tried to avoid speaking in

second readings. But since again this year it appears that the ministerial team is going to be exercising their right to speak, and as we heard from one goodly distinguished Minister today, he would not even speak on his portfolio. He would speak on everything else except his portfolio. I am sorry you missed it. He actually said it

The Honourable Member for St. James North, the Minister of Agriculture, he did not mention a single word about the portfolio that he has responsibility for and is paid in this country in excess of \$110,000 when you take the allowance, Sir. He came in here and made a second reading speech and he talked about EduTech. He talked about everything under the sun and said categorically that he would not speak about his portfolio until he comes to his Head.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Anybody who agrees with that is at least as ignorant as he about what his responsibility is.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe that you are not referring to any Honourable Member here.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Indeed, Sir, I do not believe that there is an Honourable Member in here who would be so ignorant of how this system works, or as to how this system is supposed to work, as to side with that Minister who must have had some kind of lapse in concentration because the Minister is normally not so erratic in his understanding. There is more. The Minister who just sat down, the Deputy Prime Minister of this country is the Minister responsible for Tourism. Her Head is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport in these Estimates. Part 1 sets out what the Estimates are supposed to do. It is \$128 508 848.00.

The objectives of this Ministry *are* as follows and they start to list them. The first one is to protect and preserve national sovereignty and security. The fourth is to promote the political, economic and cultural interest of Barbados in other countries etc. The first words out of that Minister's mouth is that she has no apology to make for appointments. She said that in the light of information, which did not come to this House, which we gleaned in the newspapers, that an Irish American woman had been appointed manager of a Barbados office in New York.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have never been so embarrassed in the thirty years of our independence as I was on the day I read that. I was embarrassed as a national of this country that how dare a Minister of this Crown, a Minister of this Government to get up and say that she has no apology to make? Mr. Speaker, in other parts of the world she would not be able to make an apology. It is an insult to the people of this country to say that you are representing

the sovereignty and you are appointing an Irish-American woman, that in this country of 265 000 people we cannot find a single one to run the New York office. Mr. Speaker, I deem myself qualified to say what kind of person should run the New York office. I was there at the beginning.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is true. No Government under the Honourable Member for Christ Church South or no self-respecting Government... and I know there are Ministers over there who are embarrassed. There must be Ministers who were embarrassed when they discovered it. I am sorry that the Prime Minister had to share in the blame too, because if the Deputy Prime Minister is directed by other forces, the Prime Minister of this country is the repository of the collective, cultural and historical patrimony of the people of this country. He ought to have pulled her aside and said to her I understand what you are saying but we cannot do that as we come to the end of this millennium and look the other one in the face. I am embarrassed, Mr. Speaker. I am embarrassed for all the Barbadians who have gone before. I am embarrassed for the ones who are here now and I am embarrassed for the ones to come. Do not let anybody tell me I am not to speak in this term because the woman is white. There are white people and have been white people employed by the same Minister in the office of Florida. You heard not a single word from me, Sir, because they are Barbadian nationals and they have a right to work in the offices, so when they appointed white Barbadians in the office in Miami you heard no word from me, Sir. There is a white Barbadian who is the head of this Ministry, who is one of the most efficient Barbadians that I have had the honour of working with. You never heard me complaining so it has nothing to do with being white.

It has to do that we are functioning in a country that is now taking people that learnt to be criminal in Brooklyn, when they went to America when they were one and a half years, in the case of one when he was eight months old, and that country takes him up when he is a thirty-five year old criminal of the highest order and sent him back here saying he belongs to Barbados. That country is protecting its sovereignty and then we go like a bunch of inferiorised downheaded animals and we appoint an Irish American woman who does not know where Belleplaine is, who cannot tell what Speightstown is, who believe that the Careenage is a species of sheep.

Mr. Speaker, when she hears of cou cou and flying fish she would not know how to pronounce it, and you tell me that a black person who says he is a Barbadian is to walk in to an office in New York and ask for the manager and out comes this green-eyed or blue-eyed... You should resign you know. Then a green-eyed or a blue-eyed person comes out and say, I am the manager and then we have a

Minister of Education who wants to come and fool the little children in this country that she wants to teach black studies.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member could you put that a different way? The Minister of Education is fooling the children.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I understand, Sir, I withdraw the implication. The poor little children in this country fool themselves when they hear the Minister say that she wants to teach black studies. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have said that when you are black...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for St. James South has to agree with me or she is a hypocrite. I have not called for anybody over there to resign because I understand, Sir, that it would not be fair to use the pure politics and require all of them to resign and leave the Prime Minister and the Minister by themselves, although in certain circumstances we could call on all of them to leave the two of them by themselves. You remember when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was trying to save the dollar how they got about this country and said that we were spineless. They said we had no guts because we were trying to save the dollar to allow the Prime Minister to jump up and down in here and say what a beautiful wicket he has to bat on. I took the abuse because I felt that I had a duty and responsibility to take the abuse in defence of the currency of Barbados. We pilloried our Prime Minister in private and some of us pilloried him in public, but we took the blows, as the song said. So in certain circumstances, were I in a different mood, I would say that the Ministers over there do not have any spine, but I am not going to say that, Sir. 11.40a.m.

I want to deal with the problem which the Deputy Prime Minister has. The problem with the Deputy Prime Minister is that her environmental arrangements require her not to understand the pain of black people. I am sorry she is not in her chair. I like to say these things when I can look the people in the face. I feel so strongly about it, Mr. Speaker, you can have no idea how demeaning it is for every Barbadian who lives outside Barbados, to say nothing of some of us who live inside. We have some Barbadians for whom that is not an issue. They cannot see what all the fuss is about but those are the kinds of Barbadians that you have to let pass like when a ball is outside the off stump. You have to let them continue to be whatever they are but the rest of us, and I lay no claim to being holier than thou, or to being more concerned about sovereignty than anybody else.

I am saying that if you demean yourself you cannot be heard to be saying that somebody else has

taken advantage of you. You have in the face of all the difficulties that are possible to stand up like a man or a woman for certain basic things in this world. That is why I never flinch from acknowledging that my first and primary responsibility as a public person is that I am a politician. I do not shy away and run and hide when somebody says contemptuously the word "politician". I am a politician. I was made a politician by the people of St. Michael West. I represent them and all of them, not some of them. I have white ones, black ones, in-between ones, Indians, Japanese, whatever you name, Sir, I have them in my constituency but 90% of them are poor, black people. I know that they are embarrassed when the Minister and Deputy Prime Minister say that by virtue of the appointment we cannot find a Barbadian that can manage an office.

Mr. Speaker, the management of the office in New York requires no more than what a Consular in one of the Missions can do. It requires no special skills because it is the marketing that determines that you need special skills. There is a Barbadian who is Head of the North American Office who is called Riley - I call his name, Sir, not pejoratively - who is the finest marketer we have had in tourism over the last 15 years. Frankly...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is saying from his seat that he appointed him. I am saying that when the three Lotto people were appointed, I said that he could have filled the job which was filled by Tom Hill who is now running the airlines.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East used to run an airline called "Air Canada" thirty something years ago.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. He should have left out the "something". He should have said 30 years ago.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it occurs to me that there is no quorum.

The bell was rung.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is saying that I have not mentioned Sir Lionel Luckhoo who was the first High Commissioner for Barbados. Sir Lionel Luckhoo was a Guyanese who happened to be the High Commissioner for Guyana and the Prime Minister of the day, the late Right Honourable Member for St. John appointed Sir Lionel Luckhoo in an experiment to have a joint representation in London.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is saying we should have many more but I want to draw to the attention of this Honourable Chamber that the Prime Minister himself yesterday said that he would be seeking to establish a joint presence in Geneva so that the appointment of Sir Lionel Luckhoo cannot in any way fall within the ambit of the criticism which I am making. I cannot believe that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would never on his feet seek to put the appointment of Sir Lionel Luckhoo in the same category as the appointment of an Irish American woman in New York. I am sure about that. I can speak with impunity on that.

None of the Honourable Members who fought in the trenches, whether they fought with their hands clean, in the cupboard or whatever, there is no Honourable Member who has been involved in politics in this country seriously who could applaud the appointment of an Irish-American woman to head an office in New York. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, it calls for no special skills. There can be no skill she can have that we cannot find among the people of Barbados and the Minister herself while praising the quality of another employee, who was appointed during my time as I recall, she was able to say what exquisite qualities she has.

Mr. Speaker, we can go into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now and find without a difficult search someone who could run the office in New York. We could go down Broad Street and find a person who could run the office in New York. They have some Personal Assistants who work for Ministers now who you could pick one of them up now and send them to New York to run that office.

The point I am making, Sir, is that it does not fall well from the mouth of the Minister to open by saying that she has no apology to make. She should put her tail between her legs, slink off quietly and go and be quiet having made such an error, but I am not surprised and then she makes another boo-boo as Minister of Tourism. Could you imagine the Honourable Member is saying, which will now set the hoteliers in Barbados afire, that she cannot tell the hotels in Barbados who to sell rooms to. The very clear implication of that is that the hoteliers in Barbados are contributing to the diminution of American tourists by refusing to sell tickets to persons from North America in preference to persons from Europe and the United Kingdom in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I did not believe my ears when I heard the Honourable Member saying that because even if she suspects it, because there could be no scientific evidence that any hotelier in Barbados who had an empty room would give up the certain for the uncertain by saying to an American: "Well, you are only coming for a short stay. I am holding my room for a long stay." I cannot believe that anybody would do that but that a Minister would come

and publicly say that that is one of the reasons why the numbers from North America went down, is to put it very bluntly, Mr. Speaker, rubbish.

I do not understand what it is that would inspire the Honourable Member for the City to make these outlandish remarks. The fact is that the Honourable Member for the City might not be in charge of all the circumstances and all the actions relating to tourism in Barbados. It may very well be that the Honourable Member, caught as she is in so many areas of the administration of the country is relying, perhaps, out of proportion on the capability of her advisor and a specific advisor to tell her what constitutes the correct thing for tourism. Now, if the advisor is whom I believe it is, and I am not speaking of any advisor that lives outside of Barbados, then that person would have every reason not to bother about what is the complexion or nationality of who is appointed where. Certain conceptions which that individual might have will fall easily on the ear of the Minister because she is accustomed to hearing that voice. 11.55 a.m.

I am satisfied that we the people of Barbados are the sufferers. The Honourable Member in purporting to give information made rough statements about arrivals and departures. My time does not permit me but if the Head comes up, I will be able to show from the statistics published by the Central Bank that the information she gave which was challenged by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is inaccurate.

Less I do not get an opportunity to address another matter in this second reading speech because that Head does not come up, I wish in the last few minutes to address a matter raised by the Minister of Health yesterday. It concerns the Prime Minister's comment about poverty.

I, Sir, have spent a large part of my life devoted to some matter relating to poverty. I want to quote Martin Luther King on poverty and I am quoting him, Sir. He said:

"The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practise of cannibalism at the dawn of civilisation, when men ate each other because they had not yet learned to take food from the soil or to consume the abundant animal life around them. The time has come for us to civilise ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty."

That was Martin Luther King. That comes from his book "Where do we go from Here: Chaos or Community?" in 1967.

In 1967, Sir, I was in New York and very influenced by works and utterings by people like Martin Luther King.

I want to make this point. I go to the Geriatric Hospital in my private capacity as I have a relative there and I go there every Sunday that I can. I go there almost every Sunday. I have watched the deterioration of the Geriatric Hospital from where I had left it as Minister.

I am very concerned that the Minister yesterday while addressing the Prime Minister's call on poverty did not seem to realise that for the last two years the Ministry of Health has had a capacity of 100 beds at the Geriatric Hospital that are unused. While you are talking about 40 people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that there is a capacity of at least 100 beds in the Geriatric Hospital and has been there for at least the last two years. The wards were completed. So let the Honourable Member get up or send and get the information.

I go there and I marvel how these wards were completed and how they have not been people. The beds finally came about six months ago. The Honourable Member gets in here and give the impression that the \$2 million and the alternative arrangements stem from some problem that they have in the QEH when in fact, within 48 hours, they could move out all 42 of the people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and send them to the Geriatric Hospital and provide the staff for them.

They are nurses and nursing people who have been trained and according to what a Senator from the other place wrote to the newspaper, they are nurses at home who cannot get work to do. There can be no excuse!

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Yes, these are all trained nurses. No, we do not have many nurses trained in Geriatric. These are registered nurses and nursing assistants who are at home and who can be put into immediate work at the Geriatric Hospital were the Ministry of Health interested in or capable of solving the problem as it has been identified.

The problem as it has been identified in here is simplistic. Many of the people who are abandoned at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they next of kin can be found.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I am not even going to go down there. I am saying that when they want to dump that they dump.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. For the benefit of the Honourable Member for

St. Michael West, I wish to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that for fear that he misleads the House for lack of information that firstly, the staffing request for the wards are being prepared to go off to the Ministry of the Civil Service because it is a question of how we will add to the existing staff complement to deal with it. And secondly, that in fact 20 persons were moved from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital into the Geriatric Hospital last year. I made the point during the course of my speech that given the rate of abandonment, at any given time you will find about 40 persons so you will have to keep moving all the time. That is where the second component of the plan to use the private sector beds then comes in which is 275 beds.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: At no point, Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the Honourable Member mentioned the 100 beds in the Geriatric Hospital.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I made the point during the course of my speech yesterday that there were two components to the initiative. First of all the Honourable Member was on his feet making a point of order that the expansion to the Geriatric Hospital had been abandoned. He said that yesterday and now he is saying that the beds were there for two years.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the plan was not abandoned. We did in fact provide a ward space with 100 beds. I said that as the first component of the new plan. The second component of the new plan would be the plan to use private sector beds in a collaborative enterprise with Government that has not previously existed and which would give us an additional 275 beds. You have in fact 375 new beds coming into the geriatric service during the course of this year.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When we spoke of abandonment, we were discussing abandonment of the Rehabilitation Centre. We did not speak of the wards at all. The Honourable Member did not give any impression in here that it had solved the problem of the 42 people which caused the Prime Minister, obviously because he had bad information, to talk about how the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had become a place for old people. That is what he said and if he knew - I presume that he would not normally mislead this House - if he knew that those 42 could be sent to the Geriatric Hospital...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, any Honourable Member in here except the Member for St. James South could go now and put in place within 48 hours the 42 people from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the Geriatric Hospital. If the system that was left behind where there was a committee responsible for the transfer of indigent persons from the

Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the Geriatric Hospital had not been abolished, then the system would be in place.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. There has been no such abolition of that initiative. Where in fact persons are abandoned in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, there is a team at the Geriatric Hospital that does an assessment to determine where they have to go. Whether they can go back to their families and homes and what is their physical and mental state and in fact into which Geriatric Hospital they can go.

The reality is that without the use of the private homes and the additional beds which those homes would give, there is a limited capacity within the public sector. You must still have people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital if you do not have additional beds in the public sector. I intend to keep talking and keep you on your feet.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: If the Speaker allows you, I will sit down until you are finished. But when you are finished, I will still make the point that you said nothing about the 42. You gave the impression to the whole country that there were 42 people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and you could not find anywhere to send them.

This time, you can stand until your toes drop off. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, I would suggest that you restrain yourself. I know you said that bed are available but I am sure you do not want to go there.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Yesterday I made the point and I wish to reiterate this; that as a first option, these persons at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can go directly into the Geriatric Hospital. But I made the point that the way in which the system would work is that the public sector would be used primarily for acute care but less intensive care would be done in the private nursing homes and therefore when those persons at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are assessed depending on what their physical state is and what their needs are, then the determination would be made as to whether they would go into the public sector or the private sector.

I wish to assure the Honourable Member for St Michael West, having spent some time with him in Geneva and now knowing his particular interest, I wish to assure him that whether he is in the public or private sector, I will come and read literature to him. 12.05 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I think this...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us hear the point of order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I think this Honourable House, Sir, is entitled to further clarification of this matter of being together in Geneva.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the answer was given. They were reading literature together.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir, literature has been interpreted in many forms and may be the House is being treated to a new form of literature today.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central wish some clarification on this point because I understand the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is still hot.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, every time I reach the point where I believe that the House is getting not worthwhile, something happens to make me delight in being a member of this House, Sir, and I would merely say that my father told me, Sir, that what happens between me and any lady must remain private. I therefore have no explanation to make to anyone. Like the Minister, the Honourable Member for the City, I have no apology to make for being in Geneva with the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is misleading the House, Sir. He is giving the House the impression, Sir, that one Member is jealous of the other, Sir, and I need a clarification on that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we proceed please? Have you concluded?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But, Sir, having been carried all the way to Geneva, let me return to Beckles Road. I am not going to be diverted.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have about 3 minutes more.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, but you know, Sir, whether you are in Geneva or here 3 minutes is a lot of time, especially if you are doing literature.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am hearing that is too much time for you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the person who spoke it had authority, I could touch that but if it is a male, Sir, he has no authority.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to return to the point. Under the 1993/2000 Development Plan of 1993 at page 96 the care of the elderly, we pointed out what the Democratic Labour Party had done because I feel very strongly about the care of the elderly and we had appointed a Geriatrician at the hospital and we went on to say:

"the pre-feasibility 1986 and feasibility studies on health services for the elderly in Barbados 1987 made recommendations for an integrated framework of care at the institutional level, that is the Geriatric Hospital and the QEH, nursing homes and community/home care including the polyclinics."

That is the policy which we left behind which I sought to draw to the Honourable Member's attention yesterday that the concept which has been proposed here...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is speaking to an idea. The Honourable Member for the City has today already made the point in this House that you cannot land a plane on an idea. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West left nothing laid out in terms of where one would go for the community effort, for the nursing home component of it. There was just the physical extension of the Geriatric Hospital. This initiative to use the nursing homes and map out the strategy for it and the legal framework for it is completely new.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, so is a baby. But the fact is that the transfer of persons from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital - the Honourable Member just said 5 minutes ago that what was left in place for the transfer of people from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the Geriatric Hospital - has not been abolished. So that is at least one thing we left in place.

The second thing that we have left in place is that we had created a system by which all persons going into the geriatric system, not the Geriatric Hospital, the geriatric system by having a Geriatrician on board we have now made arrangements for all persons going to the Geriatric Hospital to be assessed at the assessing centre before being sent to one of the two places. If they have told the Honourable Member that they do not have anything left behind either they are misleading her deliberately...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point we are making, Sir, is that it was not known, arising out of this study which still forms part of the Ministry's records. It was known out of here what the profile would be for the elderly and

the programme was set in place and we did not even wait for Inter-American Development Bank funding, we funded the development out of local funds. \$11 million was spent and when we went into structural adjustment we held strain and stated categorically that we would resume and the wards were completed. That is the gravamen of my argument today.

The wards were completed nearly 2 years ago. The beds have been put in. The only thing that was missing is the allocation of people and I am saying, Mr. Speaker that the impression which has been given is that the \$2 million will allow the problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be solved. My point is that that problem should have been solved at least 3 months ago and could have been 2 years ago because the capacity is there. But the Honourable Member's Government would not do for the elderly what it is supposed to do. And I will finish by saying this, Mr. Speaker, how a country treats its elderly is an indication of what kind of country it is. It is my contention that any moneys spent making the elderly of this country to which 90 percent of the people in this House will soon be added, any money spent on making proper plans for the elderly will be money well spent because all those elderly, whether they were school teachers, whether they were doctors, or whether they were labourers in the field these are the people who rolled the wicket for the rest of us to come and behave as if we have always been in this position.

We have, Sir, to ensure that the geriatric services return to the standards that they had managed to reach in 1993. We had made arrangements to ensure that those persons who lose their limbs and there are too many people in Barbados who lose their limbs through amputations. We sought to do the link which had been laid down by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in a memorandum he did when he was chief of staff. If we could get the amputations reduced, because many of the persons who are to be transferred, it is not only a question of abandonment by their families but it is a question that they are going to need nursing care. There are diabetics in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are blind and also have double amputations. You cannot send them to a tertiary institution that does not have proper nursing care. So that the Geriatric Hospital was being prepared for proper nursing care and we had made sure that there were no people and staff who were not professionally trained. We had taken all of the nursing assistants that had been employed and brought them to professional training except for three. 12.15 p.m.

Now, Sir, I say with regret that because the problem was not looked at in its entirety, we have a situation where once again, people of low skills are being taken into the system as employees to work within the Geriatric ward. I

hope, Sir, that this Head comes for discussion, so we can speak to it more specifically.

I am grateful to Your Honour.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last two speakers on the second reading of this Bill tended to concentrate on specific programmes in specific ministries. I would have hoped that we would have gotten beyond the second reading in order to get into as many ministries as possible to discuss the particular programmes in a meaningful way rather than some of the generalisations which I have been hearing in a debate of this nature.

I wish however to begin by complimenting the Government for its outstanding performance in the economy of this country in the last three years and particularly during the year 1997. It does not take any economic wizard trained at any of the main institutions either locally, regionally or internationally to see and to analyse that there have been a consistent and even at this stage dramatic recovery in the economic performance of Barbados. That recovery has manifested itself in higher foreign exchange earnings, in higher reserves, in increased employment, in an improvement in the quality of life of every Barbadian and with a consequential attendant concentration on the endemic problem of the marginalised in our society.

Now any Government that has been able to achieve that in the process of three years ought to be complimented by the country as a whole and by the electorate as a whole. No doubt that explains one of the reasons for the total panic in the Democratic Labour Party in anticipating that there was going to be an election in April, in June and various things and the hustle and bustle that one has witnessed in various constituencies. I have witnessed it even in my constituency where they cannot get it right yet and I have certainly witnessed it in the constituency next door to me, in South Central for instance where they cannot get it right yet either and other constituencies throughout Barbados, Sir.

So that I am not surprised to hear the Honourable Member *sotto voce* misbehaving himself as he usually does and not complying with the rules. But, Sir, the position is that one would expect congratulations from the Opposition to the people of Barbados in the first place for their excellent performance and to the Government and particularly the Prime Minister and the Cabinet for the manner in which they have managed the economy. One would expect the Opposition in particular not to abandon its role to be critical, but at least to be constructive in some of the criticisms which are offered. One would have expected this from them, Sir.

Instead, Sir, I have listened in the last few minutes to a debate concerning an Irish-American lady as to whether or not she should hold a particular post. I have listened yesterday and today, Sir, to the frequency with which we as persons responsible for national policy will now reduce everything, almost to the stage as though we are a decisive society and can only see things in terms of black and white, or rich or poor, rather than a society which at the moment cherishes the multi-racial culture that we have achieved, the degree of cohesion that we have achieved here in Barbados and the fact that we can be in many respects a model society. That our focus now should be moving Barbados from the middle range into the stage of excellence. That is what I wanted to hear in this debate.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of elucidation. Since I spoke to this matter extensively, I was careful and clear to point out that the position I was taking had nothing whatsoever to do with race. It had everything to do with the protection of our sovereignty and that an Irish-American lady does not constitute a manifestation by the call by the Ministry to protect that sovereignty.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I heard the Honourable Member, Sir, and I will address that when I do part of the reply to him, Sir, because he must not get away with some of the things he has been allowed to get away with, so far that none of us on this Side has spoken.

But, Sir, the economy of Barbados is performing well. But, let me in the moment of praise, recognise that we are still in a very critical period in so far as we aiming after a long-term sustainable development. Unless we can maintain a high level of earnings in foreign exchange, unless we can hold together very carefully an understanding between the social partners that increases in wages in particular and increases in profits most definitely must be linked to productivity so that we are producing more and earning more to widen the national cake which is available for us. Unless we can hold firmly to that philosophy then we are building up for ourselves and will continue to build up for ourselves problems in the future and cyclical changes which will undermine the very fabric that is so fundamental to a sound economy in Barbados.

We are moving into the stage, Sir, as we happen to every five years where elections are around the corner. It is easy for every politician, including myself to get up and talk that you have to give more here and you should give more there and you should ease the burden here and that of course has its short-term attraction for people. I have heard on the Other Side that Barbados is an overtaxed society.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The point about Barbados being overtaxed was made by a Member of that Side in the name of the Honourable Member of

St. Peter who argued that Barbados was overtaxed. It has nothing to do with the people over here. Sir, it was argued by the Members on that Side.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Sir, I am not going to get into which side it was said from. I do listen very carefully to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. 12.25 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday afternoon when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke he said that the Prime Minister when he was Leader of the Opposition said that Barbados was overtaxed because the tax effort was 28 cents in the dollar. He said yesterday that it is now 35 cents.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy...

Mr. SPEAKER: It has been pointed out that the statement that you are alleging to have been made by the Prime Minister was not in fact made by the Prime Minister so I am asking you if you would not mind withdrawing what you have said.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No. I cannot withdraw, Sir, because it is a matter of the record of Parliament that the Prime Minister indicated in here, as was stated by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West yesterday when he read the report and gave the specific page and indicated that Barbados was overtaxed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, he was reading from the record?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: ... From the record of Parliament, Sir. It was clearly stated by Members on that side and we accept that since 1994 it is not overburdened with tax.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: For the purpose of my argument it does not matter who said what. The point I am making is this. What we must avoid at this stage of our development is to stress in a pejorative and partisan sense the nearer that we are getting to an election only the negatives and the things that we want to move away from and cure in our society.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: What I wanted to say is that the Honourable Member showed that I was

absolutely aware of what could happen in an election year because he asked me from his seat if I am not aware of that. I am absolutely aware that you can adopt the policies of the Honourable Member and spend heavily as is shown by the statistics for those times because you are in an election year and spend unwisely at the same time which has the effect in the long term of damaging the economy structurally and leading it to the IMF.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: The Honourable Member is obviously talking about 1981 not 1991.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I did not say that at all. I am dealing with the year the Honourable Member was Prime Minister and ran the election then. The prediction which I made then that the IMF would be at our door and I was not the only one making the prediction. The prediction was made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who was forced like the then Honourable Member for St. Philip North to leave the party on fundamental issues of economic management.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. All of that occurred in 1981.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Again I say that we must be careful as persons in public life with the primary responsibility for guiding the future of Barbados as we approach the consideration of these Estimates not to be in the mood to lightly mislead the public by our analyses of what is happening in our country.

Sir, we are not completely out of the problem. Recovery has occurred. We believe that it is sustainable but if it is to be sustainable then we also have to show prudence and restraint. We must not overspend unless we are earning it to spend and I can see nothing with which any Honourable Member should disagree on that statement. We must not lead the public into believing that you should overspend to the detriment in the long term of the public. You need a proper mix of politics.

I regret very much that the Prime Minister's promise of last year that we were going to do the Budget and the Estimates together has not matured into reality, because then we would be freer on a Second Reading of this Bill to discuss the measures which obviously the Prime Minister has to bring to the House at some stage, the measures which he has for attending to some of the problems that are confronting us on a macro level and not only on a micro level, as well as alleviating some of the social and consequential problems following in the wake of our macroeconomic policies.

However, Sir, there is a sufficient outline if you read these Estimates carefully to give us guidance and there are

a few points that I want to stress in the very limited time available on a Second Reading speech.

The Government is correct in going for a taxation policy which spreads the burden of taxation as we must raise taxes to catch particularly those persons who have been making money in Barbados but would not undertake their responsibility by paying tax.

If you cannot catch them in the direct web you have to find some way of catching them in an indirect web as well. To the extent that the Value Added Tax has managed to achieve that, particularly in the area of services, it has certainly been an improvement not only as a tax raising measure but as well as a more equitable form of dealing with the incidence of taxation. So one has to say that

I anticipate that in the process we will also affect people who are at the area of what we call the economically marginalised. Any government that is thinking very seriously about a cohesive society has to put in place policies that would deal with those. I am satisfied reading these Estimates and even before these Estimates that the Government has set out to deal with that problem not only through poverty alleviation but through other measures. We have heard about the policy for the elderly and I hope I will get back to discuss that as well. We have seen an effort of the Government to give direct grants to those who are at the lower end of the earning scale in Barbados, and the promise by the Prime Minister that he will unveil for the benefit of the House in the country in due course, more detailed measures in that way. The Honourable Member for St Michael North West has suggested a reverse VAT tax credit. That may be one. There may be other measures to deal with this, but the point that I am making is that this Government is constructively making suggestions for solving the problems, not running away from them or minimising them as it gives the economic and other political leadership so necessary for Barbados going in to the 21st century. We know there is a problem. At the same time let me say that there are some persons who may appear to be earning below the minimum level, not many of them but some of them, but who are doing two, three, four and five jobs and what we would need if we are going to be true to our citizenship is for correct declarations of income so that the really marginalised would benefit, and not just those persons who believe that you should take from one willy-nilly and give to another. 12.35 p.m.

Let me make another point that should be absolutely clear. Whatever we say about how Government takes a dollar out of the citizens' pockets, Barbados stands out in the Caribbean, in fact even in the developing world in which the difference between the earnings at the

bottom and earnings at the top are not as wide as even in socialist countries such as Cuba. We have always stood out in this regard and to this extent let me say that there have been consistent policies from the time of the Barbados Labour Party right down through the DLP, and with the Barbados Labour Party back in. That is why I say you have to speak in this House in a certain way so that you can lift the debates and look at what is really essential, to narrow those differences in our society and to deal with the marginalised. I would hope, Sir, that we will continue that policy.

At the same time, we need measures in the country that will create real wealth. I want to make the point because I hear a lot of talk in Barbados that is loose political talk without any rationalisation of what this country genuinely needs if it is to move forward. We cannot have a society that is going to move to a standard of economic excellence unless we create genuine wealth in Barbados, and that the wealth is shared in a broader fashion than our forefathers were accustomed to sharing. I make the point quite clearly.

We are not going to earn that wealth by turning our backs on capital investment, whether that capital investment is generated from our own domestic resources or whether it is foreign capital. We cannot do it, Sir. I am sounding a warning to us in politics today. It is a reckless policy for us to interpret our position in politics to give the impression to those persons who may not be as fortunate as us to be able to analyse the situation, that Barbados is against foreign investment. It is also wrong if we give the impression here in Barbados by making this statement that is untrue, that there is only a section of Barbados, a certain colour in Barbados, that has the right to incentives and special treatment. It is not true. We have had a widening middle class in Barbados because of the deliberate policies of the Barbados Labour Party first, and secondly of the Errol Barrow Government and following to widen the middle class to provide that basic necessity to keep cohesion in our society.

If we look at it in the position of the ownership of land, we, the Barbados Labour Party by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act itself created 6 000 titles for the poorest in the society for land at ten cents a square foot. Come into St. John. Come into Society where we are now putting in roads for the first time. Come into Venture, come into Pool, come into Easy Hall, and you will see the transformation of the housing conditions of people who before had to pick up their houses and walk, all because of the Barbados Labour Party.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I do not care whether the journalists write anything or not because there are a lot of

people in this country who want to hear things that are not properly thought out and we must set the example for the future.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Nobody has interfered with me, Sir. I am at the stage at my life that I am entitled to speak and will speak freely in this country and hopefully give some light and guidance for the future. That is the stage of the life at which I am, Sir. We have had a widening middle class who are owning quite a bit of the wealth of Barbados, Sir. Even in die cutting up of the plantations. If you look at Baling Park, if you look at Chancery Lane, if you look at Rowans Park, if you look at Sandford, a lot of them were cut up during the Democratic Labour Party time.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is misleading this House. There are very few Honourable Members who have been in the House long enough to know that that same very Honourable Member and his colleagues criticised the distribution of land in Sandford in the most heinous way and he should now really be consistent and not mislead the population.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Let me first make the point. The point is that the division of a lot of this land has gone to provide for a widening middle class. Having said that let me deal with my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West saying about my heinous criticism of Sandford. He was not able to speak because he belonged to the Party but he has reached the stage now that he can speak freely. What I criticised about Sandford was that someone was given twenty-three acres of land as "rackback". The Honourable Member knows that.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Someone was given 23 acres of land as a "kickback". That is what I was talking about.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I know no such thing. The Honourable Member knows that. I do not know any such thing. I categorically deny knowing any such thing.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I want to say that sometimes when we are in the Cabinet that things happen that we do not know, as the Honourable Member would realise. I am not saying that he knew it, and I am

certain that the Honourable Member of St. Michael South did not know it. That was a criticism of Sandford. We make no bones about it as well. We have always said that the policy in taking lands out of agriculture should be that you reserve a certain area of land so that in the future we will always continue to own agriculture. I do not want to get off the point. The point I am saying, Sir, is that to create wealth we therefore need to continue to get investment into this country. I believe that the mix of policies which this Government had been following on a macroeconomic level has led to increased confidence in the economy of Barbados. Our rating by Moody and other investors has been one of the best ratings for years. We are well rated. We have gone through two years without having to borrow on the foreign exchange market and we are seeing a net inflow of foreign capital into Barbados which is coming here, not in speculative ventures but being invested in long-term development in tourism, agriculture and other parts of the economy. 12.45 p.m.

That is the mix of policies that this Government must continue to encourage.

I want to say as well, Sir, and I want to stress it in this House that the Barbados Labour Party had the foresight in the early 40s to form the trade union movement. People forget this too. We created the necessity for a social contract between the private and the public sector and the labour unions. Let me say that it occurred, not first through us but through the Honourable Member for St. Michael South so he can get up on this one. Therefore it is very vital and important that this experience be widened, and it is being widened by this Government.

Sir, why I say that the Government ought to be congratulated too is that during our term in office there has been an increase in the wealth of the country and we have passed on part of that increase to the public servants of Barbados. What you are finding is that the public servants now have greater security of tenure including the casual workers. We have increased the wages, we are improving their living conditions and their working conditions and at the same time we have increased their pensionable and retirement stake. Those cannot be things that should be censored by Honourable Members in this House, Sir. In the last minute that I have, Sir, I want to reply to one of the arguments on micro management raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, Sir.

I want as well to congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister for the performance of her Ministry of Tourism during the past year. I want specifically to say that when you look at the statistics, whether you are looking at them in terms of numbers or in terms of earnings from tourism, last year was the best year in Barbados since we have been a tourist country.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: You have to say that and you will have to acknowledge that, Sir. When you look at the American market, it is not fair for Honourable Members to believe that the problem in the American market is that the Board has chosen an Irish-American other than a Barbadian. What has happened in that market is that since 1988, there has been a consistent decline in the American market in so far as number of visitors who have been coming.

The problem is now a ten-year problem as I see it, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, speaking about the U.S. market. The Honourable Member should indicate that 1997 was the worst performing year since 1982 in the U.S. market.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is talking about 1997 being the best year and it cannot be. It is the worst year and Mr. Speaker I cannot allow it to pass.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member probably cannot hear well. I am not going to be diverted by dealing with the Honourable Member, Sir. Statistics as shown in the Central Bank report for January 1998 at page 81 is there for all to see. I do not have to misquote statistics to prove a point, Sir.

The point that I am making is that since 1988 there has been a consistent decline other than for 1993 - 112 000 and then it dropped again to 110 000. Then in 1995/96 - 111 000 and in 1997 - 108 000 roughly. That has been the position.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I do not need cheap little points to deal with arguments. I have never had to be cheap in argument in this House and misquote things to make a point.

For ten years, we have had the chronic problem of the American market and there are a number of reasons, not the appointment of an Irish-American which have led to this position and therefore we must take, as we are attempting to take now, concrete measures to deal with the problem of the increased competition out of the United States, the necessity to increase and improve the hotel plant, particularly on the South Coast. I represent the South Coast and it is absolutely important that we should upgrade the plant on the South Coast to bring it back to the

standard that a person coming from the United States in the middle income range can find that they are getting a good product as we get in their own jurisdiction at a reasonable price as well.

We are dealing with that problem, Sir. We must also provide along our coastlines, the facilities that are necessary and therefore I am pleased to see in these Estimates provisions being made for the revival and the renovation of the Durants Golf Course and also provision being made for better coastal management.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am much indebted to you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am much obliged to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for his kind remarks and I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.00 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am indeed happy that we have reached the situation in this country where the economy is doing extremely well. I am also thankful that the Honourable Prime Minister has explained in clear terms where we are today and where we are heading. I think it is important for Honourable Members to realise that the country is doing well and that we should try to maintain the levels which we have set.

It is important to note that we have come from a situation of negative growth in 1991 to 5 years of sustained growth and I am heartened by the fact that when I look at taxes on incomes and profits we are told by the report that it is expected to grow by a strong \$55 million this year to \$441 million. This growth is much stronger than 1994/95 which saw revenue gains of \$37.4 million and \$39.3 million in 1997. This is important, Mr. Speaker, when we look at employment generation. Any country where you have growth on incomes and profits, points to the fact that employment generation has occurred because the more incomes that the country can sustain it means that employment generation is occurring.

When one looks at the employment statistics one finds that unemployment is down from 22 percent in 1994 to about just over 12% and that is important. So that employment has been created in all sectors of the economy especially in construction and in the offshore banking sector. This is important but I want to spend some time looking at how employment has been created and how the Government has been trying to sustain this employment generation by looking carefully at the programmes that are outlined.

Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Labour under the Vocational Training Board. I believe, Sir, that if a Government is serious about maintaining employment one has to look at serious training. I advocated this years ago even before I was in this Honourable Chamber that a skills training programme is necessary.

When one looks at the Ministry of Education's programme, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College and the University, the tertiary institutions, one finds that more and more and more people are being trained today than they were before. I understand the figures moved and more than 1400 people are now being trained on an annual basis. That does not mean because people are being trained that they are not part of the statistics for unemployment.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy using the argument that the Government is creating training opportunities in order to shore up the employment figures. That is not necessarily true because when people are training it does not mean that they are not part of the job market. People undergo retraining exercises and I am sure the Honourable Member knows this. When one looks at the programmes that are being offered by the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic one finds that they offer programmes not only in die day but also evening programmes to retrain persons who because of the time they went to school have to be retrained to meet the new job market. Therefore training is necessary and I believe that our programme for training has shown that we are keeping on the ball to make sure that our labour force is trained for the future.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at training opportunities I am delighted to know that this programme which was started by this Side in a previous administration, in 1985 or thereabouts for retraining Barbadians, has continued to a lesser extent under a past administration. Since 1994, Mr. Speaker, more and more people have undergone training in the various fields. It is estimated that over the next 2 or 3 years building construction will be at its height and therefore the training of masons, the training of carpenters, the training of tilers and plumbers and steel benders and other artisans is indeed important. To this end, Mr. Speaker, the National Training Board is conducting

training opportunities to meet the demand for house building in this country.

It is also important to know that all those persons who were retrenched under the last administration are now being trained in some field that they could be meaningfully employed and this is important. It is also important to know that the Vocational Training Board has taken on more skilled teachers and has taken on additional personnel to help train a number of people that were put out of work under the previous administration. They are doing a wonderful job.

I am aware that the skills training department is trying to expand the training opportunities. Money was voted in the Estimates this year to provide that institution with opportunities to train persons across Barbados, not necessarily at the centres that now exist because I understand that the department is looking at providing a training centre in the centre of Barbados which can capture the catchment out of the St Philip, Christ Church, St. John areas. It is needed in that area and I am happy that the Skills Training Department is looking at that area where the demand for skilled artisans is important.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that when one looks at the demand for housing in Barbados one finds that the supply cannot be matched since thousands of Barbadians are indeed looking for housing. The demand for housing is quite great. In looking at the figures that were presented to me recently one finds that in 1994 more than 700 persons applied at the National Housing Corporation for house spots. In 1994-95 about 702 persons applied at the National Housing Corporation for house spots. In 1995-96 the figures decreased to about 647. By 1997 the figure again has gone up to about 800 persons applying for house spots, bringing a total of those persons applying to the National Housing Corporation to well over 2 000 persons who are now registered with us for house spots. These are low income earners and that does not include the number of persons who have applied to other sources for house spots. The demand for house spots is really great. However it is anticipated that during the coming year from what our programme has indicated, right now we have more than 670 house spots that are now under construction, at various stages of construction. When I talk about various stages of construction, when house spots have been acquired, they have to meet the Town Planning permission, and then sights and services have to go in, water, electricity and all the other necessary services that are necessary to make a community. 2.15 p.m.

I am making a point, Mr. Speaker, that when you look across Barbados in the various areas, we in the Ministry of Housing with its executing arm and the National Housing Corporation are undertaking several

projects. We are doing work in St Thomas, we are doing work in St Peter, St Lucy to a lesser extent, in St Michael and we are also looking at St James, a total of 670 spots are now at various stages of construction. So this is important and as we go through this debate, when we come to look at the Head we will be able to identify where these spots are located.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to know that we have not only created spots through the National Housing Corporation but a number of Barbadians have taken advantage of the economic situation and have started building houses. If you look at the year 1997, over 175 houses up to September 1997 have been completed. So that when I hear other Members on that Side talk about only 24 houses were built, in the course of this debate, one would be able to correct the misinformation that has gone out to the public.

Mr. Speaker, by the end of this year, more than 100 terrace units will be added to the 4 100 that we now have. We are building 28 terrace units in St James, 20 at Flat Rock and 50 at Pondside. We are hoping to do at least 20 terrace units at Bush Hall in St Michael. Mr. Speaker, these are at various stages of construction. The ones at Flat Rock, I understand should start this week. Twenty-eight are supposed to start in St James and the ones at Bank Hall, Bush Hall are now at the Town Planning awaiting permission, whereas the 50 units at Pondside have already commenced. We are hoping that should be completed by the end of this year or early 1999, so we have already put forward the process and it is going very well.

It is also important to know that since 1995 housing completions have increased tremendously. When you look at the years, Mr. Speaker, 1994/95 you will see a downward trend. At the end of 1995, 677 housing units occurred in those years. Today we are doubling the number of houses that are under construction. The figures since September last year are now available, but definitely we are doing more construction today than we did in previous years. More Barbadians are taking advantage of this.

In terms of loans, Mr. Speaker, this administration has provided through the general workers loan fund, more loans than ever before and the figures have shown that they have been tremendous increases in the number of loans that are being offered to Barbadians at a lower level. So when the Honourable Members on that Side talk about providing opportunities for poor Barbadians, this Administration has taken the lead and we are providing opportunities in housing for Barbadians.

Last year, the Minister decided to look into a pilot project in allowing Barbadians access to \$5 000. That programme worked very well where persons who

wanted to repair their homes; put on a roof or a toilet could access \$5 000 from the National Housing Corporation. That fund, Mr. Speaker, helped a number of Barbadians. In fact within two months, we were able to lend out more than \$1.5 million for persons who wanted a mere \$5 000 to repair their homes.

Mr. Speaker, that is important because for the future the Government has to look at that programme where a number of people do not really require more than \$5 000 to put in a flooring or to put on a roof or windows. The important catch to this is that persons do not have to have any great security; like a bank account, once they are employable and are working they can have access to this fund.

It is important to know, Mr. Speaker, that we have provided the opportunities for Barbadians to repair their homes and to have access to loans for rental of spots as well as the purchase of land. Across Barbados this programme has affected a number of persons who are at the lower end of the society. We have created a situation where we have realised the future demand for house spots and we hope that on an annual basis we can provide more than 500 house spots.

I think down the road we have acquired a number of parcels of land throughout Barbados. We have not been able to provide the infrastructure in St. Joseph at this time, but we are hoping that in the coming months in St. Joseph and St. George South, we will be able to provide the infrastructure so that more house spots will be created in those constituencies. So that we believe, over the next five years the housing programme will be sustained and about 500 house spots will be provided on an annual basis to help meet the demand. So that it is important that Members know this and they can put in train a programme to help their constituencies. It is very important.

It is also important, Mr. Speaker, to know that the National Housing Corporation is providing opportunities for those persons who now live on their estates. A number of persons live in the National Housing Corporation estates. We have put a programme to help those persons who want to purchase their land and who have, for years been asking the National Housing Corporation to allow them to purchase their land. We are going to be subsidising the rates. In fact, the Minister has made it clear that the Corporation will not in any way exceed the rate that we have set in the urban area of \$2.50 a square foot. We hope that in most cases the land will be sold at a subsidised rate, especially in the older tenancies. The older tenancies although they are not a statutory tenancy that the rates will be set based on the kinds of persons who live on those estates, based also on the fact that a number of them have paid their rents over time and we can subsidise the rates for

those persons who live on lands, for example, Parish Land, Christ Church and Parish Land in St George. 2.25 p.m.

The National Housing Corporation has undertaken a programme to help bring a more equitable society where persons can obtain not only loans but can buy the lots on which they live and have lived over the years.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of house repairs in the older estates like Eden Lodge and Bennetts a lot of work has gone on as well. The Ministry is actively preparing this year for the removal of the asbestos sheets.

When we came to office in 1994, a lot of people had been complaining about the asbestos roofs and the problems that occur. We have done a lot of work in the Farm Housing Area. We removed asbestos roofs in that area. We have done some in the Deacons Road area and we are hoping that during the coming year more work can be done in Silver Hill, in the Pine area as well as Bennetts and in the Mt Pleasant area and in Gall Hill where asbestos exists.

It is important to know that we may not be able to do all in one year but we have begun to rid all of the homes belonging to the National Housing Corporation of asbestos roofs.

In terms of house repairs we are going to accelerate the pace. A number of people complained that they now live in the units and they need to be upgraded in terms of electricity and water facilities. All of these things will be done and if you look at this year's Estimates you will notice, Mr. Speaker, that the National Housing Corporation in the coming year will have more than \$4.5 million which will be given by Central Government to help the Corporation in carrying out its programmes.

I believe that the National Housing Corporation will be moving in a right direction to help poor Barbadians, to provide affordable homes and we know that the task is not going to be easy but during the year we will provide opportunities for all Barbadians at that level to provide themselves with homes.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that some of the members have complained about the time it took for them to have house spots and units but we believe that the time is fast approaching when persons would not have to wait too long at the Corporation to get their demands met. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, during the course of the debate we will put forward the programme which we hope will be the new programme for the National Housing Corporation and for the Ministry of Housing in general.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, when I came in here in 1976 the Estimates for that year showed revenue

at \$182480111 and estimated expenditure at \$208 865 255 and on capital for that fiscal year 1976-77 Government was spending \$80 208 000 and 22 years after the Government estimated current revenue is \$1.5 billion, total expenditure \$1.8 billion.

I give those figures to suggest that I do not think that any of us who were in here 20 years ago conceived that this country would have made the kind of spectacular progress that it has made in those 22 years. Each of us would have been concerned to do our part to improve the quality of life for all Barbadians but the level of accomplishment of 262 000 people in these 22 years is a matter not only for wonder but a matter about which we on both sides should feel pride.

The Prime Minister yesterday openly told us that he is trying to position Barbados in the next few years to take its place among the developed countries of the world and if we can assume that position 25 years after I was in here, I believe that my tenure as a parliamentarian would have been indeed worthwhile. That I could have seen my country move from the status of a developing country down the rung of the ladder to that of developed country in a quarter century would have been an achievement of the greatest possible magnitude.

Indeed, what we are spending this year in the Office of the Attorney General, \$105 million, itself is more than the whole Government spent on capital in 1976-77. So it is with a sense of pride that I make my contribution to this debate because I have seen this Government and the Government of the Democratic Labour Party move this country forward with a rapidity and yet a surety, apart from the problems of 1991 to 1994, that has caused our country not only to be held in high esteem among other countries in the world but also to be the object of some envy among countries of our size.

Mr. Speaker, when we were in Opposition between 1986 and 1994 Members on our side and, in particular, the present Prime Minister as shadow Minister of Finance, asserted in similar debates and indeed in Budget debates that the only way that Barbados could attain sustained economic growth was if the major contributors to the economy, the major engines of growth, were themselves firing. In that period 1986-1994 for the most part, only tourism contributed meaningfully to growth and development. Happily that trend has been reversed. As the last Member who spoke said we have had five years consistent growth and the major economic cylinders would appear to be performing satisfactorily - manufacturing, sugar agriculture, wholesale and retail sector, tourism, offshore services. 2.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, where there is economic growth that growth has to be used for the dispensation of social and economic benefit to the citizenry at large, and this Government is therefore attempting since last year to ensure that the fruits of economic growth and development are reaped by the broad mass of people of this country. At the budget, Sir, I will have an opportunity to speak perhaps more towards those matters.

However, I wish to give an indication for the purposes of this debate as to the ways in which some of the benefits of economic growth can be felt throughout the Ministry of the Attorney General. I think it is undoubted that in the last three and a half years the Government has strived manfully to improve the physical conditions under which many of the officers under the Ministry work, particularly the Courts, the Police Force and we are working now on the Registry, but there is still a lot more to be done. For a long set of years, going back the same twenty-two years that I have been in Parliament, there has been a call for the construction of a forensic lab. Going back those twenty-two years there has been a call for a new facility to house the Judiciary. I hope that in the fiscal year 1998-1999 that we shall start to answer those calls. In the Estimates of Expenditure \$5 million is included to provide for the construction of the forensic lab. Plans are drawn. It has been out to tenders. Shortly and early within the new financial year a contractor should be appointed, the contract should be awarded for the construction of that facility near to the new National Insurance Building. On the other side of the road, west of the National Standards Institute is where the construction...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is off Culloden Road, in the constituency of the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South. That will get going in the new financial year.

With respect to the Supreme Court, I can inform the House that we have again quoted money for that construction but negotiations are taking place now between the Crown and the owners of the property at Whitepark Road, the CLICO group of companies as to the purchase price of the land. The plans are virtually finished. Since last year we had finished the design for the court but Government then took a further decision that we considered it appropriate to have all of the registries in one compound, so we went back to the architects to have one wing of the building redesigned to provide for Corporate Affairs Registry and the Land Registry. Provision has already been made for the Supreme Registry. We want to centralise all the registries in one area. The land capacity at the corner of Gills Road and Whitepark Road can carry those other registries. There has been a little hold up but the drawings are finished and next Friday, 27th March, I should be having a meeting.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: These projects will start, hopefully in this financial year. The Forensic Lab will get off the ground first and then the Supreme Court Registry but of course they cannot be finished in this financial year and these projects will carry on to the next year.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, in the district of Horse Hill in the parish of St. Joseph the Government is also planning the development of a Civic Centre, similar to the Hometown Complex, but not as expansive as the Hometown Complex.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is for Horse Hill at land on the other side of the road from the present police station. I think the technical description of the area is Tamarind Hall and this year we will be designing the complex at Horse Hill with a view to construction, either in the last quarter of this financial year or in the next financial year, Sir. 2.45 p.m.

Sir, for a long time the facilities for the Police Force have been in need of expansion. District "A" at Station Hill covers a very large area. It is the largest station in the island. It is, I think, overburdened and there is a need to take some of the load off District "A", Station Hill. We are therefore building in this financial year at Pine Plantation Road at the site of the old Pine Agricultural Livestock Station a Police Post to service that area of, Wildey, Pine, Collymore Rock, Clapham and so on, on lands west of Pearson's Pharmacy.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will tell you how it is coming about. The Barbados National Bank is required to keep records for a number of years and under the new money laundering legislation which should be coming to Parliament next month, all banks will be required to keep documents, evidence in transactions for a minimum of five years. What the Barbados National Bank has found is, and I suppose all banks, that there is a vast collection of paper which has to be stored and the National Bank needs to have a large, as it were, warehouse to store documents. The National Bank is therefore going to build the facility on land at Pine Plantation Road and they are going to take the opportunity to provide certain facilities for their staff.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, Sir, there are, however, apart from physical developments, matters which

need to be addressed to improve the administration of justice. The Police, for many years - I hear people talking about low morale - but there has been some disquiet among the police about the method of promotion. I believe promotions are due again shortly. You get rumblings and people expressing concern and dissatisfaction every time there are promotions. I have tried to put an end to that by changing the system of promotions. I did not do it on my own. I set up a working group of the management of the Police Force, officers of my Ministry, Parliamentary Counsel and the Police Association representing the broad mass of policemen. We have developed new promotion rules which should be going before Cabinet on Thursday.

In addition to that, the system for discipline within the Police Force was archaic. It went back to 1961. The Police Disciplinary Rules have not kept pace with administrative justice. I insisted that there should be a new Police Disciplinary Court.

We are bringing to Cabinet this week, Sir, a Bill to amend the Police Act to put in a whole set of offences in the Police Act and, as subsidiary legislation, the Police Disciplinary Rules 1961 are being repealed and new rules will come into effect as soon as we can get the Bill passed in April as the parent legislation the rules will then come as subsidiary legislation. I hope in April but no later than May.

One is trying to address some of the matters which strike at the heart of satisfaction or morale in the Police Force by addressing the question of promotions and discipline in a consultative way. Nothing was forced on the police. They were all party to and participants in the exercise to modernise the promotion rules and the disciplinary rules. I hope that the promulgation of this new legislation will improve those concerns for the police and particularly the concerns in that area.

Sir, as far as possible, it is my approach to managing some of these matters to have a consultative process where all the necessary stakeholders can be involved. We need to have in place this year, and we will be working toward that, a new procedure for complaints against the police.

The Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party in 1994 committed the Government to the establishment of an independent Complaints Authority and with a view to the implementation of that promise, Sir, again we are setting up a working group to look at that, to study the legislation. In England it is under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Jamaica has legislation. Trinidad has legislation. We are going to study all this legislation and come out with something we believe our society can live with, but there will be a new independent Police Complaints Authority later on this calendar year.

Similarly, Sir, parts of the Evidence Act have not been implemented though the new Evidence Act was passed in 1992, but there will always be concern about the reliability and the efficacy of oral confessional statements. We want to modernise the system and provide for video taping of accused statements given to the police and audio tapings. Again, I am not just going to buy tape recorders or video cameras and give the police. 2.55 p.m.

We need to study the thing, see how it is done and do it properly. A small working group is going to be working on that, Sir. It should not take long because we send people abroad to observe what is done in other countries. We hope this year to have that system in place and provision is being made in the Estimates for 1998/99.

There is one other matter that I would dearly love to deal with this year, Sir, but I do not know if time will allow me because the Ministry of Transport and Works and ourselves have to get together. That is the question of parking tickets and pleading guilty by post.

Barbados as it goes into the year 2000 should have a system which allows for a person to be charged for minor offences, to plead guilty by post and send the \$50 or \$100 or whatever it is and you do not have to waste time going to court. The whole thing can be put on computer. We are into the last phase of the computerisation of the Police Force and since MTW is responsible for the management of the Road Traffic Act, our two Ministries have to collaborate about the introduction of this system. We will start working on it this year. Already it sounds like a lot of things that we are doing and we have to be careful of indigestion.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn now to some of the things that will be done under the office of the Attorney General for this year. I wish to mention that Honourable Members will see for the first time appearing in the Estimates at page 57 a project office.

In order to do all of the maintenance that we have to do on police stations, courts and whatever, in order to plan the capital projects and to ensure that Government's interests in the capital projects are protected, we have to set up a project office. We have a project office provided for at page 57 and this is using some existing staff and we will probably have to bring in two or three people, one or two from MTW to ensure the proper structure for the project office. This Ministry now has a project office for the first time. We had a building officer before but we have a proper project office now with a manager and subsidiary staff.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say, however, that I have been very satisfied with the work of the officers in the Ministry.

I have pushed them hard and they have responded well. I think that it is a little bit harsh and certainly it will conduce to low morale when they see some of the comments of the Auditor General.

From my perusal of the file this morning, I will let Honourable Member see it but these files never come to the Minister. When the Auditor General comments that they are 48 queries and only 24 have been responded to, what he does is to use a cumulative process. He starts from 1990 or 1991 when he has been asking about something and nobody has replied and he adds them up every year.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, the file shows that. He adds on every year. It does not mean that in any one year there are necessarily 48. Cumulatively, so many have not been responded to.

Some of the queries concern, in my submission, very minor matters. In respect of my Ministry, there seem to have concern about the Government Industrial School, a few at the Prisons and the majority at the Police and a few at the Registry.

Sir, these are some of the things, Sir. Corrections were made in ink on duplicate receipts, contrary to Rule 39 of the Financial Rules.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have to find the right plan and the right year.

Sir, take this one. An amount of \$16,416.25 was paid to Jose & Jose Construction Limited for voucher No. OC592 dated 97-02 for excavation work done at the Farm Project. This expenditure was charged to Object No. 210 - Supplies and Materials instead of Object No. 211 - Maintenance of Property. They are not saying that there was any misspending. Instead of writing Object No. 211, they wrote Object No. 210.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I understand the Opposition's role in this. The point is that I think I have to respond to it because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke to this matter in second reading and I am showing that some of these things, they do not impute any larcenous intent or fraudulent behaviour on the part of anybody but there was somebody writing down Object No. 210 as it appears in the Estimates when it should be Object No. 211.

The Accounting Officer has sent me the file and anybody can feel free to have them. I hope the Leader

of the Opposition as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee will summons all these persons to come and explain. These seem to be genuine errors.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have to defend my officers. That is my role according to the principles of ministerial responsibilities.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order. Sir, yesterday the Prime Minister said that this question of audit queries was not the business of Ministers. He was aided and abetted by the Attorney General. Now, the Attorney General is in here saying that he has to defend his officers. We are very concerned as to which is the correct position of the Government. They are misleading the House.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Just to explain, Mr. Speaker, that all of the audit queries are addressed to the Permanent Secretary as the Accounting Officer. I said yesterday and I repeat that Ministers do not see these audit queries and these files will show that I certainly never saw them. What I am saying, Sir, is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, a student of constitutional and administrative law, must appreciate that even though we do not see these matters in strict conventional practice of the Constitution we are answerable for them because it is a matter that occurred in the department over which we have responsibility and even though we do not see... 3.05 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member would give way, Sir. It is a point which I tried valiantly to make at a time not long removed from now when the Honourable Member, Sir, would not hear any such and indeed committed himself in writing to include the Minister in a condemnatory statement which will live forever in the Interim Report of the Public Accounts Committee.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I just wish to say, Sir, that I appreciate the role of the Opposition and I do not get angry about the Opposition doing their job. However, if I have to put my case he cannot deny me the right to put my case and I put the case for the officers in the Ministry of the Attorney General whom I am constitutionally bound to defend. No one can say, Sir, that this Government has not given good governance both in terms of administrative matters and in terms of financial management to Barbados and I am proud, the complaints of the Opposition, the criticisms of the Opposition notwithstanding, to be a member of this Government. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would not detain the House for very long today. I merely wish to make a few points and I will deal with some literature today, Sir, and start by making three references:

Firstly, we heard about the fable "Animal Farm" and there was some revolt carried on on that farm and the pigs overthrew the rule or dictatorship of the human beings and set up, Sir, what I could only term a 'pigocracy'¹ but then, Sir, in the end when you look from the pigs to the human beings and from the human beings back to the pigs you could not understand what the difference was. Dictatorship is dictatorship is dictatorship. I will leave that in a kind of inscrutable way.

Secondly, Sir, we heard about literature and this House, while discussing these very complex set of Estimates heard about the reading of literature in Geneva. I certainly, Sir, was led to believe that some of the classics read on that occasion including the "Kamasutra" Sir, an Indian classic, the subject matter of which I do not quite recall at this time. And Sir, I will just leave those two quotations. I may just get back to them if my 5 minutes do not elapse before I make the points that I wish to make.

When I look at these Estimates 1998-99, I see estimated current revenue of \$1.5 billion, estimated total expenditure of \$1.8 billion, leaving an estimated excess of total expenditure over current revenue of the sum of \$321 428 058.1, Sir, am not accustomed to those kinds of numbers.

I am not accustomed to those numbers, Sir. I deal with 5 cents and 10 cents, may be get up to dollars. I cannot deal with those, Sir. I look further into the Estimates, Sir, and on page 4, Table 7, going on the information that I have been presented with, I notice that the expenditure for Defence and Security will increase by 4.9% but education will increase by only 0.5%. I note too, Sir, that health will increase by minus 11.8%.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am going on the information that is before me. Now the Estimates are supposed to tell us something. I see somewhere else, Sir, that the deficit on page 2, Overall Fiscal Balance, that is Table 2 on page 2. Overall Fiscal Balance as a percentage of the GDP is minus 7.1%.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member must explain to the House that that is dealing with the fiscal year 1997-98 not 1998-99. These Estimates deal with 1998-99. That Table 2 deals with 1997-98, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We are talking about fiscal discipline and so on and we have an out-turn figure showing 7.1% and the prudence and form that we have spoken so much is...

Asides.
3.15 p.m.

The point I am making, Sir, is that when we come to these issues, we have to look at the total picture in the country. We must seek in all ways when we have points to make, let us make them. When there are difficulties let us say what those difficulties are. I join with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who says he does not have to make cheap political points in a debate although he was very much on the defensive and then there was a level of animosity during his speech and I did not quite understand why he was so fervid in his presentation. But I have passed that stage, Sir.

I remember, but I hold no malice and therefore I can sit down with equability, Sir, and hear the references to what is going to happen, the goal and vision for Barbados to make Barbados a developed country in the 21st century.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: No reference to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, but I will research, Sir, I have not completed it yet, the times in which I have referred to a vision for Barbados, that Barbados should become a developed country.

Sir, this is still the Development Plan for Barbados. It has not been replaced. The 1993 to 2000 Development Plan and, Sir, the preface to this document reads as follows:

"One of the cherished objectives is to see Barbados transformed from the category of a developing country into that of a developed country in the shortest feasible time."

Sir, that was said by the then Prime Minister in the preface to this document. It is recorded here and it is in other speeches as well. So what is happening, Sir, is that the wheel is coming full circle and it is being realised that Barbados was on the right track for its development, that the policies that were put in place were sound policies and that the vision for Barbados was also a sound vision and I think that this is significant.

It is significant that these points should be made, because there is a tendency to forget. Not the Honourable Member for St. Thomas today, because he indicated that on both sides there has been an effort to make a contribution toward the growth and development of Barbados.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: There is no money in here for this because I do not get paid as a Member of Parliament, nor the Member for Christ Church South.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, the point I wish to make is that there is no one who comes into this Chamber, no one who holds high office in this country that does not or should not have as a goal and objective the output of as much efficiency of which that person is capable for the development and growth of the people of Barbados and our little rock on which we live. That includes the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, Sir.

Nobody mentions him and his contribution, but he presided in this country over a period of growth in Barbados. We are now hearing about five years of growth in Barbados, from 1993 until 1997/98, five continuous years of growth from 1993 until 1998. But there was seven years of continuous growth before that, Sir, 1983 until 1989, five continuous years of growth in this country.

All we can talk about is depression, recession, call it whatever you want to call it of 1991, but cannot find the breath to say that we had recession or depression in 1981 and 1982 when there was no growth in Barbados. You should be in a position to know about it because the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was a high ranking public officer and economic adviser during those years. I am not attacking, Sir, or criticising. I am simply setting the record straight on which this debate and future economic debates in this country should be positive.

Barbados will not develop or cannot develop unless there is growth in the economy and there was growth in the economy between 1983 and 1989 continuous years indeed, Sir, 1989 was a record year. 3.25 p.m.

I believe that may now be surpassing some of the indicators of that year but that was a record year and I recall how I was pilloried, not from my side, on this matter, for saying that 1989 was a record year. It is now being discovered that what I was saying was correct. Seven continuous years, but we do not remember that. We are now boasting about 5 continuous years. Of the previous 7 years the Honourable Member for Christ Church South shared in that. He became Prime Minister during that period.

I have had the good fortune to be associated with both periods of growth in this country. I am concerned about the Estimates because when I look at them and see only that small increase overall in the provision for education I reflect that out of growth development should take place.

The GDP tells us about growth. It does not tell us about how that growth is used for improving the quality of life in a country. We have to look at other values, at our value systems and concerns, particularly for the disadvantaged, the young and the old, and that tells

us something about where our conscience is and our outlook on life and what we wish to do with our country. Nobody can build the houses. They cannot put down the roads unless it comes out of a growing economy.

I am sure the Members on this Side and all right-thinking Barbadians are pleased to note that the economy is growing. I am pleased to see that, Sir. It is growing because of the policies that were implemented first of all to bring about stabilisation in the country and then as was said in the Letter-of-Intent to restore conditions of growth in this country. That is what is happening. When I say that the economy is behaving as it should be, that is precisely what I am referring to, Sir. Our projections call for a growth rate down to 1996-97 of about 3%. That was the projection that we were working on. That is what is happening. So, Sir, the question is how do we use that growth and how do we distribute it for the betterment of our people?

I make no apology for saying that the quality of life of our people should be improved when additional resources become available and that education should carry its fair share of that increase. I am talking about education for all.

There is a very real sense in which we are not quite doing that because in the private schools of Barbados we still have students who are being treated unequally to students who are in the public system. I think it is time that we bring that to an end by giving greater resources to the private schools. They are educating Barbadians.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: ... By hiring you as a professor.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is reflecting on the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chair needs a lot of help you know.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am making the point that they are the children of Barbadians and if they were not in those schools they would have had to be in the public schools. But we believe in a mixed system just as we have a mixed economy we should have a mixed educational system but they are still Barbadian children between whatever ages they are and we believe in education and continuing education and that is good. That is what I would hope for. I wish to make that particular plea and we should build upon the programme of assistance to private schools and find a mechanism for improving our provision to those schools. You can only do it according to how our economy grows and we have to take it step by step.

Secondly, I wish to support the points made by my colleagues on this side in respect of the care for the elderly. I have not said very much on this particular subject but I worked very closely not only as a former Minister of Health but also with the Honourable Member for St Michael West when he was Minister of Health in the development and financing of programmes for the upgrading of the Geriatric Hospital.

In this very development plan and I would commend it - not commend it... It is the duty of each of the Members over there to read this document. This is required reading not only for background information but also in terms of projections and the way forward for the development of the various sectors in our economy and for the economy as a whole. I suggest that it be required reading and you would be surprised to see what are the programmes and projects set out in this document, because if this were read some of the things that we hear about in public discourse coming from those who should know better we would not hear. Let me make the point because I do not think that young minds and minds that are not so young should be misled into believing that ideas are not important. I heard some foolishness about a plane cannot land on ideas. 3.35 pm.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Life is run on ideas. You ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Literature is ideas and so he was reading the "Kamasutra" recently. There are many ideas. At least the Attorney General reads. He is prepared to use ideas in order to try to deal with problems. He gets a lot of frustration, Sir, and out of my experience I would know. I would know what my Ministers go through and what Ministers go through. I know what you are going through.

I believe we have to pay attention to ideas. I recall, Sir, when we were trying to position tourism as the leading engine of growth in Barbados there was a bright young tourism executive who was acting as the head of the Board of Tourism, the Tourism Authority. He was acting as head. I am not afraid to say he was a black Barbadian who had been trained and the entire Opposition, the entire Opposition fought because I stood up for that young man.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, the Right Honourable Member, you have two minutes to conclude but I would also like to remind you of the rules 28(4) and also 28(11). 28(4) if I may remind you, "it shall be out of order to reflect on any vote of the House or attempt to reconsider any specific matter upon which the House has come to a conclusion during the current session except upon

a substantive, motion of the Sitting", and 28(11)... so could you conclude, please?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I follow your directive, Sir, I have already said enough on this. In due course it will come out because nobody else in the history of this country has been dealt with in that way. Nobody else, Sir, and I will speak from time to time on this issue when I hear all of the comments that have been made because tourism is the leading sector. It plays an important role, Sir. We are told how well tourism is doing and I believe I am able, Sir, under your direction to make a few comments in these areas, Sir, bearing in mind what you have said, Sir, but we will find a more appropriate opportunity. I just wanted to make those few comments and I know that my five minutes have expired, Sir, and I will pause.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this debate takes place against the background of a Government that came to office, promised change, promised a new direction, and certainly by the year 1998 as we reflect on the period 1998-1999, we would expect to be witnessing some definite change of direction from the course that had been set by the Democratic Labour Party. I think we are satisfied on both sides of the House that there is a point that we have reached where we accept on both sides that growth in this economy is necessary for us to progress as people. It is very unfortunate that Barbados is saddled with an elitist bourgeois elegant-type Government which clearly does not understand that they have a role with regard to the distribution of any growth that is effected in this society.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us hear the Member.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, they can talk until they are blue. I have to survive in this country and I do not steal. If I have to survive and if I have to find a job, I have to find a job. I do not see why anything I do privately has anything to do with my debate in here. I am debating on behalf of the people of St. Michael East. It has nothing to do with where I work or what I do.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we hear the Honourable Member, please?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is unfortunate that this country is saddled with an elitist bourgeois Government because when it comes to the distribution... When we are at the crossroads in our development in Barbados where the Estimates of 1998, based on the mouthings of the Barbados

Labour Party should be reflecting a change in direction, we can clearly see that the *status quo* remains except in a few areas where the social services of this country are to be effected. Clearly in health we should be seeing that there should be a new direction to help, particularly in light of the fact that there are so many problems in the specific Head, but we have seen a deliberate cut in the budget for health which sends to me a signal that the Government misunderstands its role as to where its priorities should be placed on behalf of the people of this country. 3.45 p.m.

I have to set this against the background that the Prime Minister also in his administration indicated that he would be a Prime Minister who would budget and forecast to the point, and that there would be no need for any supplementaries that he knew precisely what his plan was for the development of Barbados and he would do precise budgeting.

Simply, Sir, I do not trust these Estimates. These Estimates mean absolutely nothing to the Ministers because if we have to take the Auditor General's Report and other reports about the spending of money by Ministers and certainly by the Prime Minister who has been the chief offender, he cannot say one word to any of his Ministers because he has broken the rules that he set more so than any of his own Ministers.

He has spent significant amounts of money without achieving the appropriate warrant from himself, without coming to Parliament and accounting, and that was a major bone of contention by the Public Accounts Committee that was chaired by the Barbados Labour Party during the period of 1991-1994. It was a major bone of contention, accountability. The Prime Minister with his own mouthings set the agenda and said that he would dismiss any Minister who broke the laws. He said he would take no prisoners. He would shoot a general from time to time. That is a fact, and he has refused to shoot himself. He has refused, Mr. Speaker, to put the gun to his own head. Maybe he fired it but it did not have the right height. It went straight over his head.

We have a scenario where a Prime Minister is going to come into this House of Assembly and set standards only in talk, but not in deed, and it makes no sense mouthing, I am going to do this, I am going to do that, promise everybody everything and then you do not deliver or you do not keep the promises you said you were going to keep. That is one of the problems we have with the society today. That is why the people out there are angry because this Government will get in here and say, we are giving people an increase in salaries. We are going to give them back an increase in pensions but they have said nothing about the \$300 million they took out of them in VAT. You have taken significant amounts of money

from people and you are going to get in here and say you are going to give them back something. They should give you one slap. You gave them something? You have taken away from the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please! Just one minute, please. Just try to restrain yourself. The language you are using, it would be better if you refrain from such terms. You are talking about shooting, putting the gun to one's head. You are talking about slapping and so on. I am not saying anything is wrong with your language. I am simply saying it would be better if you could express your point without referring to such kind of violent language, please. Proceed, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am seriously concerned when we come into this Parliament, and we take the office of Prime Minister, and we all accept his words that he would take out any of his Ministers who do not conform with the Financial Rules of this country. In all seriousness, he said so when he was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, of which I was a Member, and he said so again when he became Prime Minister of this country that he would take out any of his Ministers who refused to conform yet we can see reports that suggest that there has been blatant overspending by almost every Ministry and certainly the Prime Minister is guilty of his own standards by the breaking of them and spending money within his Ministry without having the appropriate warrant of Parliament. So we have to look and question how serious is the Government by its own mouthings.

Now, when we speak about development in this country, Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party when they were the Opposition, interrupted a serious session of Parliament to move a motion of public importance to discuss the critical situation of water in this country. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that four years later, in 1998, Barbados is confronted with a crisis that suggests that any further development that has to take place in Barbados has to be put on hold? It is not a joke. It is not going to be easy to carry out all of the capital works, all the developmental works as the Government has been articulating and have paid little or no attention to the crisis of water in this country.

I am not going to go into the specifics in this second reading address but I will be dealing with it systematically when we go into committee, if they have the courage to call the Head on Public Works because it makes no sense talking about development when the Honourable Member - but then I have to be careful because the Members on that Side, certainly the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, the Attorney General, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who is in the wrong seat right now, all of those Members said at the time that the water crisis in Barbados had nothing to do

with the drought. It is a matter of the Hansard record and if they want to take me on I will read the report to them but the Members, I identified all took that position.

Now, you are talking about a Government who has a macro plan of development for growth, *et cetera*. The growth they are witnessing is growth that has been propelled by policies left in place by the Democratic Labour Party. I am saying that once you effect that growth, it was always a difficult scenario once we had to open the door for new investment, the new investment would be tied to the rich class as we can see in Barbados that the land that is being bought up and used in the productive sectors is being used by a particular class. That is why I am saying that it is unfortunate that any elite bourgeois class is in charge to make sure that we control the whole distribution of the pie in this country. That is where I have a problem.

The perception out there is that even though there are arguments on that Side that there are Barbadians who have become middle-class and bourgeois and able to purchase houses and so forth, Barbadians are basically buying land to build homes. Barbadians are not spending money to purchase land in the productive areas of Barbados like in the Hometown area and where all these special development areas are. Barbadians are not investing in those areas. Bay Street is only a pappy show. That is just an excuse. 3.55 p.m.

Barbadians, Mr. Speaker, are not investing in the land that can be used in the productive sector. They are not buying agricultural land, they are not buying land to put down hotel plants or anything of the sort. And in any event, any further development taking place, will take place at the expense of the social development of the Barbadian people. Because when we allow our beautiful Barbados land to be used for people to profiteer...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You would be amazed at the level of return that some of the investors are getting on their tourism related properties that are very up market and very beautiful and they get beautiful returns but it bears no relationship to the Barbadian pocket. Because all the profits that are being derived are spent on people who are not Barbadian oriented. Even though you can say, yes, the economy is booming, the economy is doing well, it is not trickling down to the man in the street.

When you look at these Estimates and papers and documents and say, okay Barbados is doing well and on that score I do not know if you can even say that because the Minister got in here today and tried to suggest that the Ministry of Tourism had achieved something spectacular. Just let me take a few minutes to correct those facts.

In 1997, page 81 of the Central Bank Report of January 1998. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that despite the Minister saying that 1997 was the best year ever, in fact from the USA, it was the worst year since 1982. The figures are in the Central Bank Report. In 1982 out of the USA there were 75 511 visitors. That was the lowest. For 1997 it is 108 095 which is the lowest and the worst performance since 1982 despite the 'Dream Team'¹ that broke up in three pieces. One went here, one went there and the other remained.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: In 1986, when the Democratic Labour Party took over the Government of this country, arrivals from the United Kingdom were 47 590. In 1986 the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, amidst tremendous resentment by technical people in the Board, I would not call their names, but many bourgeois elements within the Board of Tourism...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not a bourgeois. You all get in here and say that I am Joe Tudor's son. You all say that Joe Tudor was an idiot so I cannot be bourgeois.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: If it is in the records, it does not bother me. I am me and I speak on behalf of the people whoever I am. All of me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just continue to address the Chair.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I know that you are in a hurry to get rid of me. You do not want this speech to continue.

In 1986 when the Barbados Labour Party put the tourism industry through a couple of hurricanes, they left the UK market struggling to produce 47 590 visitors from a previous high of over 72 000 in 1981. There was a dramatic decline when they almost cut it in half by 1986 when we took over office. Within two years despite the resentment of the bourgeois people, the then Minister who was the Member for St. Michael West insisted that we should trigger the UK market by introducing an Airtours programme which targetted the smaller properties in Barbados and which saw a massive increase out of the UK market which had a domino effect because it then forced British Airways and some of the other carriers to become competitive and seek to earn some of the money that was made by Airtours in the Barbados market.

That growth has continued. British Airways made money out of the whole market since 1987, have continued

and we have seen a steady increase out of the UK market. It had absolutely nothing to do with the marketing people at the Board of Tourism who were put in place. They were not there long enough anyhow. One man was there for one or eleven months? Could he be responsible for any growth? This is totally ridiculous. And for the Minister to suggest...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You don't realise that they are very few Members of Parliament who can call a Press Conference and the Press come.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Anyone of you call a Press Conference now and see if the Press will turn up. But when I call a Press Conference, they will come.

All of you will want to trivialize this debate because you have consistently taken the people of Barbados for a ride. You all have no right being in no Government. You have not earned it. It is unfortunate that some Members on this Side misunderstood the process.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Some former Members misunderstood the process but they will tell you quietly now that they made a mistake when they see Barbados in the hand of whom it is in.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Water Authority. I will deal with that later.

The Minister today said that the administrative cost at the Tourism Authority had now been reduced to 25% of the total budget. I do not believe it. I am not in a position to prove her wrong but I would say that I find it impossible, despite all of the mouthings of the Minister, the former Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, he appointed 25 auxiliary staff all across the United States. Despite all of the increased salaries and the big salaries that they are not only paying to the three lotto people here, the Director in New York \$150 000 or up in there. These people are not working for small money. All the money jump up big but they have not yet come and told the public of Barbados that they are paying large tourism salaries to all of the overseas directors and managers. 4.05 p.m.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: They will come into this House of Assembly today to try to convince Barbadians that only 25% of the Budget of the Tourism Authority is being spent on...

It cannot be right. With all the higher salaries that are being paid overseas, with all the auxiliary people we have had the worst performance ever in 15 years out of the United States. This is not my report. This is the Central Bank's report. The trend that we witnessed in the U.K. market has nothing to do with the Minister of Tourism. It is a trend and what is strange enough about it is that during the reign of Tony Arthur there was an increase of 32 000 visitors out of the U.K. market within a short period of 2 years. But we sent a message to the whole Barbadian society that here is a black man who is the best trained and believe me, I worked with him and he is a complete professional. Tony Arthur is an outstanding tourism professional.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not agree with that. One of the difficulties that people may have with him is that he is a complete professional person, a detailed and a precise planner, one who was promoted 3 times by the Barbados Labour Party but you would prefer today to insult the Barbadian population by bringing a person... I cannot even call the name.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: If I gave you the name to call you cannot call it as good as me because you do not speak properly and nobody can understand you. If you want to talk about literacy, you need to go and be taught how to speak because you are the Prime Minister of this country and nobody can understand you.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I know that the Prime Minister feels badly that he cannot say to the Deputy Prime Minister, what are you doing? You cannot go down that road because she would tell him to shut up. That is the problem we have in Barbados because nobody puts down his foot to protect the sovereignty of this country. One person can jump up and behave like a bad woman and nobody can talk to her or put her down. This is foolishness. This is an insult to every single Barbadian. Why are you putting them in? To get what? To get these results? If I had to go to that extent, the turn around that I expect from them they would have to double their performance for there to be any justification. For there to be any justification at all the performance of these people has to outstrip those of

the average Barbadian by 10 to 1 for it to make any sense. But it is an insult believe me. Do not believe that a lot of what happens in the Tourist Board has anything to do with the real marketing efforts of the Tourist Board. Business people go after money. Both the cruise ship people and tour operators know they can make money out of the Barbadian product. So regardless of if the Board spends money or not, if the Board of Tourism did not spend one single cent tomorrow, if they shut down the Tourism Authority, if they shut down every office I believe that the tourism levels would remain the same.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: But it is necessary still to have some kind of a presence but the over emphasis that you are doing something that is spectacular really gives a lie to the whole situation.

Now, I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, that these Estimates really come against a very difficult background. The Government is continuing to, clearly by its shift in some of the numbers and so forth that it has cut back in health and so forth, seems to me to be trying to use the budget to be preparing itself for an election year where we can see them going out into the public repairing 3 or 4 houses here or there and creating the impression that they have done a massive job on behalf of the people. It is an impression because what should take place in reality is a genuine eradication of poverty and a genuine housing development that includes not a few people for political reasons or for show, but a genuine provision of housing and poverty alleviation for people. Not a token. Not a percentage of the society because if you did a survey in the households across Barbados you would see that almost every single household in Barbados is in debt and owing and has to take this bill on to the next month. It is a lot of pain out there. People are suffering. Barbados is not booming so I do not want you all to sit down in here and believe you can present estimates and a budget and just go back in your big houses and so forth or even relax with cellular phones etc. and believe that Barbados is fine because you can do that. Barbados is not fine and I want you to understand that the game must stop. The public relations games must stop.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas said, let us get down to reality. I accept the position.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, I will conclude. The Minister of Health said that...

How much more time do I have, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: You do not have any more time.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I will wind up. The Minister of Health indicated that she wanted to actually divert my attention from the debate that we are going to be discussing once they call the Head, but they probably would not call it, that is on the South Coast Sewerage Project, Greenland, the state of the QEH, the non-opening of the eye care clinic, the position with the Geriatric Hospital, the other institution at Black Rock, the polyclinics and the pharmacies.

There are a number of issues that we are going to have to discuss in detail. But the Minister...

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I would still like to make this point. The Minister in speaking last night indicated that, and it is a very serious point.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are going on to something new, Sir. Your time has expired. You have gone over your time.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, just briefly I want to make a brief intervention in this debate. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for fiscal year 1998-1999 are now a reality in Barbados and the Honourable Member for St. Peter has led Honourable Members on the Other Side of the House in this debate. The goals set to these estimates were clearly articulated by the Honourable Prime Minister and if I recall them correctly they are these, that the Estimates are intended to guarantee and promote growth in the economy, to protect the country's fiscal position and also to reposition Barbados for the new globalised world and I am hearing him add on one now, something to do with social justice. 4.15 p.m.

Now, if I may just look at those goals briefly, the issue of growth from all that has happened since this Government took office, is no longer an issue in Barbados because this Government inherited an economy that was already on a growth path, and what it has done and commendably done, is to preserve the growth which it inherited. And therefore, it is eminently fair and reasonable that any Estimates presented in this House should seek to protect that heritage which the Democratic Labour Party bequeathed to the Barbados Labour Party when it assumed Government in September, 1994.

But we start from a position, Mr. Speaker, that growth is only a quantitative concept. Growth is not an end in itself. Growth is only a means towards an end. A man who has put on weight between March last year and March this year may be able to claim that he has grown. But at

the end of the day, he may be a less healthy man in March 1998 than he was in 1997 March because that growth may be at a variance with other requirements of his personal health.

The issue in politics is not principally growth, although growth is needed to guarantee the achievement or the attainment of other political goals. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South, and I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas made the point in their speeches that at the end of the day the goal of all politics is the achievement of development which is the equitable spread of the fruits of growth. So the issue of growth as articulated by the Honourable Member for St. Peter is not central to this debate because the economy is on a growth path and as I said, the Government has maintained the growth which it has inherited.

The issue of the country's fiscal position now falls to be considered. The fiscal position of Barbados as I understand it is now stronger than perhaps at any other time in recent economic history. It has to do with the fact that the Government has introduced a Value Added Tax which has made for a more efficient method of collection of taxes in this country which has narrowed the rate or the basis on which taxes are imposed in Barbados. The Democratic Labour Party had contemplated the introduction of a VAT and on the same rationale that the base needed to be broadened, those persons who were escaping the tax net needed to be hauled in and we started from the position that the country was overtaxed and that a lower rate was needed.

This Government also promised the country that this tax would have been revenue neutral. As it has turned out, the tax has hauled in substantially more than the wildest expectations of the Government would have allowed it to contemplate. I say that timidly because perhaps that is not so. Perhaps the Government knew that the haul in would have been as large as it was, but it was politically convenient to make the point that the tax was going to be revenue neutral.

The Government therefore finds itself in a position where there is an abundance of revenue around and the issue that now falls to be determined is how that revenue is going to be distributed in Barbados, for growth in an economy, and an excess of revenue are only meaningful to the people in the society if the fruits touch and heal and transform their lives. I have a sneaky suspicion, Mr. Speaker, that all this growth of which the Government boasts and all this excess of revenue of which the Government boasts have not reached down to the people in this society who really matter. For at the end of the day the value of revenue is to solve problems after a careful diagnosis of those problems.

Between 1991 and 1994 the crime situation in this country was admittedly fairly acute. The Barbados Labour Party raised noises about that crime situation at that time. In fact so much of a front burner item was the issue of crime in Barbados at that time that the Barbados Labour Party in its Manifesto of 1994 already a document of this House, stated at page 34, under Law, Order and Public Safety that Barbados today is not a safe place to live in, "Violent crime threatens us in our homes, on the streets and on our beaches." That could easily, Mr. Speaker, had been written in 1998 and has the same resonance as it had in 1994 when it was written.

Mr. Speaker, if it is true and of course nobody has contested it, that Barbados, after three years of continuous growth, and after a change of Government, the question that one has to ask is why do we have the same crime situation in a period of growth and prosperity that we suffered during a period of recession? For the period between 1991 to 1994 was not a period during which the Government was boasting of any growth. It was a period of acute austerity and therefore the crime situation could be easily in that context. In 1998 the proud and glib boast of the Government is that all is well in the society. The figures are right. Whether you are talking about percentage growth, whether you are talking about foreign reserves or whether you are talking about jobs, the figures are right. If you are talking about tourist arrivals, the figures are right. In spite of the existence of this bright city on a hill called Barbados, Barbados is still not a safe place to live in.

What is it that is really wrong, Mr. Speaker? The Honourable Member for St. Michael East talked about a bourgeois government. I do not want to get into that kind of language, because I do not want to follow the horrible example set by the Barbados Labour Party in trying to politicise crime or to reduce crime to a partisan focus. The reality is, Sir, that there is a loss of faith in Barbados in all of the traditional institutions that this society has fashioned over the years to look after the people at the bottom. 4.25 p.m.

Violent crime, I have always contended, results from social anger. A man does not get angry after going home to get a good meal and watching a good film and listening to fine music. He is more likely to get angry if he goes home and there is no meal and if there is no television to watch and if there is no music to listen to.

So there is in the society at the moment a marginalised group of persons whom the growth is not touching. It is not healing. It is not transforming. The problem in the society, therefore, is to work out a method on the basis of which these marginalised and alienated persons can be reached by the fruits of the growth of which the Government so often boasts.

I am aware that the Office of the Attorney General and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas set up a task force on crime to enquire into the cause or the likely risk factors that attach to crime. I have not found any fault with that initiative. It is something that I advocate vigorously because I do not believe and have never believed that it is enough to describe criminals in terms of lawlessness in a society and just write them off as being rock-headed.

I start from a philosophical position that everything is caused and has a cause and that you can only deal with any phenomenon by reference to what has brought it into being. Therefore, I commend the Government on the setting up of this task force and I have heard harsh criticisms of the report by the purists who believe that the methodology did not satisfy perfect and puristic standards. The reality though is that we have more information today that we did not have before, and that is enough to commend the report to me.

I believe that armed with this information we are now in a position to tighten it up and strategise with a view to confronting a problem which at the present time may seem untargetted. The violence in this society may seem untargetted. That is to say, we might see poor youth killing poor youth or committing acts of violence against poor youth. That is how social violence always starts, because people will always act out violence against the persons closest to them; but over a period of time, violence becomes more and more targetted and the entire society can be put at risk if the issue of violence here is not urgently addressed.

I do not believe in any mystery to all of this. I have been practising law for the last 14 years. When I go up to Glendairy to visit clients I see a sea of young, black, healthy faces looking at me and shouting for me. That is not an accident.

When I talk to some of these black youths I discover that some of them are barely literate and they are angry for a whole host of other reasons. I had a very traumatic experience sometime recently where a young man said to me on the premises of Glendairy that he wanted to plead guilty to a charge which I had advised him he had a good chance of succeeding on in court. The explanation he gave me was this. He said, "Look, I did without bail for nearly a year while the preliminary enquiry was going on. When I came into prison I could not read or write and now my case is about to come off after spending a year in here I can now read and write. Prison has done for me what my school did not do and it serves my purpose to be here a little longer. When I go back into the society I will be able to handle things differently from before I came in."

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no mystery to all of this. That young man was not nearly as angry as he was at

the start of his term of imprisonment; but what his statement pointed to, was the failure at certain levels of the school system and I think the time has come for us to stop burying our heads in the sand and come face to face with the fact that schooling in Barbados is failing too large a number of our children.

I had recently the amusing experience. I say amusing only because of the way it was said, where a teacher suggested to me that the problems at her school might best be solved by introducing martial law there because of the extent of hostility and aggression and violence that characterises life at that school.

Children fight over things as basic as furniture. I laugh when I hear the Minister of Education talking about EduTech 2000 and spending all of this money on computers. That may be all right in other circumstances. It may be all right in itself, but there are schools in Barbados, secondary schools, and I want to make the point, because I can prove it, I know it to be true, there are secondary schools in Barbados to which children leave to go every day not certain where they are going to sit down. There are children in Barbados who sit on desks where the desks are available in secondary schools in Barbados. They sit on desks hunched over in obvious discomfort in order to receive an education and some go pleadingly to teachers in secondary schools asking why don't we have chairs and desks like the others.

There are teachers themselves who do not have proper teaching accommodation at the schools at which they work. So if the family is an institution of primary socialisation and we are admitting nowadays that all is not well with the family and a child leaves a hostile family environment to go to a hostile school environment it is only a question of time before when that child leaves school that he carries anger in his head which at the slightest provocation he is prepared to put to use and sometimes he does not need the provocation because the provocation has been a part of his experiential reality from the time of his nurturing and childhood.

So when we talk about growth, when we talk about a favourable revenue situation, let us remember that all of this is not reaching the people whom it should reach and the level of anger in this society amongst the lowest rung of it are unacceptably high.

Government by statistics achieves nothing. Statistics only have meaning within the context of the fruits of growth being used to touch and to transform the lives of those who are deprived and marginalised. The Government will say that I am not being fair in all that I am saying because a poverty alleviation programme has been put in place and that the Government is trying to deal with the problem to which I am addressing these remarks. In the

first place I am yet to tie down this poverty alleviation programme.
4.35 p.m.

When I began first to hear about it, I was given the understanding that the definition of the poor was all those persons in Barbados who had pit toilets and who lived in dilapidated chattel houses. So we started with a pit toilet concept of poverty and of course this phenomenon was discovered sometime in November 1996 during the by-election in St. Michael North West because that poverty was not a concern of the Government. The Inter-American Development Bank in the agreement of 1995 had condemned this Government to making poverty a back burner issue. The Executive Summary of the report of the project document between the Government of Barbados and the IADB condemned poverty to the back burner of Government policy. The Government discovered poverty in St. Michael North West in 1996 and it started with a pit toilet concept of poverty.

More recently, we hear another catch phrase because this is also a Government by slogan and catch phrases - "country team", "being on the cutting edge of technology", a whole set of slogans and so on, EduTech 2000, all of these things. Now the last thing we are hearing about is "empowerment through enterprise". I will hear the boast of how many institutions you can go to in Barbados if the poor wants to improve themselves.

Aside.

Mr. F. J. STUART: There is an institution called the Micro-Enterprise Lending Institution and emboldened from all that she heard from this Government about poverty alleviation and empowerment through enterprise, a constituent of St. Philip South approached the Micro-Enterprise Lending Institute. To be fair to the institution, she was handled quite courteously and there was hint of partisanship. There was no hint of meanness in the way she was handled but for the small sum, I think, of about \$5 000 she was asked to provide three guarantors. Since I have been in this House this Government has guaranteed loans for the Barbados Light and Power Company to the tune of about \$50 million.

It is all right to guarantee loans for corporate Barbados but the Government is prepared to take no risks at all when it comes to the poor and oppressed who just wants \$5 000. Why should anybody who wants \$5 000 be asked to go out there and ask friends to assume risks for them. Three guarantors - that is the most difficult part of the bargain, to find people who will assume that risk for you. If the Government does not want to assume the risk why should any individual want to assume it? All this talk about empowerment through enterprise, the Government has to have faith in the programme which it is promoting.

It is my view that crippling imposition should be removed so that people who want to access funding can do that without the hobbling effect of having to find a guarantor. It is very difficult to find in Barbados nowadays. Three guarantors to get \$5 000 is madness. It is supreme idiocy and it speaks of the insensitivity and formalistic ethos that characterises the Barbados Labour Party.

The Prime Minister has said that he does not want to treat poverty alleviation in any tokenistic way. I respect that but if you are asking poor people who want \$3 000 to find three guarantors you are treating the whole issue in a tokenistic way and we call on the Government to remove that imposition and to make it easier for the poor and the socially marginalised to access funds more easily. The Government must have faith in the poor. The test of the Government's commitment to the poor is the faith the Government has in the poor. You have faith in the BCA, you have faith in the Light and Power, have faith in the people who are responsible for the Barbados Labour Party being in power and who do not like debts, who pay their debts when they have to.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates sound very good, the statistics sounds very impressive but at the end of the day the people who really matter are not being touched by all of this progress and all of this growth and all of this excess of revenue that we are hearing about. They are just not being just and the intensity of social anger in the society is not being diminished by anything which is happening in the corridors of the Government.

The final issue to which I want to address a few remarks. In the two minutes remaining to me I want to say that the other issue that occasions enormous social anger in Barbados and that is critical to the Government's credibility in the area of poverty alleviation is a creative programme for low income housing and for access to house spots in Barbados. I know we have had many debates on this almost weekly when the Government had fed the House on a steady diet of compulsory acquisitions. We have had this debate over and over again, but we need to deal with this problem of low income housing urgently because no single issue outside of job creation so affects the poor in Barbados as this issue of low income housing and access to house spots. It is an unmitigated scandal that three years after being in power the Barbados Labour Party can only boast the building of twenty-four houses. That is an unpardonable scandal.

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

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I shall revert to this issue later on in this debate but I think that the fruits of the growth of which the Government boast must be more equitably spread.

Aside.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I have clarified this early today. I have made the point that we have completed twenty-four units in the last two years. So far we are building another fifty at Pondsides which are in progress.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us hear the Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Members should not mislead this House. We are building over a hundred this year. We have completed twenty-four.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. F. J. STUART. I would like to get back to this issue but I want to say that we are not dazzled by these statistics. At the end of the day the proof of the pudding is in the eating and we do not sense at the lowest rungs of this society that the Government has convinced the poor elements in Barbados that it is a Government of the poor altogether. I am obliged to you, Sir. 4.45 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, we have had almost two days of debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill which is currently before the House. It has been a long time now since we have not had a full debate on general economic issues and social issues at this stage. There has been a tendency in the recent past - indeed in the mid 70s when I first came to Parliament, Prime Minister Adams almost insisted that we have a full debate on the economy and the society. In that period 1976-1981, some Honourable Members would recall, we used to have a day and a half or two full days of debate on the Appropriation Bill. Since then there has been a departure from that to the extent that there was a tendency to rush into the Heads and I myself welcome a full-scale debate such as we have been having over the last days on issues of the economy and issues of the society.

I think that in fairness to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter it must be said that one of the factors that might have stimulated the debate was the fact that the Bill was introduced in a very relaxed and lucid and I thought, mature way focussing as he did in his speech and the essential issues confronted, in my view, the society and the economy at this stage. I have already complimented him in private on his presentation yesterday and I thought it was only fair that I should say that for the record because I think that was one of the factors that stimulated the debate that followed.

Now, the Government and the country are in a fortunate position where we are experiencing growth in the economy and at the same time we are having a buoyancy in the revenue position, the result of growth itself and also the result of the unexpectedly high yield from the introduction of the VAT. It is against that backdrop that I thought it was important that we should have a debate on how best to spend the surplus revenue which we are bringing in. Even though in my view the issues have been overstated in part, and that is to be expected, given the nature of our politics, I think that generally speaking we have been focussing on the right issues.

I think it is important to recognise that though considerable progress has been made in this country, and even though, generally speaking, our standard of living has been lifted up over the last 20 years and more, there are still sections of the society that are lagging behind and there are still groups in the society on which we have not been focussing and paying enough attention to. The Government has rightly identified those who are earning below the notional poverty line and great efforts are being made to address those problems. We have heard from the Prime Minister that we have not heard the last of those efforts.

It is also right at this stage that we should be concerned about the 11% of our population over 65, the elderly and the quality of care which we are offering them onto their death. I think in that respect in terms of identifying the groups that are in need of attention that not enough attention is being paid to the handicapped in our society. I have not been hearing enough in this debate and at this time when we have some surplus revenue, about those who are blind, those who are suffering mental deficiency of one sort or another, the autistic child. We have not been hearing enough about the dumb.

There are a lot of families I come across, a good dozen or more in St. Joseph, for example, where the children have no means of being transported to the Challenor School and other institutions so the mothers who should be out earning and helping to support them have to be at home to take care of them. All that is needed are three vans with a capacity of 12 or 14 children to service the entire country and bring the children who are without transportation to the schools and carry them back home. It seems to me that now we have the capacity to do it that it should be done as a matter of urgency.

I hope that would be borne in mind because up until the last few months, I have been getting complaints from mothers of some handicapped children that they are not able to get them to the Challenor School because there is no transportation available as used to be the position in the past.

It seems to me too, Sir, that we have to be concerned about the unevenness of the development in geographical terms. For many years I have made it a point of telling others and telling myself too about the two Barbadoses. And that we ought never to forget the unevenness in our development in geographical terms.

It is easy to understand why it is that the burst of development took place around the capital and in the so-called urban coastal areas but the time has come when we have to think more of the development of the country part of Barbados and in particular now I am thinking of the Bathsheba/Bath area. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that is an underutilised, underdeveloped resource we have which will strengthen our tourism product and make the country more appealing even to those of us who live here. Already it is in the special development zone but I think the Government could still take initial initiatives to ensure that the Bathsheba/Bath area is further developed both for the benefit of locals and foreigners.

I want to say something about the construction boom which we are experiencing and which has partly been fuelling the growth which we are at this time experiencing. There are still large numbers of persons out there who have not been able to get employment simply because they have no skills. We are still deficient in the supply of steel benders, joiners, carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers and so on and that deficiency dictates the pace to a large extent at which we can build. 4.55 p.m.

What is striking me and has struck me for a long time is that our skills training programme is not well known in the country. I see a large number of youth on a weekly basis and when I suggest to them that they ought to go and invest in some training to try and get a skill, they say, "Skipper, tell me more, something more about it, where can I get this skill" and so on. They seem to know very little about the skills training programme.

I have suggested to the Minister that the GIS and also the other media of public information need to be put to work in educating the public of Barbados more about what is available in terms of skills. You can get \$75 a week which is both lunch money and bus fare and other necessities.

I think that many people who are liming on the block, will for \$75 and the prospect over a year of acquiring a skill catch at that opportunity rather than remain liming on the block. But many of them do not know about the programme and where there are available, where they can be accessed and the fact that the Government is giving them \$75 dollars a week and that where they are working the employer will make a contribution.

The point that I am making is that the programme is not well known. It seems to me too that it was a major error on the part of the Government and those who managed the programme to have allowed the programme to degenerate it to the point - I thought it was nothing short of degeneration - where it was only three months. In three months, you can only introduce a man to a subject. When it started it was conceived on a different basis and all of a sudden we are told that the programme had a three-months course. You cannot teach a man anything serious in three months. A lot of them who went into the three-months programme found that they did not have sufficient skills to be attractive to employers.

I am happy that we have gone back to a nine-months programme for the most part but the whole scheme is not well known to Barbadians. I want to say a word about tourism particularly about the United States of America market

Generally speaking, I think we can be happy with the growth in numbers over the last few years and the yield that we are getting from our tourism. But it must be a matter of deep concern to the Government as indeed it was to me as Minister of Tourism that the United States market, four hours away from us, has been declining. Our numbers from the United States has been declining on a steady basis to a halt.

I think that the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that we have been prescribing for that problem without diagnosing it. I recognise that when I came to the House a few years ago as Minister and invited the House to support a supplementary of \$0.25 million so that we could put more people on the ground by way of promotion, I indicated then that in my judgement it was only a 'stop gap'¹ measure because in truth and in fact no diagnostic study had been done. They had been several schools of thoughts as to what is the problem and what is the cure but no work had been done in going to the market and hearing from people pursuant to a survey and asking, why are you not coming to Barbados? Why is it that if you went ten years ago, you are no longer going back?

I know that the Prime Minister has given more money to the Ministry of Tourism but I hope that you will insist that however that money is spent, the diagnostic study be included as part of the expenditure. We have been hearing all sorts of people speculating as to the nature of the problem and what we should do to lick it but in truth and in fact we have not been able to do any serious empirical diagnosis.

I believe that the fact that we only have two gateways out of the United States will in any study prove to be one of the critical factors. You can only come to Barbados from the United States out of New York or out of Miami.

Important gateways though they are, there are large numbers of people, millions of people in the United States who are many thousands of miles out from those two gateways and many other destinations they can access within a hundred miles or 200 miles of where they live.

That is why, when I had responsibility for that area, I tried every quarter to knock on the doors of the airlines, giving them a presentation of Barbados and to persuade them to come to Barbados so as to create additional gateways out of the United States of America. I would like to hear from the Minister of International Transport that that effort is continuing. Barbados is an expensive destination to come to even for airlines and we have to make sure that we can offer them a package of incentives so as to make Barbados an attractive place for them to come. Whatever we do, it seems to me that we need to have additional gateways out of the United States of America.

There has also been a perception that Barbados is an elitist destination and that for the man with a middle income pocket, or low income pocket it is not quite the place. Our promotion must not only be improved, increased and enlarged but I think we have got to work hard to correct that mis-impression. As I understand the Barbadian tourism plant, all sizes of pockets can come here and be at home. I think that that point has not been sufficiently emphasize in relation to the United States of America's market.

Whatever we do, we have to make sure that within the tourism sector we do not have this excessive reliance on the UK market because our experience is, that nothing last forever and there will come a time when the strong performance of the UK market will for one reason or another decline. We have to make sure that we continue to be attractive in continental Europe particularly out of Austria, Switzerland and out of Russia and also that we tap on an increasing scale the Latin American market. Recent efforts into that market have ended in failure but there is no reason why on a more carefully planned basis we ought not to go back into the Latin American market with a view to getting 10 000 or more from that area. It boils down to the whole question though of air transportation.

I am happy to see that the carriers are sitting down to talk about rationalisation of routes. We are doing it at least two years too late but the representation of LIAT were determined that Carib Express had to hemorrhage to death before they would sit down and talk. So, Mr. Speaker, much as our tourism is growing I find it is a cause for concern particularly the mediocre performance out of continental Europe, particularly the continuing decline from the US market and our failure thus far to penetrate the Latin American markets. 5.05 p.m.

There has been much debate in the country recently, much noise, because I am not sure we have been having a constructive debate, about the role of foreign capital and whether there should be limitation on foreign capital coming into our country, whether in particular foreigners should be allowed to have a freehold on land in Barbados or whether they should only be able to purchase on leasehold.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that the correct signal go from this Parliament. In our recent economic history whenever we have had periods of prosperity they have coincided with periods of strong private capital inflows. Our periods of austerity and depression have coincided with negative capital inflows and there can be no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that private external capital, internationally mobile capital, has an important part to play as it has done in our recent past in the development and the capital formation of this country. All that I say, I do not think that the problem of foreign ownership of land in Barbados has reached the point where there ought to be any alarm or excessive concern. I really do not think so. And that foreign capital could start to dry up, certainly slow down, if people get the feeling that all of a sudden the policy of successive Governments is likely to be reversed and all of a sudden Barbados will have a policy discouraging private capital inflows.

I think what we need to insist upon is that those who come here behave as good citizens, whether as individuals or as corporations. That is the area in which I think that we might be a little lacking in our insistence. If you are a corporate citizen you have to be a good corporate citizen. You have to respect the laws, respect the Constitution in the same way as we expect private citizens, corporate or individual to do. In the same way that we do not expect any individual landlords in Barbados to obstruct any access to the beach similarly we insist that no foreigner will be able to do so.

I think the emphasis should be on the insistence of good citizenship once you come here either as an individual or a corporation rather than at this point putting any barriers in the way of the continuing flow of private capital from abroad. Being a good citizen means that you have got to pay your national insurance for your employees, that you have to pay your property transfer tax, you have to pay income tax in so far as it affects you and so on.

So that Mr. Speaker, I am of the view and I wish to join with those who have congratulated the Government, that the management of the economy in the last 3 years under the Barbados Labour Party has been skillful. I do not think that in that respect we have applauded ourselves enough, we have sought to take enough credit for what has

happened. The reality is that we had a log jam in our relationship with the international lending agencies. The unemployment situation has reached record levels and there had been a loss of confidence in the country. We have restored good relationship with the international lending agencies. We were able to bring the economy out of balance back into balance. We were able to maintain the growth and add to it. We were able to bring the unemployment levels down and Barbadians at home and abroad feel a new confidence and a new sense of pride in their country. All of that speaks of good management on the part of this administration.

It seems to me however, Mr. Speaker, that there continue to be areas in which there is obvious deficiency and need for more initiative, more energy and more attention and one is the question of housing, public sponsored and public supported housing. In that respect I do not think we have anything to be proud of and if we are to sustain the boom, particularly that part of it that has been energised by construction, we have to make sure that we have a housing programme such as will absorb the energies of our labouring and artisan class so that when the Sandy Lane is finished and the Westmoreland comes to a halt that we have major projects, particularly housing project, aimed at realising 2000 a year between the public and private sector such as will continue to sustain the boom, at least the construction dimension of it and will continue to put to work our artisan and labouring class.

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

Dr. the Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I think that continues to be an obvious area of deficiency and I would like to see renewed efforts on the part of this administration to ensure that that weakness is corrected. The big problem is that all of these acquisitions that we deal with in here from week to week are mini acquisitions and that has got to be recognised. We are acquiring a house spot here and a few thousand square feet of land there. We need to see the thing in macro terms, coming for 100 acres. We consume our energies in here week after week dealing with 3 and 4 house spots. That is to see the issue in mini terms. We have to bring broad perspectives. We have to do a West Terrace development. We spend hours in here every Tuesday doing 4 and 6 acquisitions and when you ask what is the total square footage you hear that the 6 of them add up to 32 000 square feet of land.

I attract considerable censure on my own side when I say these things but they have got to be said. We have to see the housing situation as a kind of crusade. We have to pursue it with crusading zeal. The Barbados Labour Party administration 1976 to 1986 did that and there is no reason why this administration ought not to bring that same crusading zeal to the issue of housing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could the Honourable Member conclude please?

Dr. the Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I am satisfied that we are on the right path if only we would correct some of those deficiencies of which I have spoken.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: On a point of elucidation. The Government has already acquired for housing 381.92 acres, 49.5 acres in St. Michael, 63.9 acres in St. George, 36.21 in St. Peter, 5.25 in St. John, 188.64 in St. James, 15.34 in St. Thomas and 23 acres in St. Joseph. I thought I would let the Member know that we have come in a big way in this House, Sir and have done it. 5.15 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

Dr. the Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I will conclude in a minute, Mr. Speaker and I am indebted to my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for reminding me of those statistics. The trouble is that they do not constitute any large tracks of land so as would allow us to have a large scheme.

I am glad that at long last we are doing something in St. Joseph and I look forward to the complex there in Horse Hill, but we need large tracks of land, 50 acres and more where we can have large projects. A two and two acres can do very little.

I am much indebted to you, Mr. Speaker, and I offer the Government my congratulations on their efforts in the management of the economy.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to wind up the debate and to say that we have had a full and comprehensive set of speeches. As I begin my winding up, I want to thank all Members who have spoken in this debate. I particularly want to thank the Members on the Government side who have been at pains to try to focus the policy issues that lie behind the numbers that the Estimates incorporate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I relish throughout my entire parliamentary career the Estimates debate as that opportunity to deal at great length with the intricacies and the substance of Government policy. I have been partied to what I regard in the past to some classic debates in here, Sir. I will make bold to say that the 1987 Estimates debate was by far the finest Estimates debate that I have participated in, in terms of the quality of the contributions. I want to make the point, Sir, that I value the contributions

that come from the Floor, even when I am not on the Floor. I listen to them very carefully, because there is no Government that is all knowing or should never seem as all powerful and the critical comment intended, sometimes to be gimmickry, but critical comments, the constructive criticism, the helpful criticism, all go toward helping to define policy and I feel make for better Government.

I must say, Sir, that I sense that as regards this particular debate, I very often try to deal with the Estimates from the eyes of the Opposition politician because I would conceive that I learnt more about politics and policy in Opposition than in Government.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I sense, Sir, that not all Members of the House are reading the Estimates and giving the Estimates the courtesy of the weight they should assume as a document that is fundamental to our determination as to how we govern this society. I say that, Sir, to say that I like spirited debates, and I would like to see that the spirit of the Estimates debate is informed by analysis of what is provided in the Estimates rather than what is provided in the reports. I sense, and I am not being critical, Sir, it is not my responsibility to be gratuitously critical, but viewing it from an Opposition eye and viewing it from how I would have dealt with it in Opposition, I am not sure that all Members are reading the Estimates with a view to understanding Government in the way in which the Government, and I am talking about Government, not the Barbados Labour Party administration, but Government in the best sense of the word. And the House will be the poorer if we allow the standard of Estimates debates to fall.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make that point, because I feel that the Estimates debate is one of the most important debates on the calendar. This really is the Budget and what we see as the Budget Presentation and Financial Statement and the Budgetary Presentations might have become adorned by the mystification of the "Black Box". But this is the country's Budget and we must treat it, Sir, with great seriousness.

So that I thank those who have contributed to this debate, because it intends to administer the affairs of the Government from my vantage point of Chairman of Cabinet, Sir. I do relish these opportunities to hear a perspective of what the Government is doing and a perspective as to if we are achieving our ends or not. But I thank Honourable Members on the Government side, Sir, for their strong contribution. I thank the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, Sir, for his strong contributions. I thank the Honourable Member for St. Joseph because I believe that if there is an area of Government activity that needs to be remedied by a stronger programme and policy that it is to the advantage of the Government if

Honourable Members on the Government side can also speak to that issue. I certainly will not subscribe, Sir, to shielding the Government from any constructive criticism.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in relation to the speeches from that Side the Honourable Member for St. John gave a clever classic Opposition speech. I want to say that he reverted to type, Sir, when he came to Parliament first, he issued the notion that the Budget should be dealt with, in terms of deficits and financial programming criteria and so on. He said he was a social engineer and he was not going to get himself tangled up in the technicalities of the details, he was going to judge the Budget only by the parameters pertaining to social engineering.

When he became the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, Sir, he was deep into the Estimates, the efficiencies of how those Estimates should be financed and so on and the concept of revenue neutrality and so on became part of his vernacular. He understood the trade off necessary to bring social engineering and economic efficiency but now he has reverted back to type. It was classic in the sense, Sir, that he had no fault to find with the Government's macro economic policy. He was determined not to go on record as saying that he does not agree with policy that he agrees with, so what he did was to find a list of things outside the context of the Estimates to quarrel with the Government about.

The Estimates should show about family values and so on which is good opposition tactics and we expect these things of the Opposition and we should not be annoyed that the Opposition behaves in a manner in which we expect the Opposition to behave. He offered comments about the state of the economy, one of which was that he thought that some sectors were under performing and I take careful note of it, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

I am not at all proposing that the Barbados economy is in a state of perfection. I say only that it is in my judgment on a path to sustained and sustainable growth and development. I understand what that means, Sir, that we are getting there. We are getting there by doing things that will not allow us easily to relax and that is all I am saying, but I do not want the message to go out from these Chambers, Sir, that I am saying that there is perfect peace and rest in paradise, Sir, but that we are making the effort to create a sustainable path to making Barbados a developed society.

The Honourable Member for St. John, Sir, spoke in more measured areas than one, and I will come to the one area of controversy that he exempted.

The Leader of the National Democratic Party was as usual, Sir, incisive and he brought to bear long experience in dealing with Estimates, both from the point of view of

presenting them himself, and as well in his longer experience as an Opposition spokesman on the matter. I have listened very carefully again to some of the arguments that he has advanced in relation to how we can strengthen the economy and I want to thank him for the very subtle endorsement that he gave when he said that he had established certain criteria by which he was going to judge whether the Estimates were statesmanlike or not. He did not come out to say that they were statesmanlike but he refrained from saying that these Estimates stand to be condemned. That coming from him is very high praise.
5.25 p.m.

Other members of the Opposition spoke and obviously the Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke to secure his place in history. It is secure with me. I know he is wise in believing that nobody else would secure it for himself.

There are two issues dealt with by the Opposition which I think I must respond to constructively and then deal with the major issues that I want to respond to.

The first issue is an issue that we have deliberately understated revenues and that the understatement of the VAT is part of a political ploy. Now, Sir, the reality is that under the Democratic Labour Party as well as under the Barbados Labour Party studies were done using available information on the structure and the performance of the economy, the structure and performance of trade, particularly the composition of domestic production with a view to estimating the likely impact of a Value Added Tax at different rates and the different exemptions and zero rating.

These simulations were done both under the DLP and under the Barbados Labour Party and in both sets of instances the conclusion that these technical studies led to - and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was party to one of those studies - was that a value added tax of about 15% would barely give rise to the same amount of revenue as the taxes given up.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party's technicians including the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West did those analyses and it is as ridiculous to suggest that we are deliberately seeking to underestimate the revenue as it would be to suggest that Members under the Democratic Labour Party functioning as technicians underestimated the VAT for some political reason.

All that the Value Added Tax yield is establishing is that, as I said, the economy is far more buoyant now than when the calculations were done but also that that part of the economy, particularly the service economy that has been brought into the tax net is far larger than

our estimates of GDP have historically caused us to estimate and that what we must now do is to do a replacing of the GDP of Barbados to devolve a new set of numbers to reflect better the true value of what Barbados is producing.

The second Opposition issue raised consistently in this debate was the issue of Government overtaxing. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you overtax if you try to raise more revenue consistently by increasing the tax rate and that can be said to have been the situation in this country between 1980 and 1996 when virtually every year the consumption tax that started at 2% was raised in sequence in order to raise more revenue to a point where over a 10-year period a consumption tax that began at 2% reached 21% at the lowest and 89% at the highest. That was a clear case where a Government was using the tax rate and increasing the tax rate to extract an increasingly higher proportion of the national product of the country.

Now that situation is to be compared and contrasted with a situation where there is an increase in the tax yield because of the buoyancy of the economy as it is in this case. And I want to say that since 1994 the record of this administration has been the institution of a consistent series of reductions in the rate of taxes.

My first action as Minister of Finance was to remove the taxes on inputs of agriculture and manufacturing. I have introduced a wide range of direct tax concessions to reduce the taxable income base as well as to reduce the proportion of each of the personal incomes that go to the tax man. The Value Added Tax at 15% compares in terms of its rate with the 21% - 89% consumption tax.

The notion of overtaxation as is ordinarily understood of a government using increasingly higher and higher rates of tax to exact more revenue from a country is a flawed argument. We have not been increasing tax rates. This Government has brought substantial relief in taxation on both the direct tax side as well as the indirect tax side.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the third major issue that has engaged Opposition members in this debate and which I want to speak pertains to what we read into the Auditor General's Report. Before I speak to that issue I wish to say that while I have commended Members in this House who have spoken, I really have to single out the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East for the offensiveness of his tone and for the shallowness and the wildness of his misrepresentations.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is using language that clearly is inappropriate and very insulting. He has to withdraw the remarks.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has said that in the end the speech may speak for itself and others may come to worst conclusions. There is a certain attitude exhibited by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. He meets you on the streets and he has the worst things to say about his parliamentary colleagues and his leader.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading the House. I have certainly never spoken to him about any Honourable Member on this Side and I certainly would not like to say what you say about your own colleagues because if you want to say what I say about the Members over here I am going to tell them what you say about them because what you say about them, I would not be on your side at all, if I was one of them. So let us fight. Let us talk for talk.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please!

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I heard about an elitist government from a man - and this is a matter of public record - whose father was taken to court because his son unleashed his dog on the poor black children in the Ivy. That is a matter of public record.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is again viciously and deliberately misleading the House: That has never occurred.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he has a matter - but outside of in here when he goes downstairs he will give you all kinds of blandishments, all kinds of talk. He likes to bad talk people. He says all kinds of things and then he comes in here and he wants to pretend that he is a hatchet man; he is going for the jugular.

Mr. Speaker I am not going to go into all the...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not understand how the Right Honourable Prime Minister can interpret my comments regarding a report about a hatchet or anything like that I am speaking about what the Honourable Member said. I spoke very clearly without any malice. I referred to comments that he made and said that the comments were inconsistent.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point of order.
5.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to start with the preface to my reaction to the Auditor General's Report and to say that in this debate calls were made for the Government to get involved in the

auditing process. The Constitution defines the role of the Auditor General in such a way that the Auditor General does not report to the Minister of Finance. The Auditor General reports to the House through the Speaker.

The first time most Members of this Side and I certainly saw what was the nature of the Auditor General's report is when we saw it on the front page of the newspapers. That is when we get audit reports, like anybody else, Sir. There is no mechanism by which any Minister, the Prime Minister or anybody else can exercise any authority of any kind, moral or otherwise on what the Auditor General does. Do you know why, Sir? It is because it is written in the Constitution. I would like to read the Constitution for you. It says "... in the exercise of his functions under the provisions of Subsections 2 and 3 the Auditor General shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority." It is a fact. So the notion of our getting involved when queries are being raised to respond to them...

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The issues raised have nothing to do with any Minister directing or seeking to direct the Auditor General. The issues related to the fact that the Auditor General had said in a previous report in 1996 and 19... or whenever, and the question was raised that Ministers had not directed their Permanent Secretaries to respond.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say that the Auditor General writes a lot of things in his report that, taken outside the context of what they mean literally, can be extremely misleading. For example, the Auditor General has consistently started to make points to breaches in the nature of not showing statutory expenses separately. The reason is that there was a time in the past when the Estimates used to be prepared with a vertical column for statutory expenses. Now, statutory expenses are shown in a horizontal basis.

Beginning in 1992 - 1993, Sir, there was a reformulation of the Estimates and the statutory expenditure is now shown on a horizontal basis by way of a note, for a statutory expenditure is an expenditure that arises by reason of an Act of Parliament explicitly stated and the note says this line item is expenditure under Chapter whatever else. That does not satisfy the Auditor General as being separately shown as required for the purposes of the Act and he uses it as a breach. There has been a fierce debate between himself and other officers as to whether it is a breach or not, but the Constitution says that nobody can give him direction or have control over him. Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It started in 1993 when you all changed the Estimates and consolidated capital and current into one, and had a different format that excluded the vertical column. From the year it was done he started to question because he was accustomed to a vertical column for statutory, a vertical for other, and no other format in his view would suffice to satisfy him that the two things are being shown as separate expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Financial Rules and the Constitution, the Financial Administration Act, defines the notion of an accounting officer as a person who is personally responsible for the efficient and prudent conduct of the financial rules and the financial rules confer on accounting officers and accounting officers alone, the personal responsibility for the administration of the public accounts ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I am amazed that the Prime Minister can say that now. When sitting as a Member of a committee he specifically signed his name to a statement which contradicted completely that statement saying that the Minister was culpable. That is what the Honourable Member and the Attorney General and others savaged my reputation in this country on the basis of what he is now saying.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the charge against the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, if we must relate it to this debate, is that contrary to the St. Joseph Hospital Act which said that the resources of the hospital could only be used at the direction of the Board, that he took it upon himself as a Minister, and not as a Member of the Board to require that the financial resources of the hospital should be diverted...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. That is misleading the House. The point to which he referred was before the Board was established. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member has a report which Your Honour can look at and it is on the basis of it. The Attorney General should not sit there silent because they quoted Section 127 and it was before any Board was established. The Honourable Member savaged my reputation and is now coming here talking about he is not responsible.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us proceed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the expenditure that occurred before the Board was established was not the expenditure in relation to the finances of his travel. The expenditure that was the subject of the Public Accounts Committee enquiry, Sir, was the fact that over \$10 million of money had been...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The point that I raised on a point of order had to do with Section 127...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Can I have back my time, Sir?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: , No, Sir, I will not allow him to mislead the House. It was Section 127 on which the Honourable Member who was a member of the Public Accounts Committee signed his name to say that he did not agree that it applied to the Minister, and the Attorney General included in the conclusion...

He said, after quoting the section, "the Permanent Secretary, somebody else and the Minister". He had to know that when he was putting in "and the Minister" that he was doing it deliberately with malice.

Aside.

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

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Yes, I accuse you of that I understand the politics but you cannot get up in here now talking that. I will not have it.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member you will have to withdraw those last words done with malice.

Mr. B. M. TATTT. I am not saying that the Honourable Member has malice. I am saying as a lawyer that it was written with malice. That is what I am saying. It is a term of art, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have to withdraw the words, please.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for St. Michael West I am asking you to withdraw those words which made reference to malice, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw it only on your instructions, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Take your seat now, please.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I was a member of the Committee and I wrote...

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. Take your seat, please. 5.45 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The former Permanent Secretary said in evidence that he was present and authorised the award of the contracts. What were we to find then? That the Permanent Secretary lied? That was the evidence.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. Please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Attorney General must know that you cannot perform an illegal act if you did not have the capacity to perform it and therefore if God said that, he did not have any right writing it, and he knows that. Do not come in here to me with that. The Permanent Secretary told you that I killed somebody therefore it is your finding that I killed?

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you take your seat, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Financial Rules at sections 8 and 9 are very careful to outline the procedures that must be gone through where an accounting officer is required by his Minister to do something that he disagrees with and that falls outside the framework and the context of the Act. In the case of the St. Joseph Hospital, when the funds were being administered by the Ministry of Health, millions and millions of dollars were awarded without the tendering process being complied and the Permanent Secretary gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee that the Minister was involved in the meetings and that the award of contracts was at the Minister's determination. That is the evidence that was presented to the committee.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I would forgive the Prime Minister if he comes to that conclusion because he knows no better, but the Attorney General and the Chairman - the Chairman signed the report. The Attorney General knew...

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is misleading the House. They had not heard from me. They condemned me, put it in the record, sent it here and allowed the Press to write that I was guilty and they never heard from me. They never gave me an opportunity to come before them to hear, and the Honourable Member knows what I am saying. Do not come in here with that.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West wants to say that his Permanent Secretary was lying that is going to open up new and more interesting things.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please! Your reference to this particular issue was to substantiate a point you were making? Could you make the point and move on?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I have had about 14 years experience in the Barbados Estimates, Sir. I know how to speak to the Estimates.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the St. Joseph Hospital issue was a clear case in point where the Financial Rules were broken with abandon, and not only broken with abandon by public officers but...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. They have been broken by the Minister of Finance now. That is what we are saying.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order, please. Take your seat.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Now, what is being argued in this particular matter is that Ministers are breaking the rules. The Financial Rules are very clear. That is why I was referring to them, Sir. There is an accounting officer and it prescribes that the accounting officer must do a number of things, that they must maintain a proper system of accounts and a whole range of things.

All of the matters referred to in the Auditor General's Reports are matters that are prescribed as matters falling to the administration of accounting officers in their personal capacities, not stamping vouchers, not reconciling salary accounts. There is, however, no reference in the Auditor General's Report in regard to the kind of breaches that the Financial Rules recognise could occur and for which it provides protection for public officers from arbitrary discretions being exercised by Ministers because the Financial Rules state that there could be breaches where Ministers give directions for the funds voted in the House to be used in an unlawful way and it specifies what public officers should do to bring those breaches to the attention of Ministers.

There is no Auditor General's Report in 1997, 1996 or otherwise that speaks to any breach by any Minister including myself. I will speak precisely to what this Report pertains to. It speaks of excess expenditure of \$71 million. But how did it speak in terms of it, Sir? It says: "Total

amount spent in excess of the amount provided under the various object classifications was \$71 million." Now what does that mean, Sir? The object classification in the Estimates includes statutory expenditures that the House does not debate nor vote upon, and if there has to be a supplementary you do not have to bring back the statutory expenditures to the House for the House to vote upon them and other expenditures.

Of the \$71 million that was spent in excess of what was included in the Estimates, \$69 million were statutory expenditures. What happened is that the House in March saw Estimates with statutory expenditures of X. During the course of the year, statutory expenditures of an additional \$69 million were spent but you do not have to bring back the statutory expenditures to the House to get approval from the House for them to be spent because the Constitution of Barbados also provides for statutory expenditures to be met out of the Consolidated Fund without there being a vote or debate in this Parliament.

What the Press picks up is the excess expenditure without picking up that the Auditor General goes on to say that of that amount \$69 million represent statutory expenditure. So if in the course of last year you had a wage increase we bring part of the Other Personal Emoluments to the House and get a vote to approve that. The increase to the established staff was not brought to this House but will be in the realised expenditure for this financial year as an excess of what was in the original Estimates to begin with, and that is what the Auditor General was talking about. But the Press picks up that and sensationalises it in terms of excess expenditure above what was in the object classifications. There was no excess expenditure above what the House lawfully could spend because we can spend for statutory purposes above what is provided for in the Estimates and without having to come back to the House for supplementaries.

Now, Sir, as with the case of the Minister of Finance, no Minister of Finance, in my memory - I have never signed one - and there are four other Ministers here who have ever signed a warrant because after these Estimates are prepared, they merely prescribe the outer limits of Government expenditure and then after that the Ministry of Finance manages the allocation of the funds upon the basis of Government's cash flow. The issues of warrants are also treated as an administrative matter signed by the Director of Finance or the Permanent Secretary. I have never signed a warrant for expenditure. No other Minister of Finance in my memory or in my knowledge has ever signed a warrant. It is an administrative matter. 5.55 p.m.

In relation to debt, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with what was in the Auditor General's Report. At the end

of the financial year, this is what the Permanent Secretary has reported to me. They found that they had to bring to account payments for debt in excess of what warrants had been signed previously by the Director of Finance. They could have just signed any date and back dated it but he said that he would rather prefer to get a query from the Auditor General than to do that because he felt that it was better that the Government not appear to default on the payment of the debt because of the lack of a warrant and they paid the debt. He told the Auditor General that he did it consciously because the notice of it came in late.

Sir, it was a matter that was handled administratively as all warrants signing have been handled administratively by every Minister of Finance. It had nothing to do with me, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I am now being pilloried by people on the Other Side who do not want to understand what Government is about.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say that I cannot give directions to the Auditor General. I have no constitutional responsibility to do so, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I wanted to hear the Honourable Member full point before I intervened. I believe that he is proceeding on the wrong premise and is inadvertently misleading the House by suggesting that on this Side that Members were calling on him to intervene...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am assuming that you were referring to a presentation made but I was referring to performance of public officers, not the Auditor General. Nobody can give the Auditor General directions. But a Minister of Finance, as I said, can set standards where the work of the Auditor General is facilitated. A demand must be made by the Minister of Finance that Accounting Officers must respond to memorandum or they must be dealt with through the processes which are available under the Services Commission and so on.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the Auditor General has set out a large list of queries not responded to but on page 45 of the Auditor General's Report is a comprehensive account of the state of public finances in Barbados. Of 244 objects or heads 143 were unqualified. He could find no fault whatsoever. Another 93 were qualified and what does qualify mean? Qualify reports relate to account on which I made comments but despite these comments, the accounts can be regarded as properly representing the financial position in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

There are 143 plus 93. That is 236 of 244 that were fully complying with the Financial Administration and Audit Act. Only three of 244, I want to stress this point,

Sir, only three of 244 accounts of the Heads in the judgment of the Auditor General do not comply despite the massive list of queries to which reference is made.

We therefore have to put queries by the Auditor General in their precise context. The Auditor General is in a position to raise comments on something on which he may have a doubt. That is a query but it is not in and of itself a statement that there is an irregularity in die accounts.

I would want, Sir, since I cannot give directions to the Auditor General, to suggest that it would be a good thing for all of us if we could be told of the queries to which people have not responded. We are being told of the number of comments and if we could be told of the nature of the queries that are being raised for us to have a better appreciation of whether he has commented upon serious breaches or not.

I simply do not know, Mr. Speaker, and as Minister of Finance, I have no authority to intrude in the process of auditing.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is Because your Permanent Secretary has put you on the spot.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not let us get there again, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, in 1996 I am pretty sure that a similar pattern obtains. Three out of 244 objects or heads did not fully meet the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. You have, Sir, thousands of comments raised. Sometimes the Auditor General writes to ask, why a voucher was not stamped. That is a query that is often raised, Mr. Speaker. There are places in the Financial Rules where it says that the records must be written up in ink and if an officer writes in pencil, that is also a query.

Mr. Speaker, I can say categorically that as it affects all the other various Ministries of this administration, there is no reference in the Auditor General's Report of any breaches under Rule 8, 9, or 10 where are set out breaches that could occur if a Minister unlawfully got him or herself involved in the process and seeks to require public officers to use public funds in a manner not intended by Parliament. There is no report by the Auditor General to that reference of section 8 or 9 breach, that a Permanent Secretary has had to state that a Minister has required him to use funds in excess of his vote. Mr. Speaker, what is being referenced here is, people have not reconciled vote books, people have not issued local purchase orders and things of that character, Sir.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that last week a seminar was organised by the Training Division of the Ministry of Finance involving all Permanent Secretaries and those at that related grade and all Accounting Officers at which the Auditor General was the guest speaker and the Auditor General's Report was the subject of the discussion. Mr. Speaker, that seminar tried to rustle down the problem of Accounting Officers not following the accounting rules. A document which is to be used as a tool by Accounting Officers to assist in the monitoring operations was presented.

I also want to report, Mr. Speaker, that as part of the expenditure management project being carried by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, a new information technology is being introduced that will take a lot of the laborious labour-intensive aspects out of the management of public accounts. A large part of the reason why the public accounts sometimes can have these administrative flaws is because we are in a \$1.8 billion public sector still using ledgers and the handwritten technology that was operative in a 1910 public sector. 6.05 p.m.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, can I be protected?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: You still have a situation in Barbados that they are trying to change, where people had to write up things by hand, add up, and we are now installing a smart stream technology package that will allow the management of the public accounts of Barbados...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, nobody at all can justify the people not responding but, Sir, the Auditor General is telling us that only 3 accounts out of 244 are out of whack with the Financial Rules but we have issued queries or comments, Sir, on over something like 500. We need to be told what those queries are if we are to avoid jumping to judgement that merely because a query has been raised that there is some corruption by politicians.

I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Democratic Labour Party does not have any fundamental issues to raise about the running of the economy. In fact they are prepared to say that we are following the directions that they give but they would seek to fabricate issues that are extraneous to cause confusion or to reflect negatively on the Government. So that the Auditor General's Report is now to be transported outside of this Parliament...

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House when he says that this Democratic Labour Party has no basis for coming to the conclusions which he has said because, Sir, on the basis of a report which was filed by a committee of this House, those audit queries and other similar matters which the Honourable Member is now articulating were held to be sufficient. They were in fact the basis on which the Ministry of Health had been brought to account by the Public Accounts Committee and out of which came a report which dammed the failure to respond to audit queries among other things.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to have to say so, Sir, but the reason why the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is not now the leader of the Democratic Labour Party rather than the Honourable Member for St. John is because the members on his side also believe the Public Accounts Committee.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: They believe that the strictures raised by the Public Accounts Committee in relation to the St. Joseph Hospital were valid.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: On a point of order, Sir. They would have every reason to believe it because the strictures raised by the Auditor General on the St. Joseph Hospital were exactly the strictures raised on the Ministry of Finance now and the Ministry of Education. Let me read, Sir, from the report, page 6. They are exactly the same strictures so the members of the Democratic Labour Party on my Side could have had every reason to believe the strictures because the Ministry of Health did not respond to audit queries just like the Minister etc.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I rise on a point of order and I wish to make it abundantly clear that I have never passed any comment nor have I expressed to anyone on the issues raised by the Prime Minister. Unless he read tea leaves, or he deals with the cards, carrot cards or whatever it is, I do not know how he would know what is in my mind. Therefore he has accused me of taking a position in respect of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that I never took. Therefore I would ask that to be struck from the record. I have borne a lot in this country and there can be no further distortion in this Parliament of my stance in these matters. I would like nothing to get between the very long friendship that has existed between myself and my colleague the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

The final point I wish to make, Sir, is that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has said that as

Minister of Finance he does not either issue any warrant or see them or something like that. That part may be true but to be absolutely clear on this matter, as Minister of Finance at the start of each financial year I certainly, in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act, authorise a public officer to deal with those matters. That is what is required. I merely wish to make that point for clarity of the record.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading this Chamber particularly if he seeks in any way to implicate me in any attack on the integrity of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West because, Sir, it is well known that there was a no confidence motion brought by Members on that Side when they were over here against the Honourable Member, a no confidence motion which the Honourable Member for the City said that it was not a matter of whether they won it or lost it, its aim was to do damage, maximum damage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just get to your point of order.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was a no confidence motion, Sir, in which I voted "no" and I made my position abundantly clear in relation to the St. Joseph Hospital and the conduct of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West which was beyond question by Honourable Members on that Side or anybody else in Barbados. That was my firm belief then and I still hold that belief.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is so skilful that I always marvel at his parliamentary finesse. He was very careful to say, Sir, that he has never passed a comment but he was not man enough to say, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to say it for the record that I repose only the fullest confidence in my former Minister of Health, Sir, but he cannot say that Mr. Speaker. He stopped short of making that point, Sir. Skilful, he will not pass comment this evening either. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the process of the investigation of the Public Accounts Committee was fully participated in by the DLP members on the Committee. The existence of the letter written to the Hospital Board was first raised by a DLP member of the committee, not by us; that is a fact, and the Honourable Member from St. Michael East, Sir, was a most obliging, cooperative and loyal member of the Public Accounts Committee. 6.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading the House. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East filed a minority report in which he indicated, and it is in this report, that he did not subscribe to the view that section 127 could possibly apply to the Minister. And furthermore,

Sir, Mr. Bowen, who is not now a Member of Parliament, but Mr. Bowen indicated that he was in no way able to sign the report and therefore did not sign the report. I think it is incorrect for the Right Honourable Prime Minister to give the impression to the House that Members of the Democratic Labour Party were enthusiastically pursuing that dastardly act which resulted in the report, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, before you conclude, please? I have given a lot of extra time and would suggest to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that I am reminding you that we are winding up.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member clearly was misleading the House, when he sought to suggest that I did not subscribe how I actually felt on the Public Accounts Committee about a particular matter. The Honourable Member should be aware that I always took...

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: He is misleading the House about my role on the Public Accounts Committee. I always took my role on the Public Accounts Committee very seriously. The breaches that occurred over the last 20 or 30 years in respective ministries should not have occurred. The Public Accounts Committee should be the committee that should send the correct message to the public sector agencies at large, to make them aware of the difficulties and breaches.

I was not part of any witch hunt that was deliberately designed to score cheap political points and I objected to that.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, all I have said, Sir, and the records of that Committee will establish that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was a loyal, enthusiastic, cooperative member of the Committee and he asked pertinent questions, searching questions, he was as outstanding in his surveillance as any Honourable Member on the Government side. And as a result, Sir, it came as an extraordinary shock to all of us who were part of that process that an Honourable Member who was so loyal, cooperative and searching, could then, at the end of the process, he was like a prosecutor in the finest sense of the word, he was better than a film star and that such an officer of servants of the Public Accounts Committee, Sir, having contributed so fundamentally with the process, could then put in a minority report. Because, Sir, he was more striking than I was when all the facts had to be ferreted. Sir, I commend him for the spirit in which he facilitated the conduct of that Public Accounts Committee, Sir, without fear or favour.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. The Right Honourable Prime Minister

knows that when I sit on a committee it is part of my duty to search for the facts. What happened on the Public Accounts Committee was a significant amount of misinformation and propaganda which was being put on the table. It was my role to make sure that the proper facts were known. There were a lot of innuendoes about misspending and somebody being paid for trips abroad and being paid for hiring staff that was pure lies. And it was my responsibility to search and to dig and to ask questions to find out the truth and that is proper behaviour, because a lot of misinformation was being put out.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is enough, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to respond and put to rest, Sir, the issue of the role of the Minister of Finance and the role of the Minister in relation to audit matters that fall entirely within the province of Accounting Officers. All of the issues raised in the Auditor General's Report go to administrative breaches by Accounting Officers. They do not speak at all, Sir, to the misuse of power by any member of the political directorate. I say that categorically and without fear of contradiction. We are putting in place the systems to hopefully minimise them, because as I said, Sir, the existing system is one that has been in place from the time there was a Public Service of Barbados. You had to keep ledgers and write in ink. You had to use payable vouchers and stamp them and countersign them and all kinds of things. It is a very laborious exercise and in a \$1.8 billion Public Service, Mr. Speaker, those kinds of old-fashioned days of accounting for public expenditure will always give rise to the kinds of hitches that have been the case of late.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy referred in this debate again to a matter at Six Men's that I have to correct also. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is fond of coming to this House and quarrelling about how land owned by Barbadians is being utilised by foreigners for purposes that disadvantage the small black people of Barbados. Six Men's is a classic case of a village on which small black Barbadians have been living like their foreparents for over 200 years. He is setting an argument that we should move and dislocate 200 families from Six Men's to allow some foreign investors to come to Barbados to put in some facility at Six Men's. It is a comprehensive contradiction of everything that he is professing to be done in this country. That Six Men's people, some who are boat builders and fishermen and who live in Six Men's, to make a living must be carted somewhere in the centre of the country to give their land at Six Men's to some foreign investors.

I say, Sir, it is the hypocrisy of the Democratic Labour Party of this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister is

misleading this House, because he knows that the land at Six Men's does not belong to foreign investors, but it belongs to a man by the name of Mr. Broomes.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Six Men's is not a tenantry designated under the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act because that Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act does not allow land on the foreshore to be designated as a tenantry. But it is a tenantry and community in spirit in which people have been living for 200 years and they live and work at Six Men's. Mr. Broomes is not seeking to develop it, Sir. Foreign investors, and there is a contradiction here, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy could be telling us about how we have to protect the land of Barbados for Barbadians, but to be suggesting that Mr. Broomes, in collaboration with some foreign investors could come and take 200 people off land where their fore parents have lived... Where the Democratic Labour Party stands on Six Men's will be used as a test of their sincerity in relation to land ownership in Barbados in general, because they say one thing and do something else, Sir.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is an interesting case. He had some land that he was operating on the West Coast too...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.
6.25 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is within my certain knowledge that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy as a small black businessman in this country was operating a business at Holetown and also in The Garden close to the beaches in a well developed area and helping us to maintain the part of our patrimony of having black businesses on the beaches of Barbados and he, under no pressure from this Government, has sold that business to a man based in New York depriving us of the opportunity of saying we are maintaining a society.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, again Sir. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is again misleading the House and I cannot say that he is lying to the House because it would be unparliamentary. The business was not sold to any foreigner overseas. It was sold to a Barbadian living in Barbados.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would crave your indulgence but I must say that I for one am sadly disappointed at the turn of events in this debate. After his winding up speech, the Prime Minister referred to

the quality of the presentations on both sides of the House and now the debate has descended into personal attacks.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I was coming to a larger point and I will say on this larger point, Sir, that there is a kind of duplicity in the way in which some people speaking from political platforms treat this issue of the relationship of their parties to foreign ownership of land in Barbados and the Democratic Labour Party on a micro level from the amount of individual members but also from its collective statements are trying to make the question of things like the Sandy Lane expansion issues in this country. There is a kind of duplicity and the duplicity is borne out by the fact that in their manifesto and I want to repeat these are the projects that they cited as the projects that they would carry out:

"A multi-million dollar Westmoreland Golf Project" - Land bought by foreigners. Foreigners making profit from it.

"The major expansion to the Sandy Lane Golf Course" - week by week Barbadians are being made to feel that we have in some important respect sold out our patrimony by encouraging a major extension to the Sandy Lane Golf Course and we are being told about the alienation of land in Barbados but in their 1994 manifesto they committed themselves to the major extension of the Sandy Lane Golf Course.

The construction of "a major tourism facility and Golf Course at Bushy Park in St. Philip" - owned by a group from England.

The screw dock - owned by Barbados Shipping and Trading. No reference at all in this manifesto to any protection of the patrimony and I am saying, Sir, that it is reflected as well in the individual relationship of people because for every buyer in Barbados there is a seller and there are a lot of people in real estate who have made a lot of money from selling lands to foreigners and they come and also condemn that land that they sold to foreigners. Prominent real estate people making a killing and quarrelling. Sir, there are some people who want to get the acclaim for being high-minded and having this high level of consciousness but when you examine their personal behaviour there is a contrast between their high-minded statements and what they really can subscribe to.

I am saying, Sir, that CLICO bought land in Barbados and nobody quarrelled about it, Sir. We want to encourage people to bring investment in sugar cane and upgrade it. I salute it. I am not quarrelling about it, Sir. Westmoreland bought land in Barbados under the DLP, put in a fantastic investment and I am not quarrelling with it, Mr. Speaker, Sir. But what I would quarrel with are the same people

who supported those actions and saw them as being in the interest of Barbados and made them happen now tend to parade to the public that the same projects that they would have supported now suddenly become wrong because they are in Opposition.

I feel, Sir, that this duplicity has to be dealt with for what it is. I would not want to preside over a country in which Barbadians do not feel as though they belong in our country. Nobody on this Side wants to create that kind of society; but Barbados at the same time has depended upon foreign investment in its offshore business. We have created a climate to attract international business companies. We have attracted foreign investment in manufacturing. We have attracted foreign investment in tourism. Through CLICO we have attracted foreign investment in agriculture and this country has proceeded by giving people a clear set of parameters within which they can operate.

We will never for example allow any private beaches in this country. We will not do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. Up to last Saturday, Sir, the Minister of Housing had to go to stop one.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are some countries in the Caribbean like Jamaica where beaches are privately owned and there are people who will come from other cultures and try to impose their bad practices to us but once we become aware of them we will stop them. We cannot stop Sandy Lane from putting boulders to stop people from earning a living but once we hear about it they have to move and that is the point.

We cannot stop people from trying to exploit but once we become aware of the attempt it must be stopped. The attempt to villainise the Barbados Labour Party, because that is what it is really, a reaction to the fact that there is no major issue of substance on the management of the economy or on the ordering of our social affairs on which the Opposition can fairly fault the Government. The Opposition will tell you that the programmes we are putting in place to deal with poverty if they were doing it that they would be trumpeting these programmes. That is a fact. There are members of the Democratic Labour Party who tell me in private that they would be glad if they had done the same thing, if they had the chance to do it.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I am trying to capture what this debate has in large part been about, is that the Opposition is not in a position to fault the Government seriously on its development of the economy, on its management of the economy, on the initiatives that have been taken to create a more just society in

Barbados and therefore you have a large number of gimmicks being thrown into the pot of which is family values.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I ask Your Honour how much time is there for a wind-up speech. I submit that the Honourable Member has exceeded the time allocated as in the Standing Orders for response.

Mr. SPEAKER: You made your point. The problem is interruptions. 6.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The political divide in Barbados has never been about the virtues of building strong families and strong communities but the Opposition feels that in the absence of an issue this makes for good public relations. We have seen as recently as this week, Sir, the way in which...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. As a Member of the Opposition I do not so believe. I know so, Sir, and furthermore, what we accuse them of is creating the environment that encourage people from a foreign culture to feel that they can behave that way in Barbados. That is what we accuse you of. We do not accuse you of any of this razzmatazz. We are saying that whenever the Barbados Labour Party is in power foreigners coming to Barbados feel they can walk over Barbadians.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Westmoreland, Bushy Park... Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was coming to the point that there is a lot of public relations gimmickry about the way in which the images of the family are being exploited for political purposes by those members of the D.L.P. who have submerged to the top.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order. I take objection to these references to the family as political gimmickry. I would not like the House to be misled. The family is an important element or aspect in our country and its role is inscribed in the Constitution of Barbados and I would not like the initiative of the Leader of the Opposition to be put into a category of gimmickry or any frivolous category.

Mr. SPEAKER: No speech, you are on a point of order. You have made your point, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have not made my point yet. I take long to do that, Sir. I quote, Sir, the Attorney General should be familiar with this "...now therefore the people of Barbados

(a) proclaim that they are a sovereign nation founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity of the human person, their unshakable faith in fundamental human rights and freedom, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions."

If the Leader of the Opposition seeks to give some deeper meaning to this particular phrase then I believe that cannot be frivolous.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition does not intend it to be frivolous but I suggest to him that if he checks carefully, some of his public relations gurus are using the families as gimmicks. This week, Sir, one of the image makers who has submerged to the top was pictured on the front page with his newly born baby christened in the arms of a politician, the father, the baby and the godfather but where was the rest of the family - a gimmick, a pure gimmick and the baby was in the arms of the former to lend credence and credibility to the failing candidature of this public relations guru who has submerged to the top in the Democratic Labour Party. We can expect more and more of that, surrounding yourself with all the little artifacts of family but not answering fundamental questions about the debts in the casinos in Antigua and the attempt to shake down investors in Antigua and whether there are family values in that, Mr. Speaker. All these things are part of the gimmickry. Mr. Speaker in other jurisdictions people who have set themselves up to be judged on the high strict, moral virtues of their commitment to family values have found them to be political boomerangs of the worst possible order.

There was a man called Gary Hart who set a standard by which he was to be judged and sought to separate himself. He said that he was a man who did not have any relationship of an extra-curricular nature, and the Press followed him and when he was found doing precisely what he was not supposed to have stood for, it was the end of his career. Those who set themselves up...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I would like to close by addressing the last issue of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, Sir. He comes to this House and he uses every debate to try always to vindicate himself without giving appropriate context. He has never been good enough to tell us how it was that an economy that as he said again today was performing at a record level in 1989 was by 1990-1991 catastrophically deposed. History is a wonderful thing. In 1992 a member of the Central Bank Board, a Sir Douglas Lynch, resigned from the Central Bank Board and he wrote the then Minister, the Member for St. Michael South this letter that I read into the records because I feel it has to be kept for posterity. This was addressed to

the Honourable Erskine Sandiford. On page 1814 it says "I hereby resign as the Director of the Central Bank Board of Barbados. The perceptions of almost all of the public of Barbados are:-

- (a) the present crisis is entirely due to your mismanagement of the economy of the country, and that you had ample warnings from the World Bank Reports, from the Central Bank and from other sources all of which you ignored,
- (b) that as Minister of Finance you should have controlled Government expenditures more carefully,
- (c) that despite repeated advice to the country you procrastinated in approaching the IMF and other International sources until Barbados¹ foreign reserves were practically exhausted and that as a result the options open to Barbados are severely restricted,
- (d) that your management of the negotiations with the IMF and your communications to the rest of your Government and to the people of this country as to those negotiations was of a quality far below that which the people of Barbados have a right to expect,
- (e) that you have been evasive as to the details and the consequences of those negotiations generally, and particularly in dealing with the public service,
- (f) that you are unable of leading the country through what are certainly going to be hard times in the next three or four years.

I have reason to believe that those perceptions are true and that the participation of the public in a series of demonstrations..."

Aside.

6.45 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, we may end up writing history. Mr. Speaker, I remember from June 1989 myself and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central came to this Parliament meeting after meeting and started to chronicle the drastic deterioration in our foreign exchange reserve position arising from discretionary decisions taken by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South contrary to advice. I am saying that if he is to speak in terms of the rescue he helped to perform, I think he has also clearly for the record to chronicle his contribution to putting the country in crisis. He wants to claim credit for the recovery but he must also accept responsibility for his contribution to the crisis, and I am not hearing that balance from him.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, were you concluding your speech?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Yes. I am about to finish, Sir, if the House would give me the leave. I thank all Members for participating in this debate. There has been no contradiction of the economic policy goals set by the Government. There has been no challenge of the macro economic programme that is embodied in the Estimates. I therefore have the high honour to commend these Estimates and the policy to the House and beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to read a Message from His Excellency the Governor-General to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

"His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, under section 3(1) of the Ombudsman Act, Cap. 8A, he proposes to appoint Carl Leon Ince, Esquire, to the Office of the Ombudsman established by section 2 of the said Act.

His Excellency further has the honour to seek the approval of the Honourable the House of Assembly for the proposed appointment pursuant to section 3(2) of the said Act.

Signed: C. STRAUGHN HUSBANDS
Governor-General"

The letter is dated March 13, 1998.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. Wednesday, March 18, 1998 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 6.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: The sitting is resumed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT- \$216 524 839

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE - \$189 192 318

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - \$8 189 824

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 35 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT - \$128 508 848

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 35 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT - \$45 381 004

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL - \$54 222 809

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move Oat Head 30 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 41 - MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND BUSINESS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 41 stand part.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE - \$9 579 259

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all let me say that I am taking the opportunity for the first time in my Parliamentary experiences, to initiate a debate on the Post Office.

The Post Office Estimates are annexed to the main estimates and year after year we have never gotten to that Head by the time the guillotine goes off. I volunteered to the Opposition last week, Sir, when we were doing the Validation of Postal Rates Bill that I would welcome a debate on the Post Office because of its central importance to the economy and the communication systems of Barbados. I am therefore keeping my word in respect of that commitment, because the Post Office turns over approximately \$111 million a year. That is a significant financial turnover in the context of the public service.

But the Post Office in the Region is now caught up in all of the developments that will ensue as a result of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) coming into existence and the move toward globalisation and trade liberalisation.

I will indicate to Honourable Members that by the year 2003, under the WTO there would have to be deregulation of the postal services. So that it is as well that five years before that date we take a careful look at what is likely to happen in the effect of de-regularisation, trade liberalisation and globalisation with a view to ensuring that the postal services of Barbados are positioned to take their place in that very competitive environment.

Mr. Chairman, yesterday the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the former Prime Minister relayed this document, "the Development Plan 1993-2000", in support of aspects of his speech. I have combed this document this morning and in that seven-year period the previous government in developing this plan did not make any specific provision by way of capital expenditure for the development of the Post Office. Nothing is shown in this document. We have the Holetown Complex, the Mechanical Workshop, Police Headquarters, District D, Forensic Lab, Police Training Centre equipment, Prisons, Probation, GIS, Immigration, CERO, the Fire Service at page 262, and then the Courts on page 263. Not a word is said about the development of the postal services in this period 1993 to 2000.

However that may be, this Government is approaching the matter of postal reform in a serious systematic way, Sir. I indicated to the House that some weeks ago they took two documents to Cabinet, Sir, one to deal with the need to increase postal rates because the postal rates had not been increased since 1991 and there was a small increase that was sanctioned by Parliament. But more importantly we also dealt with a project to commercialise the Barbados Postal Services. This has to be done as a matter of urgency.

In introducing it let me just quote from the Postal Express which is a bulletin for the world's postal businesses. Listen to what the British post offices are doing and I read, Sir,

"Addressing the Commons and Trade Industry Select Committee, Sir Michael said there is wide acceptance of the case for the Post Office. We believe that if the Post Office is to stay in the public sector, it should be converted by legislation into an independent, publicly owned company regulated by Parliamentary Charter. It would be a limited company, with the Government as sole or principal shareholder.

What we need is a decision from Government. We were pleased the Government recognised our case soon after the General Election, when it announced a review of the Post Office. But the longer the Post Office waits, the more intense are the competitive pressures it faces. The sense of urgency is underlined

because decisions taken now will take some years to produce substantial returns for customers.

Post Office chief executive John Roberts said the Trade and Industry Committee had first endorsed the case for commercial freedom for the Post Office nearly four years ago."

That would have been 1993.

"Since then, he told the MPs, competition in the Post Office's markets has continued to intensify. Plans to liberalise the postal market in the European Community are well advanced, there is increasing use of e-mail and faxes, and many other post offices now regard the world as their marketplace.

Every day that passes gives our competitors a further advantage. Within a 20-mile radius of my office in London, the post offices of the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Belgium have set up sales offices and are hunting orders for UK mail, said Roberts.

The New Zealand Post Office has been transformed in recent years from a state-controlled department into a thrusting commercial enterprise, with sales teams travelling around the globe in search of business.

This sort of competition will only increase - and it will threaten the Post Office's ability to give UK customers one of the most reliable, value-for-money postal services in the world.

Looking at rivals abroad and at the changing market, the evidence showed that if it stayed in the public sector, the Post Office should be converted into an independent, publicly owned company (IPOC).

A charter setting long-term objectives..."

I would not go on anymore, Sir, but the point is that it has been recognised in the developing world that the structure and operation of the postal services must change. Britain is doing that and I urge Barbados not to delay too long in following that example.

St. Lucia, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago have already taken steps to refocus their postal services. 10.20 a.m.

Now we have not been oblivious to the need for us to refocus the Post Office and so about 2½ years ago we had a number of meetings in workshops with Dr. Aubrey Armstrong of Aubrey Armstrong Associates to develop

a strategic plan for the post office. We are pursuing that plan and in pursuance of the recommendations of Dr. Armstrong we have set up within the department an internal reform committee and on that committee we have the unions represented so that we can have the input of the workers' representatives at an early stage in the redevelopment and reorganisation process.

That process has been going well; but I must confess that we had a little hiatus in the discussion because the plan for commercialisation, the broad plan, went to the Ministry of Finance and they needed time to look at the financial implications. We have got the green light from Cabinet to pursue the strategies and very shortly the working group will continue and I hope that we will be in a position within the next year to have concrete proposals for the redevelopment of the post office.

Let me indicate here that one of the major issues of my Ministry is the need to develop a proper career structure for the workers in the postal services. I would have indicated in here before and I repeat because it is a matter that has held up the proper development of the postal services, I repeat that if you join the postal service as a postman no matter what qualifications you have, you can have 6 "O" levels and 3 "A" levels, if you join as a postman it takes you under the present structure 20 years before you can expect to move to another grade. That is unacceptable. It has been so for as long as the post office has continued. I have said it must come to an end and we must create a proper career path.

With a view to doing that in December, I wrote Mr. Levy, the Director General of the Universal Postal Union, and asked for his permission to release the regional advisor of postal services, Mr. Herbie Niles, a Barbadian who is now in St. Lucia on secondment, to come to Barbados and do a separate project for us looking at a restructuring of the staff structure to provide a better career path and better mobility for the workers.

I had a meeting with Mr. Niles about 2½ weeks ago and we looked at what he was going to propose in his report I am not in a position to give the House the details on it as yet because I do not have the full report. I have a working draft that we used. What Mr. Niles is portending for the postal service will be a radical departure from erstwhile practice and the former structure.

I believe that it will give the postal workers a new sense of hope. It will certainly conduce to improved morale and I daresay that one can expect as a consequence of all that greater efficiency and productivity in the postal services.

I do not believe that the financial implications of a new structure will be unduly burdensome. I am not going

to put a dollar figure on it at this stage but it will not be anything... In fact, the figures that Mr. Niles gave me that he had worked were indeed so moderate that I do not believe that Government should have any difficulty in adopting the plans. So I do not expect that the cost of a new structure will be too burdensome for the post office or the Government to finance.

In terms of the future development of the post office one is looking at the organisation and the structure as they relate to human resources and human resources development. On the other hand, we have also taken steps to look at a reorganisation of the revenue generating capacity of the post office. The matter of increased rates is just a very small element in all that. What we are doing is changing the system for delivery by segmenting the delivery of mail into 2 types, priority and non-priority mail.

We hope that the introduction of this system from January 1 will lead to a speedier delivery of mail.

We are aiming, Sir, to introduce an island wide delivery on the next working day if priority mail is posted at branch offices before 8.30 a.m., if priority mail is posted at the General Post Office before 10.30 a.m., if priority mail is posted at a public posting box before 7.30 a.m. we pledge to be able, all things being equal, to deliver that mail by the next working day. You have to post before those times. 10.30 a.m.

The Express Mail Service of the Post Office is an important revenue centre for the Post Office. Its development has been slow but we intend to change that to ensure that that sector of revenue generation can yield far more than it presently yields. The Post Office has faced competition as you would have seen from the observations of people in the British Post Office Royal Mail. We face competition from fax machines. We face competition particularly from the private courier companies DHL and FED-EX and so on. They are private sector operatives. The Post Office is there as a public sector operative. There is a market. We feel that the Post Office can get a better share of that market that is presently cornered to such a large extent by the private couriers and in that regard we are developing our express mail service with some urgency. It will call for greater emphasis on marketing and we have to look at the development of a marketing arm in the Post Office to ensure that we have people out there selling our services in the same way that FED-EX and those do. There will be a little job creation in that area and of course we have to ensure that we train people to properly man that department and make sure that our marketing strategies and our marketing operations are indeed competitive.

I know at the level of rates we will be more than competitive with the private couriers. That is a deliberate policy and we will guarantee that if they take a day to get your letter from London we take a day to get it to London. We are going to be offering the same service at a cheaper rate.

We believe that proper development of the express mail service can yield substantial revenue to assist the Post Office in reaching a level of self-sufficiency and independence that in time will reduce the need to rely upon Government for support. If every Government Department and every statutory board uses our express mail of the Post Office, there will be a significant increase in our revenues. In recognition of that, Cabinet has directed that as from January 1, this year, all Government departments and all statutory boards must use the Express Mail Service of the Post Office for speedy delivery of their mail. I think that is fair. Some people would say families first, the family of Government and public sector and statutory boards. Others would say home drums beat first and so on, Sir, but Government agencies should use the services provided by Government, it is as simple as that.

I look forward, Sir, in the next few months to the rapid development of the express mail sector. We have to do advertising and I am appealing to the GIS to assist in advertising. I have said in here I believe, Sir, or elsewhere, that if somebody in Miami calls and says to send me the Development Plan of Barbados 1993 - 2000 by Saturday, everyone of us instinctively will call Federal Express or DHL and ask them to do it. The Post Office does not enter into your consciousness. We have to change the psyche and the consciousness of customers and consumers. We have to get them attuned to using the express mail service of the Post Office and the necessary advertising, either as a public service through GIS. I do not see why they cannot do it regularly at that slot at 8:30 after the news at night.

The Post Office will obviously have to pay for some commercial advertising but we have to start that process, not bombardment sensitisation of the customer about the services which we have. That will happen. I think, Sir, that we should also be conscious that there has been an absence of a business image attaching to the Post Office. For as long as we have had a Post Office it was seen as just another Government department. If we are to commercialise the operations of the Post Office, if we are to make it competitive and take its place in the world 2003, then we have to give the Post Office a new and different business image.

Again, we will be taking expert advice as to how we can develop that kind of image, but I want Honourable Members to be Assured that we are pursuing - we are not just looking at anything - we are actively pursuing all of

these strategies to have a different image for Barbados within the next few years.

What about the organism of the future? I would be grateful to get the views of Honourable Members if they have given this any thought and study as to how we should redevelop the Post Office, what kind of legal phenomenon and structure should we use for the Post Office.

There are options. It can be set up as a separate statutory board. It can be set up as an independent public company with Government the sole shareholder. Indeed it can be set up as a private company with Government being the sole shareholder. It can be set up like the Barbados National Bank, that is the fourth option. It can be set up like the National Insurance Scheme. That is the fifth option but then it still retains character. This is the one area that is deeply exercising the minds of the special committee that we have set up. The unions have given us their views - different views.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is one that we are working on and I want to say that Government has no hard and fast position of the type of legal structure that should operate in the future. I am not going the way of Trinidad. I am not going to recommend that to Government Trinidad is on a move to privatise. I am not doing that, Sir. I will tell you one of the reasons why I would not encourage Government to privatise the Post Office. In a small community where jobs are at a premium, it is important that the public sector retains control and interest of certain of its organisations to ensure the continuity of employment of its workers. 10.40 a.m.

Let me say first of all, in case there is any doubt. The restructuring of the Post Office, the thrust towards commercialisation of the Post Office will not result in any downsizing or lost of jobs. I give the House my word. That is the Government's position on this.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order. The Attorney General giving me his word about anything, Sir, this Side cannot accept it. Last year, a whole year ago, he gave me his solemn word on franking. So far all I am getting is talk. Do not worry to get in here and give your word. Just do what you have to do.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am glad that the Postmaster General is here and the Permanent Secretary is here. He wants franking privileges for Members of Parliament. I have said that it will happen. I am not pulling out something and do it without looking at the overall picture.

We are making very good on the restructuring and the reorganization and we are looking at the revenue centres. He knows as a management expert that one has to look at the impact of certain things first.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Post Office was not debated last year. The Post Office has never been debated in Estimates anyhow. I give him my word that in due course, even before the elections that we will deal with that.

I will stop here and revert later on when the debate gets going.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I listened to the Honourable Member for St Thomas the Minister with the responsibility for the Post Office and I have not heard him say that the Post Office of Barbados is inefficient. There has been no allegation of inefficiency against the Post Office of Barbados.

We have heard about changes to be made at the Post Office. Of course, I am not trying to suggest that you should only make changes when inefficiencies are evident. Obviously, Barbados is part of a global community and has to keep in step with the developments taking place worldwide and any department of Government that yields, according to the Minister \$112 million per annum is certainly not a department to ignore.

We on this Side, therefore, can find no fault with the Government's attempt to modernise the Post Office and to bring it into line with international currents and developments.

I do not want to spend the bulk of my time on that because I do not think that that is the issue that most concerns employees of the Post Office and Shadow Minister of Labour as I am and Shadow Minister of Law and Order as I am. I am a little more interested, even though the Attorney General's Head is already passed in crimes committed in and around the Post Office. Because, I believe that is what the employees of the Post Office would expect me to talk about.

In recent times, Mr. Chairman, workers of the Post Office have been plunged into an abyss of fear and panic as a result of the commission of crimes of robberies at various Post Offices across this island. In the case of the constituency of St Philip South, even though there was not a robbery at the Post Office itself, there was a serious robbery in very close proximity to the Post Office in the Plantations Complex at Six Roads, a robbery serious enough to plunge the employees there into a state of panic.

Now, the Minister responsible for the Post Office is also the Minister who promised Barbadians to make Barbados safe for them when the Barbados Labour Party came to power in 1994. It now emerges that if there is one group of people in Barbados who have not benefitted from the fruits of that promise it is the employees of the Post Office who have, in some cases, had to resort to their own methods of protection, their own methods of detection to stave off the avalanche of crime which has threatened to envelop the Post Offices of Barbados.

I think, of course, of the postal workers at the Post Office at St. John who instead of being able to look after the public's business have had to maintain a nervous lookout for potential attacks against them and their security at the Post Office. In other parts of Barbados, postal workers down their tools, so to speak, because the Government seems to have turned its back on this issue of crime while dealing with the larger and more grandiose issues of commercialising the Post Office and modernising it and that kind of thing.

I want to hear from the Minister on this issue of security of postal workers because no matter how modern an establishment becomes, no matter how commercialised it becomes, no matter how profitable it becomes, the workers who make all of the profitability possible, do not feel a sense of security at their places of work and from the point of view of Members on this Side, all that counts for nothing.

The Honourable Member for St Thomas must not limit his vision to the issues of trying to conform to the requirements and to comply with the stipulations of the World Trade Organisation in trying to make the Post Office profitable. All of this is laudable. He must not limit himself to trying to make sure that the Post Office competes sensibly and effectively with persons providing equivalent services in the private sector, he must have regard to the welfare of the workers at the Post Office and try to put mechanisms in place to guarantee their security at their places of work. That is not happening in Barbados today.

The slipping through of the Attorney General's Head to perhaps frustrate a debate on crime has not succeeded...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member had his head down when he was saying that He did not say it with any convictions but it is still in breach of the rules, Sir, and it is imputing motive. They were not here because they walked out yesterday. 10.50 a.m.

Mr. F. J. STUART: The old biblical saying, the wicked flee when no man pursueth but the righteous, Sir, is as bold as a lion, Sir. So I want to hear the Minister

on this issue of security of the post offices because I am shadow Minister of Labour and I am interested in what becomes of the workers in all of this. I am interested in knowing what will become of the security of the workers at the post office having regard to the fact that in recent times they have gone through very torrid experiences where robberies have been committed against or at the scenes of post offices plunging them into states of panic with varying degrees of intensity. So when we applaud the Government in its initiatives to modernise the post office and to make it more profitable we do not think that the workers' issues, the personnel issues should go untouched and unattended. Therefore, Mr. Chairman I should like to hear from the Minister on this question.

I know that workers in the Post Office are very nervous because of the seeming indifference on issues of security at post offices in Barbados and the attitude is, which of us will suffer next, amongst workers at the post office. I do not believe that it is really fair to them to hear about all these modern developments taking place around them but to hear nothing at all about their enhanced security at their places of work. So I am going to rest my case there for the time being because I imagine that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas as part of the wider mandate which he has to bring the crime situation in Barbados under control will want to tell us what security steps, what modernised security steps he proposes for the post office to guarantee the security of the workers there. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very pleased to join in this debate. As you know, Sir, in the constituency of Christ Church West there is the Worthing View Post Office which is possibly one of the most active of the branch offices of the General Post Office in Barbados.

Just outside the boundaries of my constituency there is also the Dalkeith Post Office, a branch which I have had to take a very close interest in for many years and it is about time I remind the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that the post office that has been under threat and violent action more often than any other branch and in recent years now has been Dalkeith in Brittons Hill. That attack occurred not under this Attorney General but during the last administration we had several instances and if one would reflect, it reflected a trend of changing crime patterns within Barbados and those changing crime patterns escalated tremendously during the period of the early 1990s.

I am very pleased to see that overall there has not been a tremendous increase in crime although I join in expressing my displeasure at the reckless and the undisciplined in the society who want to escalate crimes of

violence and robbery in particular. I believe that steps have to be taken and are being taken to deal with these persons and deal with them promptly. So the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, I think has really this morning not taken the broader view and concentrated more or less on ribbing the Minister a little bit about the instances that have occurred in the last year or so. But in such a case it is timely to remind that there is that pattern and therefore this House should join in the condemnation of those in our society who perpetrate those acts of violence against their own fellow citizens.

Now, I do not know the causes. I am not going to go into the causes. I just want to say that the call for increased security is a proper call and that is how I am speaking in this debate. I am not saying that the Honourable Member is not right. In fact I join him in asking for the Minister to give us the steps which he proposes to take to upgrade security facilities at the post offices. Indeed the Government has to look beyond the post office and look at upgrading security wherever there is a large cache of money being accumulated or being exchanged at any time.

Our post offices and particularly the branch post offices are used particularly by pensioners so that the criminal who is intent on robbery knows that there will be people who are not physically up to his challenge and it is easier for them to overcome in those circumstances. A lot of pensioners use it. For instance the National Insurance makes available to the General Post Office between \$1.5 million to \$2 million a month in order to prepay pensions so they run an account with us. They have an Imprest Account and they run this account with us. Obviously I must be concerned, although there is insurance cover, where that sort of money is available that there is adequate security.

Now there are new methods of dealing with this. I have no doubt the Attorney General would tell us but I wish to see at the Worthing Post Office, as well as at the Dalkeith post office and all of the branch offices, not merely a security guard, Sir, because Barbadians have this feeling that we should not have armed people in our society. We do not even want to arm the normal policeman so that the criminal knows that the security officers at the post office, although providing some presence and brawn, are not adequately armed to deal with their ultimate violence. So we have to put in place, Sir, the type of security that we can monitor people. It is necessary to monitor their movements as they physically come within certain ranges, monitor their ingress and their egress and also to have on videos the people who are going to use force at places where any large measure of cash is being exchanged at any one time. That is necessary, Sir. The cost will, it is minimal, it will be more than recoup from the exercise in itself.

Now, there is a second reason why we have to do this, Sir, not merely to detect and prevent crime but because I strongly believe that the post office can only be competitive if it is customer friendly and being behind bars is not a customer friendly situation for commercial operations.

Indeed if you would look today to see that most commercial operations want to remove the barriers that are there between themselves and the customers. A customer could come in, sit down and be at ease in a nice chair, wonderful surroundings, read, be chatted with and feel that the post office or for that matter, a banking institution is a place to which they can go without any difficulty. 11.00a.m.

I know that there has been agitation not only at the St John Post Office but at the Worthing Post Office as the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has said. There was agitation on two grounds. One was a fear of security, although I believe the Union has said that they are reasonably satisfied with the arrangements that are being made there.

Two, we have had a problem that is peculiar to the Worthing Post Office. It is on low lying ground and from time to time, not only the Post Office but other buildings along that road are in the position where sewerage is not being emptied because it is below sea level. It backs up and the sand enters the system and it creates a smell and odour which has affected the workers there.

Sometimes the problem is not at the Post Office's premises itself, but it is at adjoining premises. That is why, Sir, despite the inconvenience which has been caused by the building of the South Coast Sewerage Project, I welcome the South Coast Sewerage Project because it will help to answer that problem of buildings that are built below sea level and it certainly would ease the problem of the Post Office.

I also note from the Estimates that the Attorney General has some money under "Structures" to deal with refurbishing two post offices this year. I wonder which branches, Sir? Worthing was built several years ago. I think over 30-odd years ago. I believe it was built by the Barbados Labour Party while the Honourable Peter Walcott as he then was and the Honourable Sir Edwy Talma were representing adjoining areas.

Nowadays if you were building it, it would be much more customer friendly and much more attractive. I believe that it draws a lot of foreign exchange and can draw more foreign exchange into it, because I believe that the Post Office should take over some of the banking functions, even if it does it for the Barbados National Bank, so they

not only pay pensions for the NIS and we pay them for doing this. But it could also take over some more of the banking functions and be much more commercialised along those lines.

Now, Sir, I have every respect for a Government enterprise that remains in the commercial sector. I am not yet fully convinced that we need to privatise the Post Office, but I want to see its efficiency upgraded to the stage where it is not running an annual deficit. I had asked for the figures and unfortunately I have not got them in my hands. But I believe that if we looked back over the past 10 years or more we have not seen the Post Office showing much of a profit.

This year it is running a deficit of \$367 748 which is projected from its operations and I want to see them get past that deficit, Sir. I read on page 3 of the Estimates that the estimated revenue is rising to \$19.7 million, an increase of 23.9 percent, so obviously the Minister is putting in place measures to increase revenue. And although there is an increase of expenditure of 8.5 percent to \$20 million, it seems as though he is putting in place measures to contain expenditure and to improve productivity and efficiency, whilst at the same time increasing revenue.

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

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Yes, Sir. I believe that this is a good sign and what I do want to say in this speech is that the trend of increased productivity, efficiency and better delivery of services is an urgent matter for the Post Office if it is competing with the new technological developments which have come on stream and where mail by delivery is now being done at such a large pace that a large number of people are going to immigrate to E-mail, their websites and what not. But there will always be room for quick delivery still, and even a fall off on that system and in this, there is scope for the Post Office.

Now, Sir, I would like to see the postmen and postwomen in uniforms that are attractive, as attractive as those of DHL or Federal Express. They need not wear the old colonial uniform that has been here and think that it is a sign of anything. I want to see them in attractive uniforms. I want to see them motivated that they are part of a commercial enterprise that has possibilities and looking for alternative opportunities, so that they can move forward, Sir.

So whilst I join in asking that we improve the security measures for the Post Office and the working conditions for those workers there, I would like to leave them with the hope and the expectation and a realistic hope that the governmental measures are moving in such a direction that service will become one of the hallmarks

of the ability of the public sector to deliver commercial services, with greater efficiency as any private sector organisation, Sir.

In this respect, I believe that the workers have the capacity to do so. They will get the motivation and the reward, Sir, and I am folly sure that the Minister will put in place the security that is necessary.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was exactly on the 19th March last year, since today is the 18th March that makes it a complete year, when I was discussing Head 12...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: How do you expect to get the Estimates debate? He is asked when the Estimates will be ready and we come in here to discuss these Estimates and nobody knows what they said last year, because they cannot read it.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If I am going to make the point? You can imagine that I am not about, except through my own reciprocity to verify that it was an exact year today that the Honourable Member promised me that he would give us franking privileges.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And you gave your word because I said that all you have to do is to make an order. But I know why you cannot do it because of the antediluvian bureaucracy that we have and the people who believe that if you give parliamentarians franking privileges that the Treasury is going to lose sufficient money that they would not be able to buy a cup of coffee. I do not understand it. It is rubbish. It is backward. You cannot come and tell me that you are modernising the post office system and you have parliamentarians... I do not wish any free mail but my constituents have a right to know what is going on in here. This is rubbish that is going on over and over again. Do not come to me and tell me that you are modernising - yesterday the Prime Minister talked about we are still making entries with pencil and paper - we still have to put on a stamp when you do a receipt. 11.10a.m.

You come talking about globalisation. Look, we are only tinkering and talking about these modernisation things. I have no quarrel with the post office as such. The post office has some of the most efficient officers in the service. That is a fact and if we would sometimes ignore the political considerations we would get a much more efficient service across-the-board. The best idea that has come out

of the post office in the last 25 years came from an individual who used to be pilloried and perceived to be a supporter of some political party.

Eventually it has got to be realised that people beyond these shores recognised his talents and, as a result, the whole question of where he belongs does not arise any more, as if it is some sin to belong to a political party. I have never understood why it is that we can represent political parties, we belong to political parties, but every now and then you hear about some senior officer who is a B or some senior officer who is a D as if it is a crime to be a B or a D.

Anyhow, Sir, I do not wish to be diverted, but a year ago I said in here and I want to make the point that it has nothing to do with the MP. I said and I repeat:

"I think that it is inherently wrong that a parliamentarian does not communicate in writing with his or her constituents at least once a month. I believe that whenever they want to if they wish to write and say Happy Birthday, if they wish to write and say I killed two dogs yesterday or conversely I went to four funerals this month, if they want to say I went to church or explain why they did not go to church, they should be able to write to their constituents and tell them how they are being represented."

And I said much more. The Attorney General gave me his solemn oath, because I said that it could be done by order.

I went on to say:

"You cannot write to your constituents and put stamps on as often as you would like on the basis of the "salary" which you get."

You cannot write to your constituents and put on stamps as often as you would like on the basis of the so-called salary that you get in here. I am a Z16 or Z something which is \$32 000 a year. That is what Members of Parliament on this Side and on the Back Bench are paid. The maids are not far behind that. I have no problem with that. So you cannot expect to give me \$32 000 a year and want me to write letters to the constituents too, and you give me all kinds of pressure and I have to wait a year to come in here as though I am begging for something about a frank sending out a letter.

Mr. Chairman, let me discuss the security of the post office. We are going to get to the Head. We are going to discuss Parliament today and I take it that the Leader of the House will be calling Parliament, Head 12, and therefore I will not try to speak about it now because I have some things to say about the rubbish that is going on in here by the people who ought to know better. Do not worry to

tell me don't debate it and sneak in anything. I do not want anything sneaked from me. Let us discuss it with the people.

The post office which concerns me, as Your Honour knows, is the post office at Eagle Hall. The first thing I would like the Attorney General to do is to tell the Post Master General... I have already said that they are good officers so you know I am not going to curse the officers, but I want him to look at the sign at the Eagle Hall Post Office. The sign has not been coherent for the last 7 years. When the DLP was in office the "E" was off and now the BLP won the Government the "E" is still off.

If you bring somebody to the Eagle Hall Post Office - go and look at it yourself - the only way you will know it is the Eagle Hall Post Office is because it is in Eagle Hall. If somebody says that is the post office you would assume that it is the Eagle Hall Post Office.

There was a mural painted at the post office. It was beautifully done by some people with talent around the area. It has in the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East's father. It has the late Don Norville. Most of the people who are heroes for the people in Eagle Hall because every now and again I hear them talking about national heroes but the people at Eagle Hall do not have any problem of who their heroes are. None at all.

The mural was damaged by some vandal nearly 11 years ago it seems to me. It could have been 7, but these things sometimes you feel they were always there. No attempt has been made whatsoever to correct it. It is as if the people who live around Eagle Hall do not need to be dealt with in a particular way. As for the crime, the fellow who went to the post office and committed the crime of robbery did it in full daylight. He was wearing locks, no mask, and he was riding an old bicycle. Now, I do not know if the Attorney General believes that when he modernises the police force or whatever it is that he is going to do that it will be able to catch a fellow with locks, no mask, and an old bicycle.

I feel that in the days of Murphy and those kinds of policemen they would already have known who that man is. As a matter of fact, I feel that if they do some serious questioning of the people around Eagle Hall Post Office they might find out who the man is. It is not my duty. The MP represents the people not the police.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You hear that? She is suggesting that I should know who the person is and help get him caught. If I had seen the person I would have told the police. That is the truth. I am almost certain that the people

in the post office were so shocked that a man could come in on a bicycle, and this is the point I am making. They were so shocked that a man could come in the post office on a bicycle and hold up the post office, take the few dollars and then ride through one of the alleys. I know them by heart.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sometimes, you know, when you are getting to a certain age you do not remember instantly.

Listen, if you all want to have a separate debate it is all right with me, you know. If you and Miller have something to discuss, do it when I am not speaking. I could sit down and let the two of you have a discussion.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House should set a better example than that. She is assaulting a member on this Side while I am speaking.

The police ought to be able when you have modernised the force and given them a decent salary, because that is part of the problem too. The police would probably be able to detect crime in the post office a little better if the Attorney General would ensure that they have better conditions of service. The police force is having a tremendous difficulty. Do you understand that they only have 2 single cars for the whole of St. Michael? The police use the cars from District A. Do you realise that if somebody goes in the post office...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member knows that that is not true. So many new cars have come in that are dressed up in red, white and blue with flashing lights. They have two? What foolishness am I hearing? Why do you tell lies just for effect? To get somebody in the Press to carry it? 11.20a.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am putting it to the Honourable Member that is what we were told that there are only two cars for the whole of St. Michael. The people in the police force told us so. We were told that there are only two cars and that is why it took so long for the police...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not the first time that you have accused me of being a liar on the basis of what I have said. You once told me something, I went and told somebody what you said and then you said I was a liar. I am not surprised. That has happened before. Do you remember? You told me something about Tom Adams. I told Tom Adams what you told me and you told Tom Adams I am a liar.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three minutes.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: The police at Black Rock are not the ones to be called if there is a robbery at Eagle Hall Post Office. They have to come from District A. District A is nearly up in the country. The Black Rock police is around the corner but if they have a problem with Eagle Hall Post Office, the officer has to come from District A. There has to be something wrong with that organisation. I am not privy as to why and I have no doubt that there are good reasons why but I am saying that in the context of the security of the Post Office at Eagle Hall, the people have a right to expect that when you call a policeman and say there is a robbery that somebody should get there in a hurry. Unless you think that I am merely speaking for the sake of speaking, we had a robbery at the DLP Headquarters and the police told us they would come the next morning, which they did.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can make fun of this but I am very serious about what happens to my constituents. I am disappointed that we did not have a chance to discuss the Police Department in the Estimates. I am not complaining. I am just telling you about me. I am disappointed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We have discussed the police several times. I indicated yesterday that a bill is coming to amend the Police Act shortly. You will get a chance to discuss the Police Department there and then.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member wind up? You can speak again.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I have no doubt that we will get a chance because I will discuss the police under this Head. The police cannot come from Black Rock to Eagle Hall to deal with certain things and I have no doubt that we are going to get answers to that. But I share the view expressed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that it is about time that you put television surveillance in the areas such as the Post Office and other important offices where the transactions which go on there might need to be re-examined after an incident. I have no doubt, Sir, that we can afford to do that. I wish to speak when I come back about this question of the fast mail. I will speak about that when I come back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir I welcome the opportunity to speak to this Head. It is said by people who observe 21st century trends that the new

technologies will overtake the role and function of the Post Office in our communities as we know it. I do not believe that is what will happen in a place like Barbados. The Post Office has a social and economic function in our community and what I believe will happen, and I am very pleased to hear from both sides of the House already this morning the calls for the greater use of modern technology to enhance the performance of the function of the Post Office.

I am concerned that there are in the Post Office at this time some areas of inefficiency. A letter was written to me dated January 26, 1998 posted in Paris, postdated January 27, 1998, I received it on my desk last week. For several years now mailing to the United States, we have been having tremendous difficulty. Even what we call inland mail in Barbados! It can be very inconvenient and disruptive to be receiving notices of meetings. I have it with my Branch. Eighty-six dollars it costs me in stamps. I very much support what the Honourable Member for St Michael West is saying about franking privileges for parliamentarians. Eighty-six dollars it costs me every single month. It is really painful when no matter how early you send these notices out people are receiving them three or four days after the meeting. I get phone calls. People call me up - Miss Miller if I had known I would have come. I believe I speak for all Honourable Members in here on all sides.

The people in our constituency branches know when their branch meeting is to be held. You usually hold your branch meeting on the same day of the month every month but people are still looking forward to getting that written notice. For a lot of people it is the only mail they will get in some months. Apart from the notice of the meeting sometimes you attach various pieces of information. It is an important linkage within the constituency. It is an important function that the Post Office plays in our lives as parliamentarians in the way in which we interface with our constituents. You walk about, you do your house to house, you are visiting people for all kinds of things, special projects going on, that you know, but you are still going to hear "I do not see Miss Thing in my constituency."¹¹

My constituency office is at the corner of Baxters Road and Kensington New Road. You go and visit Winnie in Kensington New Road and two days later you hear somebody from further down Kensington New Road say "but nobody sees Miss Miller about here." We all have this but that message, whatever the message it carries coming from us to our constituents is very important and it is a cost which we meet out of our pockets. It would not do when half of your notices arrive two, three, four days sometimes after the meeting.

Again Mr. Chairman, as public people, I believe I speak for all Honourable Members in here, as public

people we get invitations of all kinds. All of my invitations do not go to the Ministry. People send invitations to my home and again it is a source of great embarrassment. People are disposed to believe you. You know our reputations are lower than pond water as it is. People are not supposed to believe you when you say "I am terribly sorry, no invitation came." You will hear about So and So got theirs but it is a fact and it is embarrassing. Then you have to write letters and you have to make phone calls to apologise for your absence from one function or another function. 11.30a.m.

The Post Office is where pensioners go, not only to draw their pensions. That is where they have fellowship and they look at each other and say: "You ain't look good this week, and you look better than last week, and you hear from the family over and away, who is dying, who is sick, who is marrying and all like that."

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Post Office in my concept in the early 21st century ought to be a place, and again I am supporting points made by other Honourable Members, where all of these functions you would have a one stop shop.

Right now, let me tell you about the one closest to me at Holetown. You have this disgusting situation where we are using prime beach land to house the Library, the Post Office and the Police Station, but I will leave that for another part of the debate. Just let me concentrate on the Post Office. They are doing Post Office functions at Holetown proper. But to pay licences and other fees you have to walk now past the St. James Parish Church...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They have moved it? It is in the Complex now? That is very recent but I am very glad to hear it.

The point I am making here is that all these functions one ought to be able to carry out within the Post Office. The Post Office is a place where you need to have some potted plants and some garden benches so that the old folks can sit down and talk to one another. It is more than just coming to get the pension and buy a stamp, cash a postal order or something of that kind.

The General Post Office in Bridgetown, Sir, I wish to speak to that. In order to do that, I want to invite Honourable Members to look at the Draft Estimates at page (xx) - Revenues, and see under Head 90 - and as the Honourable Attorney General pointed out to us, Annexed Revenues and see the economic importance of the Post

Office. Virtually \$12 million: - "Sale of Postage Stamps, Direct, Through Crown Agents in excess of half a million dollars; Through Philatelic Bureau \$350 000". Now, that is what I want to speak to.

We have a Philatelic Bureau at our General Post Office down on Cheapside. We underestimate the revenue earning potential of that Philatelic Bureau. In my judgment it is too tucked away when you go to the General Post Office. To find it you have to ask where it is and somebody has to show you where it is. The Philatelic Bureau is something we should be showcasing. As soon as you come into the Post Office there should be a nice showcase with various stamp issues *et cetera*.

Many tourists, and particularly cruise passengers coming up from the Bridgetown Port who are interested in stamp collecting and so on, you would be amazed at the number of them who once they discover that the General Post Office is there because, remember - and Attorney General, please! I would appreciate if something could be done. The General Post Office is not signposted in Barbados. There is no sign which says "General Post Office". Up to this morning I came up and saw them with maps in their hands looking and looking. This whole business of signage, Mr. Chairman, we in the Ministry of Tourism are currently addressing but, certainly, the General Post Office ought to have some signage. There is a great deal of revenue to be earned through the Philatelic Bureau.

We could double, triple, quadruple this \$350 000 in revenue coming from the Philatelic Bureau. If you go on you will see "Private Box and Bag Rents \$174 000 in revenue." Again, we can double, triple, quadruple that but the Post Office has to go out there and market these various services. The Post Office has to get a Sales Representative to go into commercial Bridgetown. The Post Office has to post out nice attractive brochures to people offering these services and go out there and hustle the business like everybody else. It is there. FED-EX has business, DHL has business.

I see in the United States they are struggling with their priority mail. You can see all of this on CNN, struggling to compete with the private sector in this whole question of service and there are a number of services which are not now offered by the Post Office of Barbados which can be offered.

There is nothing so much more important to human beings, Mr. Chairman, than communication. The Post Office is an age-old, tried and true avenue for communications between individuals and if at the Post Office they were prepared to be creative and innovative, this bottom line of almost \$16 million in revenue could be doubled. This social and economic function that the

Post Office offers in our community is something that is very much in need of enhancement. We are going toward a new century. All kinds of new methods of communication are invented. It seems to me almost daily I can look and see that there is some new way of people communicating and the Post Office needs to be in the vanguard of this.

I remember when I was a child, the Post Office in Barbados you could virtually set your clock by the postman, and you knew that if you posted a letter in St. Michael to somebody in St. Philip or St. Lucy that by tomorrow evening they would get it. I have a postbox, one of the little old-time red postboxes in the wall, right across the road from where I live on Highway 1. You get one collection a day now but I can remember when you used to get two and three collections. But you post a letter inland now, sometimes there are weeks before you get it and sometimes you do not get it at all.

Now, there are a number of private sector operations in Bridgetown in the business now of movement of small parcels. The Post Office should be in that business but they leave it all to the private sector. I will agree with the Attorney General and others that the time is not right in Barbados yet for privatising the Post Office because, as I say, I am very concerned about the social function the Post Office performs in our society that needs to be sharpened up. It used to be a place where you would go and linger. It used to be the centre around which many, many functions were formed.

In this very building, Mr. Chairman, when we were children, downstairs where the dining room is now, used to be the General Post Office. This building used to house also the Government Savings Bank and I remember distinctly as a child, sometimes on the way to school, sometimes on the way from school, you would come in to buy stamps or to post a letter and the little savings that you had, it took me 15 years to save up \$67 dollars in the Government Savings Bank. I remember that distinctly. 11.40a.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, that was a big set of money. When I first went to England, I drew that off and carried it along and I felt like a queen with tin wheels. That was a part of the social function. Downstairs was a wooden floor and people would be transacting their business, they would be going to the Cotton Factory and just across the road where you could take goods on account, they would pay in a little bit to the Cotton Factory, nurses, teachers, policemen and civil servants of all kinds, people coming down from the country on a weekly basis to do their business. It was a busy place and it was a very social environment in this building.

I would like to think that the General Post Office in Barbados in Bridgetown, could again be a place like that. It was designed to have, and it still does have an amphitheatre. It is very rarely now that you will see performances of one kind or another, sometimes at Christmas maybe. The Post Office is not a centre for social engagement anymore.

Mr. Chairman, I am very kindly disposed to this and would wish to support this Head and I hope that the Attorney General and the Postmaster General will take note of some of the recommendations which are coming out of this debate which are only meant to enhance the overall service that the Post Office renders in Barbados.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak, although many of the points that I would wish to have made have already been made by Honourable Members. I would like to endorse the suggestions and the recommendations that have been made that the Post Office must look to modernise itself and to remember that just as in the European Economic Community, the coming of the single market permitted Post Offices from other countries to go into the United Kingdom to compete with them, a similar situation will arise in the Caribbean when we achieve the single market and the target date for that is somewhere in the year 2000. It may take longer, in fact, to be implemented but the fact of the matter is that the planning and the perception of what will operate has to take place now.

The second point made by the Honourable Member for the City is that there is a tremendous amount of small parcel business that can be obtained in Barbados by the Post Office in competition with the international services provided by such bodies like Federal Express, DHL and these other institutions. Particularly, I would say, the service of express mail for small parcels which is in existence now amongst the Caribbean countries, that can be expanded. Also, it is my view, that the existing services are not well marketed. The Post Office should have a marketing department.

I myself know because I have standing instructions in my office that when we are posting small parcels that we must get a quotation from at least two or three companies. When you are dealing with international business people, they like you to do everything to reduce the disbursements that they have to reimburse you with. I find that within the Caribbean that you can get a cheaper rate, I think that it is called Express Mail, from the Post Office than you can get from the others. That has to be exploited. A marketing department is a *sine qua non* for the Post Office if it is to take advantage of the opportunities which are there.

I fully endorse also, the concept that the Honourable Minister has spoken of today, of providing opportunities within the Post Office for promotions. People who start off as a postman, some of them may have enough talent with additional education opportunities provided, whether at BIMAP or the multiplicity of other tertiary institutions that we have in Barbados, to move up. There are people who develop late in life and I happen to know that there are one or two people who have started off either as a clerk or a postman and are in fact taking advantage of the opportunity provided for tertiary education in Barbados and I would be very glad to hear of a scheme whereby the hitherto traditional bottlenecks are removed.

I now come to an important point for my constituents. My constituents find it strange that of the three projects that have been left since the days of the cut backs, that they have one in their constituency.

My check has shown, and I do not know whether I am right or wrong, that the finishing of Sherbourne and Gall Hill Polyclinic and the Oistins Post Office are the three most outstanding projects that are not finished.

I would hate to think that it could be possible that the other two could be finished before the one in Oistins. I am very glad, therefore, to see that consideration as I understand it has been given to some work being done in the restarting of the Post Office at Oistins. We do not mind if all cannot be done this year but something has to be done. For a number of reasons and I will tell you why. The Post Office, during the course of its building had to be excavated in order to put in what is called a 'floating foundation'. The builders and the engineers designed a path which is outside of the actual footpath of the steel building which is erected. The effect of that has been, that the access that one had from the unpaved car park area, going into the Rates and Taxes building in the centre of Oistins has now been barred so that you no longer can drive to the other area of land on the townwards side of the Post Office which used to be used for recreation and which now at the present moment has to be used for car parking while the rest of the Oistins redevelopment takes place.

People do not realise, Sir, what problems have arisen as a result of the phenomenal success of the Fish Bay at Oistins. There are incredible problems of parking and incredible problems of flow of traffic. There are the kinds of problems that I am very pleased about because I am very happy for the 30 or so merchants in the Fish Bay who are making, it looks to me like a not inconsiderable sum on Friday nights and Sundays nights.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I have never enquired what it is. That is none of my business. The point is that people are complaining to me and to others about the fact that they are having difficulty in parking, the restaurants on the other side of the road are complaining, not that the people do not want to buy from them but that they cannot get into the car park. We have raised these matters and an integral part of a solution to the problem is some temporary passage being created to allow people to use the existing lands on the west, which is already acquired by the Government but an access has to be created.

The other point that we have is, unfortunately also in that area and this is a matter that both the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Health have to deal with. As a result of the excavation also, water is held there in the rainy season. It is a battle that we have to deal with because, unfortunately the whole area of Christ Church in the underlying areas has a water problem and we have managed to get help from the Ministry of Environment through the Public Health Department and through the National Conservation Commission to clean up the bush. It is something that has to be dealt with because as soon as you see June and the rain starts to fall, it has to be continuously done and it has to be sprayed. The Public Health people are on top of it and other people. 11.50a.m.

So while it may be thought that I am making my appeal on the basis of a narrow constituency interest I want to assure Honourable Members that it is not upon the basis of a narrow constituency interest but that whether he liked it or not the area in Oistins is a focal place. It is an area in which people from Gall Hill, people from Thornbury Hill, people from all of the eastern part of Christ Church come and they collect for their business. So it is a matter of urgency and I would hope that the Post Office there will be looked at in the light of that.

Lastly if one looks at the existing post office you will see how congested it is. That was only supposed to be there temporarily. The Honourable Leader of the House may not remember but that was supposed to be the dental clinic as part of the polyclinic. Where the post office is, was supposed to be the dental clinic in the plan of Oistins. The polyclinic was built and that was supposed to be there but the passage of time, the 9-year gap, Sir, intervened and I would understand the interest over there would not be as great as the interest over here but the point is that area is needed because when you go there and see the young children coming to go to the dentist and the dentist nowadays do not only pull teeth, thank God, dentist for school children now do not only pull teeth. They have to examine the children and it is taking more time and they are trying to use an appointment system but they need that area. When you talk to people at the polyclinic you

will see that that area is needed for its original purpose. So there is a pressing need also to move out the post office. It really is not suited for the number of postmen.

The last point I would like to say, Sir, about the post office is I really would hope that one day the post office will regard it as its function to do in Barbados what post offices have done in other countries, have a postal code. We really have problems. If you are in Atlantic Shores and you see letters, people bring letters, if your name is St. John it does not matter where you live they will drop them at my house and you ask them why and they say, what is the number of the house that they live at. House numbering is something that they are very lax at in Barbados. Road numbering is very lax. Sometimes the road is even spelt wrong in the signs that are put up.

Now, I believe this can be computerised. I believe it must be with the geographic informational systems that they have nowadays and with the expertise that is available internationally that we ought to be able to do something definite about a postal code in Barbados. We ought to be able to do something about it because it would be a great reform which would help facilitate the service of the post office and the other things.

I nearly forgot, Sir, the really last point. People who sell stamps are fed up now with the commission that they get. There are people who say that they are not selling stamps in the small denominations because of the small commission. I am not sure whether it is 2% or what it is. But there is a need. Sir, people like stamps almost 24 hours a day, particularly in tourist areas. Some people are buying stamps from the mini marts that open all night and things of that kind. But it is the smaller shopkeepers after all who provide the service. The small shopkeeper is coming back in vogue the world over they say. They have now decided in their minds they know exactly what people run out of, they are stocking that and that alone and they are allowed better mark ups. It is now calculated that their prices are probably 10 to 15 % higher than the supermarkets but people are prepared to pay that for the convenience. Now, stamps is one of those commodities that people like to buy. When they buy postcards, it is mostly postcard business, they want to have the stamp. But to ask people at 2% that cannot even pay for electricity. I know the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would appreciate that but people are drawing it to our attention.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has spoken about the problems of the post office security on the border between him and us. Now that has been a post office that has been in trouble with water for many years, I believe we have been in politics for over 30 years and that always had a water problem. Attempts were made. The thing about that is that it is a low lying area, the water

coming down Rendezvous Hill and when you get a big shower the drains that go to the swamps, people forget the old Barbadians had a series of shooting swamps in Worthing, the water used to be drained in there. Those drains are no longer kept. They are not cleaned any more. It is MTW's duty to clean them. Effort has been made with that and because we have made recommendations I will say this, that a drainage unit is there that has improved significantly. I believe in this year's estimates they say that some of these will need a special drain but that is a function of drainage. It should be drained right up to where the Shell station is right up to the swamp at Graeme Hall. That is a fact. You can walk it and you will see it. You have to cut back the mangroves so that the workers can go through it. It is work that has to be done. There is no doubt about that and it is an integral part of the problems that are experienced at Worthing. I know the troubles that are experienced at Worthing.

So, Sir, with those few comments I commend the efforts being made. It is only a matter of time that the post office will have to have a new structure. It cannot be run as a Government Department. Decision making and bureaucracy and the machinery is not appropriate to commercial organisations that is now facing competition. Hitherto the post office had a monopoly but it does not have a monopoly now. DHL and Federal Express, as a matter of fact these companies are practising globalisation long before the concept became popular. They have even got their own airplanes now and that is a reality that we have to understand the post office is operating.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have a responsibility to reply to a number of important points that were being made. Unfortunately it appears that perhaps the Estimates require some more information. I must say however that I can reply to all of the points that have been made without any difficulty. The only point that I am having difficulty with is the level of commissions paid to vendors. I have not been aware that that is a problem. I have never received a letter, any correspondence suggestive that the point made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is an irritant. What I do get is a number of applications for people to sell stamps as vendors. We get them often and I generally approve them. I do not think we have turned down more than one. This is an area I was not aware of. Every month we get 2 or 3 for approval.

Now, Sir, let me deal first with the points made on the Other Side. I am going to respond to them in bullet form, Sir. The matter of security that was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, obviously has been something of concern to the Government for some considerable time, Sir. The Government has taken action to increase first of all the number of security guards. Every post office will have a security guard from the 1st of April. Some places will have more than one. They are

under Defence and Security. They are not under the post office, they are attached to Defence and Security. There are 16 posts which have just been created and 16 people will get employment from the 1st April as Security Guards to ensure that we have a complement of security guards at every Post Office. 12.00 noon.

That was something that we agreed with the Unions. We had no difficulty in getting the positions. The Ministry of the Civil Service and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs responded and I believe some of those people are being trained now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I hope that the Honourable Member could inveigh upon the Defence and Security Department to recognise that there are some soldiers who have left the force who do not have work and these should be given the first opportunity if they wish that sort of thing because they are well trained.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, it is a useful point that was made and in relation to the prisons for which I have responsibility I told the superintendent to look for the prison officers among those people who have bought their discharge from the Defence Force, who have been trained. I believe that this is being done in the Defence and Security Division and I am not going to be absolutely dogmatic about it. As I said, it is a good point, Sir, and I will speak to the Minister.

Having said that we are posting security guards at every Post Office, let me go on to say that we have also recognised that the security guard *per se* is limited, if he is not armed, in what he can do in his response and so there is a need for the use of electronic systems to assist in the maintenance of security.

Therefore, Sir, electronic systems will be in place to do exactly what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West wants, at Eagle Hall, St. Philip, West Terrace, Welches, Brittons Hill and the GPO.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Wait. We cannot do all one time. That is without prejudice to our continuing our analysis as to how we can do the whole island. But the introduction of electronic systems also requires renovations and alterations. So we have to do them in conjunction with the maintenance department and renovate certain areas and do certain upgrading, like what we had to do at the St. Philip Post Office. We will also make sure that all the Post Offices are electronically monitored and that is something I said is coming. I have given the list where

systems are already in place and I am not going to say what kinds of systems those are as a matter of security. I am not going to say what instructions may have been given by the Commissioner of Police to the Post Offices.

Last year in November the commercial banks were sensitised and certain practices are already in place which will assist us in the ultimate I hope, detection of those for example, who robbed the Caribbean Commercial Bank in St. Philip. I am not going through the details. Honourable Members cannot expect me to detect those matters. But, I wish the workers and the Honourable Members on the Other Side to be assured that the question of security has been addressed in terms of manual security and in terms of electronic security and in time all of the district Post Offices will be electronically secured.

I believe that if we search our memories we will recall that over time, almost every year, not within the last year or two, but for years attempts have been made at Post Offices. Welches was a popular one. Eagle Hall was another. St. Peter...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, you see, those are things we have to look at. Brittons Hill, perhaps has been raided most often of all, and one expects that every year. Somebody will try something at a business place or a Post Office. That is the nature of the game.

We are monitoring this and we are studying the types of robberies that were committed recently. They have certain features. The Simpson's robbery early in the morning at a place set back from the road, so that if there is an outcry, nobody passing the road at Warrens would know that there was a robbery going on at Simpsons.

Within a week there was a robbery to another business place at Six Roads, again off the road and early in the morning. Scramblers and motor cars were used. We got the scrambler. They burnt the motor car and we had been looking for the motor car about two weeks before, but the car number was changing every other day. It takes time for the police to find persons involved in these robberies. We know some of them. That is all I can say and it is only a matter of time. Sir, that is on the question of security.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: However, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West made the allegation that there were two police cars in St. Michael. Sir, I had to call the Commissioner of Police. It is not so, as I said. First of all we are dealing with cars. Every police station has one functional car. District A has two functional cars. I am not talking about Land Rovers.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not finished. Let me just finish.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member said that District A has two functioning cars.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: That is what they said. They said that District A has responsibility for St. Michael.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, there is some confusion about the parish of St. Michael. Do not forget that in St. Michael you have District A, you have Central and you have Black Rock. The District A police station has two cars. In addition to that there are four roving vehicles in St. Michael. In addition to that there are a number of CID vehicles which are not marked. In addition to that there are task force vehicles and in addition to those there are a number of motor cycles. 12.10 p.m.

Sir, he mentioned that Eagle Hall Post Office was not in the Black Rock Station area. That is not true. The Commissioner instructs me that Eagle Hall Post Office is in the Black Rock Station area. Somebody may have called and they could not respond and they put them on to District A, according to the present logistical arrangements Eagle Hall Post Office is within the Black Rock Station area.

Sir, I turn now to the points made for upgrading the stations. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is correct in saying that under the last Government..

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Before going on the point you were on, could you for ease of discussion - it is not a frivolous point - define the areas covered? I think it might not be known that District A covers a very wide area and the point that was being made from police sources is that they only had 2 vehicles to cover this wide area so if they get 2 calls up in the north of their uppermost area and then they get 2 calls from the south the ones in the south will have to wait until they finish what they are doing up there. That is the point that was being made from police sources. It was not intended to be a pejorative comment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to remind the Honourable Member that he has 2 minutes.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yesterday I explained that the District A station area is overloaded. It is too large and

that is why we are putting a force in Wildey to cover that area and take some. I said that yesterday. That is part of the planning for the redevelopment of the Force. Let me just say in relation to Oistins that for a long time there has been a structure at Oistins near to the Land Tax Department which is just a steel frame that was put up by the last Government about 1990 and they went out of office and nothing was done to construct it into a proper post office.

The Press should go and photograph that. There has been a steel frame up there for 7 years. We have had an assessment done as to the structural integrity of it and it is sound. If Honourable Members look at the Estimates they would see under 623: Structures, an amount in excess of \$1 million, \$100 000 of that is going to be devoted this year to doing something with that structure at Oistins. We have professional fees of \$83 000 approximately in 626: Professional Services and we have to do some modification of the original design that was done by MTW but Members can be assured that work will be done on that new Oistins Post Office in this year and in the next financial year.

The \$1 109 335 cannot do all of the stations and we are trying to do work on most of the stations. At Brittons Hill we are doing maintenance there in the coming financial year, Eagle Hall, we continue to upgrade; Welches Post Office; St. Lucy Post Office; St. Thomas Post Office; St. Andrew Post Office; Worthing.

Let me say for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St Lucy, we are going to do the roof, the floor tiles, and we are painting the post office internally and externally. There is a programme of activity that we have prepared.

Finally in relation to the point made about new business, the express mail service will only gain customer acceptance if we put in systems to ensure that we can track and trace the mail. Recently we opened a new tracking and tracing system at the GPO to make sure that every piece of mail that leaves by express mail can be traced. That was done with the assistance of the American Government. I did that about 2 weeks ago.

Coming shortly at Grantley Adams Airport will be a new airmail facility. We are getting assistance from the British Government, through the Royal Mail International in the UK, to set up what they want up there. A centre of excellence, they are calling it, where mail for the Eastern Caribbean will come there assorted and distributed so that Barbados in this year is going to become a hub for mail for the Eastern Caribbean.

I did not have time in the first half an hour to talk about all these things. I will come back later on.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to the speaker on this particular head and I can assure you that this Head of Post Office covers far and wide.

I want to start off by saying that any serious government must recognise that the post office used to be a place where many services were provided for the poor in this country. We are at a stage in this country now where most banks are going to the ATMs and they are not providing that necessary service but I am not seeing the move by Government to make sure that the facilities at the post office are upgraded so that they can recover the ground that they lost to the banks.

The post office must be seen as a commercial area and not as a place where you just go and buy a stamp. Where certain services are provided by the private sector, I look forward to the day that the post office is prepared to challenge them for those services. The same way that the private sector can challenge the post office, I expect the post office to do likewise.

I am also saying that the post offices in the rural areas of Barbados must understand, not only the post offices, because it must not be seen that the Post Master General and his staff are not doing what should be done but it must be seen that Government recognises that the post offices can be used for many other things. I cannot understand and could never understand why people in rural parishes like St. Lucy, St. Andrew, St. Joseph, St. George, St. Philip must come to town or to St. James for certain services when they can easily be located at post offices throughout Barbados.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. If the Honourable Member would explain what he means because, for example, last year I put in a system where district post offices should have passport application forms.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ...They don't know it? It was published in the Press. I am glad the Honourable Member has said that. That is a function of GIS or bad publicity on the part of the Government. It was done last year. You can pay your light bills and so on.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I accept what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas but I also expected him to say that he only did what was requested by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy 3 years ago.

When we were discussing the Rural Development Commission Bill in this House of Assembly I made that

point and I would not tell you, Sir, who said it was foolishness. What I am saying is that people must be taught, that in the old time days the old ladies used to be going to the Post Office to change the postal orders, and now people are sending the real cash through mail. They are safer, Sir. I expect the Government Information Service to promote the idea of postal orders to the old ladies and the old men and other people so that they can go to the Post Office and get their usual cash and can discuss what is going on within a particular area. People must understand that the Post Office is not just a Post Office. 12.20 p.m.

It is a point where poor people socialise and I am saying that the necessary facilities and other services that can be provided should be provided at the Post Office. Mr. Chairman before you ask the old people to do that you must protect the lives of those old people because we are living in a violent society and we must make sure that these old people are not robbed. That is not an attack on anybody. That is a serious point.

One of the most annoying things when I go into banks and Government offices is to see a man with a baton to side. This is foolishness. I expect, Sir, that when security is given it should not be seen. It should be known about. I congratulate the Attorney General this morning for saying that they are going to be putting down cameras. I am a strong believer of that. I believe in prevention. I do not believe that you should put up a camera and hide it from anybody.

You should let them know that the camera is there but at the same time, you should have people moving around the Post Office behaving like normal customers, but this foolishness about a baton is nothing to anybody who wants to rob. The first target is that person. We have to move to a system where we protect the people who are supposed to be protecting other people. That is logical. I do not see anything difficult about that - putting on a uniform and a baton! You feel a man with a baton can protect you?

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sometimes you can protect the guard more than the guard can protect you - foolishness! There is also a belief that the Post Office and the other services provided at St. James is in the wrong location. I want to totally disagree with that. I do not believe that people going to the Post Office in St. James should go into some hill or up between some bushes to find a Post Office and a police station. The days of locating police stations and post offices, Sir, in the outer areas of Barbados must stop. It must be a key location or not the police would become the target of the crime in this country.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir, in respect of St. Peter the Honourable Member should know that the new Post Office at St. Peter is right in the heart of Speightstown. In addition to that a decision has been taken to relocate the police from on top of the hill to near the bus stand. There is a building that was built by MTW that we are going to reconvert into a police station.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have no quarrel with that. That is exactly what I am talking about and I expect that you would not only do it for St. Peter but that you would do it for other areas. We started it in the St. James area and I cannot continue listening to people in here who believe that because land in St. James is prime for people who were once our colonial masters that they must continue to control that land. It is nothing wrong with the policemen getting key areas and I congratulate whoever is moving the police to Speightstown and the Post Office to that key location. I congratulate them because it is time that our people are able to work and enjoy those facilities just like anybody else and I have no problem with that. I am saying that we must move away from this belief that because the Police, the Post Office and the Rates and Taxes are down on the West Coast that something is wrong.

You cannot market an area unless you provide the necessary facilities for that particular area and we must see those services as complementary. There is nothing wrong with that. What we need to do is to put the other infrastructure in place to make sure that the area is totally utilised by the local people and the tourists alike. Let me tell you something. I am saying that the Post Office in Hometown is underutilised, because I am saying that the Post Office should be used by the tourists and there should be a location there where they can go and send a fax, where they can get E-mail and things like that, because the rates that the hoteliers charge them are so high that if the Post Office in Hometown were to provide those services the revenue in this Estimates would be higher. The same thing can be said for Worthing and the same thing can be said for Oistins.

All I am saying to you, Sir is that there was no need to increase the postal rates in this country to the poor people. It went up by 33%. We could have provided services to the tourists that would have been able to bring in more money than the increase in postal stamps.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We need to do it. We must stop sitting back and believing that the private sector must attack the public sector, and the public sector must sit back and behave as if something is wrong with it. We must continue to make sure that Government is just as aggressive as the private sector. We need to have a new approach to this.

In terms of the Post Office at St. Lucy I am extremely glad to hear that you are doing some work, because I do not like my old people travelling through the yard with mud and so on their feet. We must look after the old people in this country and better services must be provided.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN. I do not want to hear anything about anybody in Government for years. I was in here for four years and I am dealing with four years in here. Tell somebody else, not me. I am going to deal with when I came in here. I came in here four years ago and the Barbados Labour Party was in Government and I will deal with that issue. When the Democratic Labour Party takes over in the next few years and they do not do it, I will deal with them too.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. The Democratic Labour Party in an earlier administration built an office in St. Lucy and left the standpipe in the middle of the Post Office that people could turn on the water in the middle of the Post Office and now we will hear of his old people and mud.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, if the standpipe was left in the middle of the Post Office, it meant that they could get water whenever they wanted it.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for admitting that the people of St. Lucy are so good that you can afford to allow them to come in the Post Office to get water. Thank you very much, and they do not have to worry about the mail moving out. I am saying that we need to make sure that the services that are provided to the other areas like the General Post Office, Oistins, Worthing and Hometown that those same services be given to the nice people of St. Lucy.

A point was raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South about those people selling stamps etc. how they should be given an increase and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said he is always getting a demand. What the Honourable Member for St. Thomas does not understand is that those people making requests for the stamps are not looking for the revenue for the stamps, but they are using the location to attract people, especially in tourists areas. But there are other people who would like to sell stamps as a service to people who would not necessarily get the inflow from the tourists because some people tend to believe that when you sell to the tourists you sell at a higher markup and when you sell to the poor you cannot sell so high. So you must also think about those people who live and operate in the outlying districts who would like to sell stamps as a service but

at the same time will incur a cost and need to defer that cost but who cannot recoup it otherwise. 12.30 p.m.

The argument by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is a good argument and it is one that should be looked at.

I am saying that the Post Office must be seen as a commercial area and not just as a place where you go and buy stamps and that the life of the Post Office workers must be protected. We must also make sure that health conditions in those Post Offices are such that people should not be made to go on strike as often as they have been doing at Worthing because of unhealthy conditions in those Post Offices.

I am calling on Government. Do not tell me anything about the Postmaster General or the workers, it is the Government's commitment to do those things.

Thank you very much, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and begged for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.45 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

When the Sitting was suspended the House was in Committee of Supply to that it will resume.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am indeed happy to speak to this Committee. I would like to first express my gratitude to the Honourable Attorney General for his swiftness in providing an opportunity for postmen and the public at large at the Glebe, St. George. Those of us who know the Post Office there know that it is a very small building and presently it houses more than 25 postmen and it provides services not only for the Post Office and postal workers but it provides other small services for the community and for Government.

The Post Office at St. George is housed in the same building as the Valley Branch library and the two of these organisations do provide a vital service within the community. I must say that over time this building has become somewhat outdated, overcrowded and congested. Of course, the number of persons using this facility has grown over time. If one looks at the development around the Glebe, one will find that there is a large area at Rowans Park, just to the south there is also Valley and the Glebe is growing quite reasonable.

I believe, Sir, that over the past ten or so years, the St. George community has developed tremendously in terms of more residents. Therefore, it is important that we provide the facility to meet the new demand in the St. George area. The new Post Office that will be situated at the old St. George Girls' School site will be one, I understand, a modern Post Office which will provide facilities for a police outpost as well as a community centre.

This is important because, as I said before, the community is growing and there is a need for activities of a nature which the community at this point will want to enjoy. There are also other facilities that we would want to provide which cannot at this point in time be provided because of lack of facilities. Most persons in most clubs now use the old St. George Boys' School and that in itself is inadequate.

There are also other service clubs which are asking for room and with this new facility, Mr. Chairman, it will help to improve the area of the Valley and the Glebe, St. George. We have talked about over fifteen or so years ago when the last Barbados Labour Party Administration was in office. In fact, Mr. Chairman, in those days the DLP Opposition at the time felt that the Labour Party's Government was trying to provide a city within St. George. They called it the Tale of Two Cities. I remember that quite distinctly. Since 1979, very little has been done within that area. An area which is developing, as I said before, in a way where we can call it a suburban area.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Honourable Member has seen it fit to provide money in this year's Estimates to make it a reality at the Glebe, St. George»

This attractive building will no doubt open other areas in the Glebe and Charles Rowe Bridge for new businesses. I believe that this will attract new businesses to the Glebe, St. George and I would hope that in time we can provide facilities for the Oistins bus. The Oistins bus usually travel to the Glebe where a number of people commute from Oistins to Glebe to St. Judes and to Greens.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It has been providing this service for over 10 years. The bus leaves Oistin and travels to Glebe, St. George, St. Judes and some of the outlying areas in central St. George.

I believe that when this Post Office and Community Centre is provided that more persons will use it. I hope that the facilities can be updated as well. The Attorney General spoke of programmes that would be provided in this facility and we hope that this will be done in the near future.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to congratulate that department and I hope that this will be a facility for new and modern Barbados.

I thank you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to report that I have spoken to some of the postmen from the St. Philip Post Office and they are very, very happy to be in their new surroundings in the Plantation Complex. One of them actually said to me, I now feel like going to work on morning. Because the honest truth is that there is a far cry now from where they have come from.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: One thing I don't do. I do not tell lies.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I was not attacking the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member said "the honest truth" and I could not help because it is my nature and I said that there must be a "dishonest truth". That is all I said. I did not mean to attack the Honourable Member.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: That is Okay. Yes, the working environment up there is now superb. The concern which was mentioned this morning by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, that concern was also made known to me. Since the bank robbery at the CCB at Six Roads the postmen are extremely concerned about their security. It is a fact and I must say that from the day following the day they spoke to me, I did pass there and I

did see security on the spot. So I believe that we have already taken note as to what happened in Six Roads and security guards have actually been put there. 1.55 p.m.

The only point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that I do not know if the point should have been made so strong this morning by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that the workers at the post office were under threat because indeed and in fact I believe if you are making that point and making it look as though post office security is lax you could have gone on to say that the workers at the gas station next door are under threat, that the people who teach at the school in Six Roads are under threat and that the people who work at the fast food place are under threat or the people who work at the welfare place are under threat. In other words, as I said, I do not think you should have singled out the post office and say it is the post office workers who are under threat at Six Roads now because of what happened at the bank next door. That is the point I am making. I know we are talking on the Post Office Head but the point should not have been made that strongly that it was the post office that was under threat.

If we are talking about a general security point, Mr. Chairman, I have no problem with that. In fact I think that where the St. John Post Office is concerned a really strong case can be made there. I do not know how it is but at St. John when you are in the post office, less than 12 feet away is the cane field. In other words if you are eating orange in the post office you flick the orange peel in a cane field, it is that close. It is like begging for an accident to happen because people can hide away in the cane field and then they can attack the post office. I do not know whether we should not be thinking of acquiring that piece of land. They could use it for a car park and I believe that either the plantation should be looking at that or the Government should be looking to acquire that piece of land for the provision of a car park in St. John.

The other point about St. John where security is concerned, Mr. Chairman, is that the St. John Post Office is very close to the road and I believe this argument can be made not only about the St. John Post Office but about the one in St. George. I know of instances where people who actually went to do post office business park their cars right there in front of the post office and they were reported. A teacher who taught with me at St. George Secondary, I was with him one day and he just parked the car by the post office because there is no where to park really but on the road, if you are going to the post office in St. George. We actually parked there and by the time we got into the post office the police came and reported him. I am saying that the post office in St. John that is also very close to the road. In fact it is so close to the road that when the trucks pass the road the dust used to blow

into the post office and then they put a wall to stop the dust from actually getting into the post office.

Now what that wall does is this. If something is happening in the post office, let us say that there is a stick up or something nobody from the road can actually see what is going on in the post office because the wall that was put up to solve one problem has now created another one which is that you cannot see from the road what is going on. Therefore if you are making a general security point I have no problem with it but the point I was making earlier is that I do not think you should have been singling out the workers at St. Philip and saying that the post office workers there are under threat.

The other problem that I have and which people have actually spoken about as well is the fact that there is no true computerisation. I am speaking about the people who go to pay their light bills and so on. Let us say that your discount date is 22nd March, you may go to the post office on the 20th and pay. Now when the Clerk there, has to send this down to the GPO in town and when that gets to town I think everything there is done manually. They are not on line. By the time it reaches the Light and Power Company the two days might have elapsed and therefore it does not show on your next bill and you do not really get the discount. This is the point I am making. Let us think of somewhere like Cave Shepherd where you go to pay your telephone bill. They are on line and if you pay before 4:00 o'clock the same day, that is picked up at the telephone company and your bill is paid on that date. If you pay after 4:30 it goes into the next day. The point I am making is that if we are going to provide those services we have to be on par and in sync in every respect. This is the basic point I am making.

Earlier this morning the Honourable Member for Christ Church South made the point about people who were selling stamps and the commission and so on they were getting. Where that is concerned, Mr. Chairman, one of the things that surprises me really is the absence of vending machines for stamps from places like banks and the airport. If you are overseas you can buy stamps for certain denominations at the airport from the vending machines. A friend of mine who came into Barbados was lamenting the fact that you could not obtain stamps at the airport from vending machines. It is something which I believe we can look at because someone getting off the plane and wanting to send a quick postcard back saying they arrived safe could use...

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I know he is listening. The final point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that I have lived overseas in places like the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands. And I can safely say that in

some respects and because of what people called this morning the bureaucracy that we have to go through, we are not really on par about what happens there because in those places, the Post Offices are actually allowed to negotiate and to bargain. And by that I mean a company may say, "look, I have two thousand small packages to send. DHL usually charges me \$2 each, could you take them for \$1.75" and there on the spot you can do that type of negotiating. That facility is not allowed here with the amount of red tape and bureaucracy that we have to go through or if it is allowed, Sir, I do not know of it. I would think that this is something which you would need to look at because once we are going to become commercialised we have to be commercialised in every, every respect. We cannot go half way in these things. 2.05 p.m.

At the end of the day, Mr. Chairman, what I believe we have to be aiming for is that we should be comparable in price or cheaper than those who are doing a similar service. We have to be attractive and efficient as a post office and we have to be so attractive that we can encourage corporate Barbados, we can encourage offshore companies, we can encourage lawyers and people who may want to use such services.

So that is my contribution, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I do wish to make a brief intervention in this debate on the Post Office. I would wish to congratulate the Honourable Minister for Home Affairs, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for the amount of work that has been done in relation to the redevelopment of the Post Office and the considerable refurbishment activity which has gone on over the course of the last year in this area and will continue over the course of next year.

I would wish in particular to associate myself with and endorse some of the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for the City. I wish to start at the point of service improvement within Barbados. I think it is laudable that the activities of the GPO are to be commercialised and that there is to be substantial redevelopment of this institution so as to make it more customer friendly and to cater more to the needs of those persons who work within that enterprise. But it is important, Mr. Chairman, if in fact the commercialisation of the Post Offices services is to have credibility and to enjoy the confidence of the public, then we must impress them that these services can be efficiently and effectively performed.

The Honourable Member for the City was making the point, during the course of her comment that inland mail is now taking far too long and that is a really serious consideration. It affects the conduct of business. It

affects personal communication between private citizens and it affects you at the level of invitations and so on. The Honourable Member for the City has explained at some length how it affects us all at the level of MP. But the point is that if in fact the services are to be more folly commercialised, then we have to start by being able to deliver effective and efficient service and thereby persuade the public that any additions to the services will work in the same efficient and effective way. That has to be a major consideration in the implementation of the new strategies relating to the Post Office.

I wish to commend the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in relation to the considerable improvements that have been made to post offices over the last two years and I would wish to thank these post offices individually, Mr. Chairman, Sir, because very often we only accept a post office either in town or in our own individual area and therefore we have little knowledge of the substantial improvements which have gone on at Post Offices elsewhere. Therefore, I wish to commend him for the repairs effected to the Eagle Hall Post Office, to the GPO...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. I submit that the Honourable Member is incompetent to know of any substantial improvements.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I would prefer to hear about substantial improvements in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or the Psychiatric Hospital.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member, please take your seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All right, I beg your pardon.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am tempted to make a mischievous comment, but I shall not. Repairs to the roof of the General Post Office and refurbishment of the Sorting Office at the General Post Office, removal of the St. Philip Post Office to new quarters, refurbishment of the Christ Church Post Office, refurbishment of the St. Thomas Post Office which is completed and the installation of a tracking system for mail.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: They do not want people to know the work that has been done. That is what the interruptions are about. You should have been here this morning when "Health" was called.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Quiet please. Order.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I am beginning to wonder whether the Honourable Member and her colleagues on that Side really understand that the purpose of the Estimates is for the Opposition, Members over here, to inquire of the Minister about the programme.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Repairs to the St. Peter Post Office which are soon to be completed. The expansion of the new airmail facility at the Airport which is currently under construction. The resiting of the St. Joseph Post Office to the new complex and I wish to add that when the St. Joseph's complex is opened a new polyclinic will be installed at that compound.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister who is responsible for this substantial item of expenditure under this Head, incapable of speaking on his own behalf in this House on this matter?

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: A very important question. We want to hear from the Minister. We do not want to hear from another Minister who knows nothing about her portfolio to be talking about the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. Would the Member please sit?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I submit that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. She is misleading this Committee. She is the Minister of Health and cannot possibly speak for the Ministry of the Post Office.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Every Member in this House has got a right to speak on the subject, and she is speaking on the subject of the Post Office.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Other Members over here would like to speak. It is a travesty, Sir. Other Members over here wish to raise substantive matters on the Post Office and

a Minister of Health, whose Head was rushed through today when Members were absent is now getting up giving us a litany of conclusions. It is not going to work. It is bear confusion. It will not be that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West had a right as indeed the rest of the Opposition had a right to be in their chair when the Public's Business was being done today. Had the Members of the Opposition been in their chairs...

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Our Head could not have been debated in their absences.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I beg your pardon. Sorry, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members please sit. This is no time really to play to the gallery. We are in here to do serious business and I would like this debate to carry on in a smooth manner. Would the Honourable Member for St. James South carry on? 2.15 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The resiting of the St. Joseph Post Office, I was making the point that if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West wants to hear about health that when the St. Joseph Post Office is constructed a new health clinic will be constructed as part of the St. Joseph complex. It will be a completely refurbished and modernised health complex with facilities that do not now exist in St. Joseph.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. Since the Honourable Member has taken over the role of the Attorney General in this matter I wish to ask her whether or not of the \$2.9 million under...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order. You know that, Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...how many people from St. James South would be employed at Christmas out of that vote?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member please take a seat?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. As a Member of Parliament, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is incapable as we understand it of telling us about the Glebe.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order. I understand the attempts at levity but this is a serious matter. The Honourable Member for St. George North in his address this afternoon spoke about the work at the Glebe. The Honourable Minister is entitled to follow that argument. More than that, as a member of the Cabinet all of the matters referred to are known to members of Cabinet. If she has a better memory to list them than the Honourable Member, too bad for him. She is entitled as a member of Cabinet to know what we did at Tamarind Hall.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. The comments by the Honourable Attorney General who is my legal advisor in these matters and he has advised me again and again on several occasions in the past that under the Constitution the Minister responsible for a particular portfolio is the person who speaks to policy in this Honourable House and you cannot now delegate that responsibility or allow another member of the Front Bench to arrogate that responsibility onto herself during an Estimates debate. In other words, what I am saying, Mr. Chairman is the Honourable Member for St. James South should sit down.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When we came in here in 1994 we were all given the freedom to speak. It was claimed on our behalf by His Honour, the Speaker. You cannot fetter the right of a member to speak. A member of Cabinet is aware of Government policy and can speak on any matter of Government policy.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: In looking at the post offices which are going to be upgraded I must admit that I do not see the one at West Terrace being upgraded. Arising out of this is the issue of security at the post offices and elsewhere. I really want to make a point in relation to this. Members have complained today about the problem in relation to security at the post offices and in fact this is an issue that has now become something of a national issue because it is not only a matter of security at the post office but a matter of security throughout Government institutions and matters of national security. We are living in a Barbados that is a far more violent society than it was 10 or 20 years ago. I grew up on Baxter's Road and I make the point all the time that

20 years ago when I was still a teenager it was entirely possible to go to sleep and leave the house open even on a place like Baxter's Road and nobody would intrude or interfere.

These days it is not possible to live anywhere unless you have some consciousness of security considerations and the reality is that because crime has not been endemic in our national culture that we paid very little attention to issues relating to security. When buildings are constructed, when we look at the floor plans for these buildings, apart from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's suggestion of having unclothed security guards and security cameras and surveillance systems which will allow us to monitor people's movements, which is absolutely critical that we pay substantial attention to how departments are laid out particularly in Government buildings because some are built in such a way or laid out in such a way that it is entirely possible for persons in those areas or working in certain parts of the building to be attacked or robbed without people in the rest of the building knowing.

In fact, a relevant example is the example of schools. Prior to the new World Bank arrangement many schools in Barbados used to be built with a sort of quadrangle area with all of the offices and the administrative block facing one another so that when persons intruded to enter the classrooms you could see. These days often the offices are built without reference to the location of the rest of the classrooms and therefore the security consideration is not properly addressed.

To take the security point further, Government offices are located in the centre of communities and increasingly they are becoming areas for people who live in the community and are having gang fights or other activity to take some of this activity into the building.

We therefore have to be conscious of the terms and conditions under which people work within these environments.

I also want to make the point that as we expand and commercialise the post offices' operations other persons have made the point that we have to look at how space within post offices or the Post Office will be allocated. I agree with other Honourable Members who have made the point that a post office must become a place for old people to meet and chat and therefore the lay-out and the facilities there have to be conducive to that.

A cafeteria would be a welcome addition to a post office.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member as Minister of Health ought to have a better programme for the elderly than to meet in the Post

Office. That is for the Deputy Prime Minister to say. The Deputy Prime Minister can make that point because the Deputy Prime Minister as an elderly person understands the need for these matters.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It should be possible to have vending machines and other areas where in fact the public can buy additional services. Only this morning I went to the Post Office and I was hoping to have some books packaged overseas. The Post Office does not have a packaging service. They do not sell envelopes. A vending machine for stamps. These are very simple things which can expand the range of services offered by the Post Office and which could create additional revenue for the GPO.

I intend to rise again although the Honourable Member for St. Michael West...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I presume that there are different criteria by which one measures the improvement of a service. Some measure it by the size of the post office, the furniture in the Post Office, the number of staff in the Post Office, the amount of money spent on renovations, the level of computerisation and all those things. I measure the effectiveness and the efficiency by the kind of service I receive since I am a taxpayer like anybody else, What has been my experience over the past years? Some time ago there was a headline in one of the newspapers that there would be a substantial improvement of the service offered by the Post Office. The main contribution to that improvement would be a reduction in the deliveries from two a day to one a day. 2.25 p.m.

I recall Mr. Gladstone Holder, an eminent columnist raising that point, that he found it unbelievable how you could be improving a service by reducing the number of deliveries from two to one a day. Time was in Barbados when you could have been guaranteed that if you posted a letter before 10.00 o'clock in the morning that letter would be delivered either by that afternoon or by the latest the following morning before 12.00 o'clock. It is a fact that today letters take between seven and ten days for delivery.

In my personal life and in my practice I depend on the post service, postal of reports and things like this. There are a whole pile of them coming in to me on a daily basis. A letter posted at the polyclinic which is across the road from Delaware Clinic could take up to ten days to reach Delaware Clinic.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is not the point. You pay your taxes, there is a post office service that you pay towards, you pay for the stamps as well and therefore whether you live next door or not and you post a letter you are entitled to a reasonably quick service which just is not available. You cannot tell people that you should deliver by hand, and what happens?

Some companies or offices can afford a messenger. How about those who cannot afford a messenger? When you have to hire a messenger, nowadays you do not give him a bicycle or a motor cycle. You have to get a motor car. So you would be hiring a messenger giving him a motor car, incurring all those expenses because you cannot get your mail delivered on time. Over and above that, of course, there are many lawyers on the Other Side and you know there are all kinds of legal transactions, notices, all those things that require expeditious delivery. You should be able when you post a letter to know that letter will be there within forty-eight hours or something like that.

I have had mail come to me from England, from the United Kingdom, more quickly than it can reach me from here in Barbados. Something is very wrong. Either we have to revert to the two deliveries a day, because it seems to me to have been a nonsensical statement to say that you are reducing the number of deliveries from two to one a day, and that will lead to an improvement of the postal service in Barbados. It has not happened and that is the reality. Members from what I have gleaned, I was not here, may have addressed the social and economic consequences of that kind of delay within the system but it is a major problem. I do not know whether Members have experienced this but I know for a fact that this is something that I experience from day to day, and I would urge the Attorney General as the Minister responsible to look and see whether or not it was a wise idea...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I assume that he is Attorney General and according to the legal advice he has given me in the past and according to what I saw in the Official Gazette he is the Minister responsible. Anything that I hear from the Honourable Member for St. James South I would consider to have been irresponsible because this is the Minister who is responsible. This is a matter which needs to be addressed.

It cannot go on like this because in my view that signals to me a deteriorating service because the bottom line has got to be when you have spent this money how does this translate into an efficient service to the consumer. I am not accusing the Attorney General of having reduced the number of deliveries from two to one. I cannot even recall when it was done,

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There used to be two, one in the morning and one in the evening. It was reduced and it was hailed by the Post Office as a major development in Barbados. This is something that needs to be looked into because it is not working. We have a problem that I have been encountering not infrequently recently, mail addressed to other people arriving at my home or at my office, mail addressed to me not arriving and therefore I can only assume that it has gone to somebody else. This is a very, very, dangerous thing. I have called up the local post office in my area on at least three occasions and I have drawn to their attention the seriousness of the problem and on each occasion I was told the matter is being investigated, investigated, investigated.

This is a very serious matter because a mail is a confidential communication and with the best mail in the world if you deliver the mail to the wrong person it is very likely that person may open the mail by mistake, grab a letter, think it is theirs and open it, or if the person is not seized with high moral values he might open the mail and the contents of that letter become public, what should have been a private communication. If you were to take the period 1960 - 1990, that 30-year period, I would say one would have had this experience that probably on the odd occasion, but a very occasional experience. Now it is a fairly common experience and I do not know whether other Members may have had this experience, but certainly it is one which seems to me to be occurring with increasing frequency.

I do not know whether it is a problem with sorting, whether it is a reflection of the kind of indifference you get now in certain sections of the society and so on or what the problem is, but whatever the problem it needs to be corrected, and officers need to understand that this is a very serious error when the error is made. Indeed, I think there should be provision for disciplinary action to be taken if the error is made repeatedly, because you just cannot have this kind of thing otherwise people's confidence in the mail service would be undermined and we do not wish that to happen.

One other point was fascinating to me and I wonder if this is not part and parcel of the same problem. Recently, I got a communication asking me to report to the Post Office to collect an item - a little white slip that they send out. On that slip they had "parcel too heavy". I was not expecting any parcel. However, I could not make it to the Post Office but I sent someone to collect it with the ID number and so on and would you believe it, Sir? You know what was the "parcel too heavy"? A book about this size, about three inches by four inches by about a quarter inch thick. It does not make any sense to me. I also wonder whether that is not part and parcel of the same kind

of mentality that has taken over the whole system. I cannot think of a postman of the past who would not pick up a small parcel like that, that probably weighed maybe an ounce and make that delivery to the consumer. So there are problems. 2.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, reverting to the question of Other Personal Emoluments, I wish to get an assurance from the Honourable Attorney General that those persons in St. Michael South Central who in the past got a little pick at the Post Office at Christmas, would once again get a pick. I am not asking for any...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. There were two ladies who worked last Christmas. I can give you the names of two who worked last Christmas.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. The Honourable Minister has just asked me to give him the names and they will all be taken care of. So this is what the Estimates are all about. This is why you have to speak to the person responsible on the Floor of the House then you can get responses that are meaningful, and maybe a job or two.

The Philatelic Bureau. I would accept a comment from the Honourable Member for the City on this one. I wonder what is happening. This was the brainchild of the late Tom Adams. I remember when this Head in the Estimates was first introduced it appeared to be somewhat esoteric and it came in for some criticism at the time, but it does not seem to me from the allocations here that it is being taken seriously.

If we are talking about our heritage, we are taking about heritage tourism, we are talking about all these things and here is an opportunity for enhancement through the Philatelic Bureau and what do I see here? I believe the original vote for this about 15, 20 years ago was \$100 000, somewhere in that region. The vote in 1996/97 it was \$235 000, last year \$303 000 and this year \$380 000 with Personal Emoluments, Statutory and Non-Statutory amounting to \$240 000. So, therefore what is happening here?

It is quite clear to me that this is an area where there could be substantial improvement and which is being neglected. I think the Honourable Attorney General has a special responsibility to pay attention to this Head because after he was sent on vacation from St. Philip North, he was rescued by the constituency that was nursed by the late Tom Adams, namely, St. Thomas, so he should have a vested interest in making sure that this particular item under this Head is dealt with. I do not think enough is being done. I think it has economic potential and it can be a money earner. It can be a preserver of our heritage.

I also believe, if my memory is correct, that there was some arrangement to link this up with similar operations in the United Kingdom and with the older universities where a lot of information on stamps and so on relating to Barbados could possibly be found, so I think there is a lot of work that needs to be done in this area. It is something that should be taken more seriously and I believe there is an opportunity there that is not being exploited.

Mr. Chairman, if you want good government then you have to allow the members of the Opposition to speak at the time of the Estimates and if you are a confident Minister because that is where you can pick brains, listen to them.

Now, for the first time today, Sir, the Honourable Minister responsible for the Post Office would realise that all the good work he is doing can come to nought if the bottom line is not addressed, and the bottom line must be addressed because you can run into lack of confidence in your public postal services and if you are thinking of privatising any section of that, you know what would happen in a situation where people would lose confidence in the public sector.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Two minutes, Sir? Two minutes could be a long, long time, Sir. I have seen the Honourable Member for St. Joseph panic, sweat, have palpitations, the whole lot when he was offered two minutes in a Budget debate not so long ago but I will use my two minutes well.

Basically, Sir, those are the main points I want to make. I think they are substantive, substantial and relevant points which need to be addressed. I sincerely hope that particularly in that area with more speedy delivery, less loss of mail and wrong delivery of mail, that we will see an improvement in the not too distant future.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to fully support the measures being introduced to modernise the Post Office and to further enhance its revenue earning capabilities. I have found the service provided by the Post Office to be satisfactory in all the circumstances. I certainly have not had very many of the experiences recounted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Maybe it is because of the way I get on with the lady that delivers my mail but I certainly have not experienced any significant number of problems. I think in all the circumstances a good job is being done especially in light of the facilities at some of the Post Offices.

If you look, for example, at Oistins, I have had occasion to go there and I can understand why you would have quite a few complaints about service because of the conditions in which the staff there have to operate. I believe when we are offering congratulations we must not only do it to top management but we must also congratulate the foot soldiers, those who get out there and do the actual legwork and the deliveries. Those are the one who have to grapple with trying to find houses in sometimes densely populated areas. It is very difficult sometimes to identify where they are going. They are the ones who have to deal with a number of dogs, quite often animal dogs, sometimes human dogs as they seek to deliver the mail to people. So believe that the service is satisfactory.

I believe that wherever possible, and a service is offered by the Post Office, that it should be compulsory for all Government Departments and statutory boards to make use of the service being offered once, of course, it is properly priced and the service is of a satisfactory standard. Of course, I am speaking primarily in the area of the Express Delivery. When last I checked with the Post Office in the area of Express Delivery the rate I was given, in fact, was not better than the rate I could have gotten from the private company and therefore I had no choice but to do that. 2.45 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: That was about 18 months ago. I am happy to hear that the rates will now be sufficiently competitive and I therefore fully support the view that it should be compulsory for our Government department and statutory boards to use the services being offered by the Post Office. There is a lot of goodwill in my view in Barbados for the Post Office and I believe that that could be even further enhanced if the Post Office were to further diffuse its services. It might seem like a small point but I believe that especially in areas where public transport is non-existent or scarce, a serious look should be taken at installing a number of the mail boxes, the little red boxes in the wall that we heard mentioned earlier, in those areas primarily.

I know for example in Reservoir Road in Lodge Hill there has been a cry for quite a while now for a mail box to be installed there. Public transport is non-existent in that area and I believe that a systematic installation of these mail boxes in more places in Barbados would not only benefit the inhabitants of these areas but would also further enhance the revenue earning capabilities of the Post Office because there are a number of people in that same area which I spoke about who have become fairly frustrated and they have now really, not abandoned, but they are less interested now in using the mail system in Barbados

because they have to leave there and go to the Eagle Hall or General Post Office in Cheapside and there is a deterrent when you do not have facilities that reach out to the population.

Two other points I would like to make. The question raised by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and other Members about the security at the Post Offices.

From the outset let me say that I believe strongly in proper security. In all places really I believe very strongly in it. In my house, there is a lot of security. You have to get through a lot.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I believe that if you can get through it, you should take what you want, to be honest with you. I am a frightened man and I believe in security. I believe that there should be a heavily armed presence at Post Offices. Whether they be undercover, as suggested by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy or in normal security clothing, there should be a heavily armed and properly trained presence at Post Offices. Not only at the Post Offices but in all the Government departments that handle money. Wherever there is money, there should be adequate security and properly trained guards because you go in some places and you see a security guard and if anybody comes in there and blows at him hard, he will fall down or run away.

They should be properly trained and fearless security guards at Post Offices and all Government departments that handle money.

I believe that in this day of technology, it would be foolhardy to deny that there should also be a system of cameras for monitoring and so on but that only goes so far. That would allow you to see and perhaps to record the activity that would be taking place for future use to allow you to prosecute and try to capture the person who perpetrated the offence.

I believe that in this day of technology, there is no reason why you cannot have the system of a direct link up from these places directly to the police themselves or to the private security companies who will be able to respond at the time when the crime is in progress rather than have to rely only on the system of cameras that would allow you to pursue more or less after the event.

Those are my recommendations, I believe strongly on the issue of security. To make a general point, I am happy to see that the issue of security is now being taken seriously and I think that in Barbados over time, both Governments, both parties have taken the issue of

security somewhat for granted. I am happy to see it being addressed in a serious way. At many levels we have been taking security for granted. At the level of the Members of Parliament and the Members of Cabinet, security have been taken for granted.

I well remember at the funeral of the late Dame Nita Barrow, you had a situation where every single Minister of the Cabinet was along side the chariot, or whatever you want to call it, that was taking the body down, every Minister was there walking through the streets of Bridgetown and not one ounce of protection. There was a visitor here from the United States who commented that it was unbelievable that Ministers could have been walking like that without any sort of protection whatsoever.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I also remember at the memorial service of the war veterans that takes place in Trafalgar Square every year. Last year I was sitting in the audience, in the area where I was designated and right across there was a store under construction, it is a sports shop now, I think it is "Total Sports", and it was under construction at the time and there sitting you could see in plain view one or two men sitting down in the upstairs area that was under repair and there was not one security person in Barbados at the scene who had had those men checked out before they were up there sitting down.

These things are taken for granted in Barbados but the fact is that with the advent of the technology that I just spoke about and the access to all sorts of cultures, the television and what have you, people are now seeing ways and means of doing crimes in very very sophisticated ways. I believe that we in Barbados need to take it far more seriously than we have been taking it.

I am happy to see that the Attorney General is taking the issue by the scuff of the neck, starting with the Post Office and I would like to see this expanded to all of the Government departments that handle money and indeed to even a broader section of the Barbadian community especially those who work in official capacities. I think we need to have protection at all levels.

Mr. Chairman, those are the few comments that for now I would want to make. I hope that the Honourable Members on the Other Side, who are now finally in Parliament, having not been here this morning when Parliament began, would have at least agreed with some of the comments that I made.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that this is an area of controversy at all. Both sides of the House have agreed that the developments planned for the

postal service are positive and that the country can only be the better off for these developments.

I accept the assurances given by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas on the issue of security at Post Offices. This is a matter in which we all have a vested interest and I am sure that every effort will be made by the Government to ensure that our postal staff is safe at their places of work.

I just want to raise a local issue in relation to Six Roads Post Office. First of all I should congratulate the Government on the speed with which it moved to relocate postmen at Six Roads from the very dilapidated conditions in which they were working to their new location.

What I want to be certain about is that the relocation is permanent and I want the Minister to update the House, if he would, on plans to acquire Plantations Complex at Six Roads and also what plans the Government has for the use of the building just vacated by the postmen at Six Roads.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to respond. Negotiations are still going on between the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the receiver for the Plantations, Royal Bank of Canada, who are the debenture holders about the possibility of purchasing that property. They were fairly close to a figure but there are some outstanding issues which I would not like to discuss publicly that have not yet been resolved. I will explain to the Honourable Member behind the Speaker's Chair.

In addition to that the Government has also commissioned a study to see what it will cost to renovate the premises. It is one large building without any ventilation. It has central air conditioning and if you are going to split it up into a number of offices we thought that perhaps we might have to create some window spaces and do other renovations. That work should be going on in the project office of my ministry now but if they can reach agreement I think the Government will favourably consider the acquisition because they were not too far apart for a figure for the purchase. 2.55 p.m.

To all intents and purposes the post office will continue in those new premises. We have no plans to move them. If the Government acquires the property they will have permanence and in any event we are prepared to enter into a long-term relationship.

Now, as for the building that has been vacated that will fall back to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and they will have to determine the future use of that. We do not want it in Home Affairs or Attorney General so perhaps some other department could use it. I am not sure, for example, if the Library could not be expanded and

then it would be ideal to give other facilities to the Library having regard to the demographic changes that are taking place in St. Philip and the increasing population.

Sir, if I could respond to a few of the points made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He asked questions which I should respond to. I do not know if I should be offensive and just ignore the questions.

Sir, I told the Honourable Member from my seat that I could not recall when there was a change from the twice a day service to the once a day service. I consulted with the Postmaster General who told me that he joined the post office in 1989 and it was already happening and one of the other officers in the Ministry indicated that there was that change to once a day delivery in the very late eighties, probably 1987/1988, somewhere around there. I am advised that the reason for that was that it followed negotiations with the unions who were complaining that we were working the postal workers too hard by making them deliver mail twice a day and they asked for a one mail delivery. So it was as a result of negotiations with the union that we have gone to the once a day service.

Now, Sir, I accept, as Minister responsible for the Post Office, that there was a period during last year when deliveries were very unsatisfactory, so unsatisfactory as to have prompted Mr. Gladstone Holder to write certainly once and I think he has written publicly about it. But Honourable Members have forgotten that at the time, around the middle of last year, when there were problems there was work being done to repair and rehabilitate the Sorting Office at the GPO at great cost. I think it was very nearly half million dollars. We had to move the whole sorting department, if Honourable Members will recall, from there to a building that was part of the IDC in the Wildey area. It was not air-conditioned. We had to carry up fans and there were a number of work stoppages because of the conditions but we had to move the sorting facilities from Cheapside to Wildey last year when we were repairing the Sorting Office.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When we moved to the IDC building in Wildey they had no air-conditioning and the workers stopped several times until we were able to carry in fans and so on to cool the place. Now that work on the Sorting Office was about 6 months at least. It was substantial work and during that disruption in the facilities there was a diminution in the quality of service undoubtedly. We all accept it and for what it is worth we would like to apologise to the public for the inconvenience that was suffered. However I invite Honourable Members to check their mail within the last month or so and I am sure that they would have noticed an improvement in the

quality of service. We believe we are getting back to the days when we had greater efficiency in the service.

Again, Sir, I think I ought to put in the record some of the work that has been done for the postal service in the last 2 years and in bullet form I will itemise them.

We repaired the roof at Eagle Hall Post Office within months of coming into office. The workers at Eagle Hall Post Office suffered greatly from leaking roofs, Sir. You saw it on television. We got that done. That is completed, Sir. The roof at the GPO has also recently been completed. Towards the end of last year we did the roof of the main office and we also refurbished the whole Sorting Office facility at Cheapside.

Honourable Members have spoken about the movement of St. Philip Post Office and I am grateful to them for the kind remarks that they made. We refurbished the Christ Church Post Office in the last 2V_a years. We have to now move from that site there by the Randall Phillips building over to the site where there was the steel construction, where the Rates and Taxes property is, and develop that. That will start this year and continue into next year.

As you would expect, Sir, there was a complete refurbishment of the St. Thomas Post Office. I spoke today of the new tracking and tracing system that we have to trace your mail. In St. Peter, in this calendar year, a new post office should be opened in Speightstown which would then free up the existing site which is too small and on good beach land which could be used for other purposes. That will come this year.

There is a new airmail facility coming at the Grantley Adams Airport, I mentioned that before lunch, where Barbados is going to be the hub for the distribution of mail for the Eastern Caribbean. That is under construction right now. In the development at Tamarind Hall in St. Joseph, Sir, there will be a new Post Office for St. Joseph and in this financial year, within a couple of months we should be in a position to start the construction of a new post office for St. George at the Glebe, a Post Office, Community Centre and Police Post all in one. 3.05 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew's Ministry is doing a development of new offices for the Government at Warrens. There will be a Post Office in that complex, also and that should start during this financial year in 1998/99.

In the coming financial year, Sir, among the dollars that I mentioned this morning there will be a completely new air-condition system installed at Cheapside in the GPO. All of the workers there should have cooler conditions under which to work, coming 1998/99. I

cannot do any more and I have already outlined some of the other projects that I have going on.

I wish to compliment, Sir, the management and staff of the Post Office for the excellent support that they have given me. I came to this area, a completely new area to me, and I have had nothing but the greatest support and help from the staff of the Post Office. The workers at the Post Office as Honourable Members will recall, were also given duty free privileges to buy their motor cycles and parts for the motor cycles by this Government in 1995.

Sir, one regrets the crime but as we explained and everybody agreed during the debate earlier, this has been a problem over the years where persons have targeted particularly the Post Offices: Welches, Brittons Hill, Eagle Hall to do robberies and I have explained what we are doing about that, Sir. What I am glad about however, is that the crime of the theft of postal packages has declined.

The Commissioner's Report for 1994 showed that in that year they had 40 thefts of postal packages. For 1995, 1996, 1997 and so far in 1998 there were no theft of postal packets. And we should be proud for that, Sir, about 40 in 1994, to zero in the last three years.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it is the will of the House that we move on to another Head and with those remarks, Sir, I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 39 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS - \$59 304 716

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, in introducing this Head I want first of all to react to, and not in any negative way really, to a statement made yesterday by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph when he said that, we perhaps need to do a bit more PR at the National Training Board.

I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is some truth in that statement, that we have not done enough about their public relations and making the public aware of what is going on at the National Training Board. But I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we have tried and we are indeed trying to bring to the public's attention some of the very good work which is going on at the National Training Board.

Over the past five months, Mr. Chairman, we have been on the television more than we have ever been, trying to bring to the public's attention the work of the trainees

and instructors at the National Training Board. If you were watching television, you would have seen that we actually did a lot of PR with Eden Lodge Project and we had a documentary, a full television programme on the Eden Lodge Project which the trainees were doing.

The Government Information Service, Mr. Chairman, also brought this to the public's attention by way of another television programme and we have been putting ads over the radio, there have been ads continuously asking the trainees to come and be part of the Training Programme of the National Training Board. We have also placed a number of ads in the newspapers. So we are doing something about letting the people know what is going on at the National Training Board.

There is also an officer at the National Training Board who is responsible for networking and going around to all of the secondary schools. That Officer goes around and keeps in constant contact with the Guidance Counsellors of the respective schools.

Mr. Chairman, the allocation for the National Training Board has been increased this year. This is the result of the need to provide more trainees this year than ever before. This will be the largest number of persons ever to be trained by the National Training Board in a single year. The National Training Board has been in demand. It has been getting a lot of requests from construction firms for masons, carpenters, steel benders and the like. Very often the employers want to get these trainees immediately. They say, "can you send me tomorrow, or can you send me today, six masons or five carpenters." The National Training Board cannot meet this demand 99 percent of the time because they do not keep trainees in stock to be delivered when employers want them. As a result of this unprecedented demand, an extra 600 young people will be trained this year by the National Training Board.

This will mean, Mr. Chairman, 600 more opportunities for young people who are unemployed to become part of their training programme. The number, 600 that I am speaking about, Mr. Chairman, was not a number that was pulled out of a hat. The National Training Board decided "well, let us see exactly how many would be required?" And the Board did a very careful study to come up with the figure of 600. They did not want to train too many and then frustrate the trainees, some of them not being able to work or to get jobs, or they did not want to train too few and then people argue that they did not train enough in the face of a construction boom.

So the National Training Board tried to find out from the Town Planning Department how many applications they have for private residences and for commercial buildings. Then the National Training Board looked at the number of major construction projects which will be coming

on stream this year. They looked at the Bridgetown Development Project, the Government Offices at Warrens, the National Housing programme for Government housing, the Sandy Lane expansion project, the Crane expansion project, the Hilton expansion project and, having done this, Mr. Chairman, they concluded that what they should do is to provide about 600 more trainees in the face of this construction boom that in 6 months time that figure would suffice. 3.15 p.m.

I also want to say that in almost every class at the National Training Board now you can find a lot of young girls as part of the training programme and they are getting into areas which were traditionally male dominated areas, masons and carpenters. In every class you can find some of them.

I also want to emphasise that the increase in the allocations for the Training Board this year reflects an increase from \$35 to \$75, an increase in the stipend to each trainee. We marched along, year after year, never even thinking about the increase in the cost of living and increase in bus fares to these trainees and we think that it is necessary that we increase the stipend.

I want to bring a little secret out of Cabinet that when I took the Cabinet paper there I took the paper saying that we should increase it to \$50 and Cabinet enthusiastically said no, this is still too small, it thinks that \$75 would be the figure. I can therefore say that all of us were in agreement and enthusiastic at having it at \$75 for each trainee.

The truth of the matter is that many students used to complain and those complaints were unheeded in the past. A lot of students used to complain that the stipend was not enough and when we are doing live projects in particular that is working on the Eden Lodge site, at the house at Eden Lodge, those trainees are the ones that complain the most. Because very often what happens is that they have to take 2 buses, one to get into town and the other to get to Eden Lodge, or wherever. At the end of the day they have paid \$6 in bus fare and then they are sweating and working in the sun and are more thirsty perhaps than the others who stay in the classroom and if you pay \$30 a week in bus fare and the extra \$5 to buy toothpaste and soap you do not even have any money left for lunch money.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Speaking about the live project at Eden Lodge, Mr. Chairman, I think that that is a classic example of what the Training Board can do. I believe it is that project which more than anything else caused the employers to look and see what can come out of the skills training programme. I believe that that is why

they have been constantly calling on the Training Board to send so many masons and so many carpenters.

Those trainees did a beautiful work at Eden Lodge and I believe that we should have and, in fact I know, that we are going to have a second project at Eden Lodge, one just next door. Right now the floor has been poured and the walls should be going up very shortly. They are tying up the ends of the sale to the very first ones and that money is going to be put back in and they are going to build the second. The difference now is that other trainees are brought on board because while the ones that were used on the first project were the ones in construction what is going to happen now is that a lot of the trainees who make the cupboards and who make the furniture and so on are now going to sell the second house fully furnished. The first one was not fully furnished so other trainees now brought on board will put in furniture and this other live project will be fully furnished.

During this year, the trainees will also use as some of their live training projects some of the very training centres that they work at and they are going to work on those places like St. Lawrence, St. Patricks and St. Luke which are run down. The trainees are going to be working on those projects and getting their on-the-job training.

The system that the Training Board has of monitoring where the trainees end up and I must say that certainly from the tracer studies we have done all of the trainees who work on that Eden Lodge project, the very first one, were gobbled up immediately after they finished. People were virtually waiting until they finished to get them on board in the construction firms. I think it is a wonderful idea to have these projects scattered throughout Barbados that the trainees can go and work on them and people can see the work they do.

The thing about it is that when you have projects like those when the trainees leave the Training Board they hit the ground running because it is not just a theoretical tilling they know but the practical side of it. As I say, they hit the ground running and the employers are virtually there waiting.

Yes, perhaps we did not do enough in terms of our PR as to what was going on at the Training Board but we have tried. I must say that I am very pleased with what happened at the Training Board over the past year.

The Ministry is such that it is virtually impossible in half an hour to give detailed attention to each agency that falls under the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports. Mr. Chairman, in terms of the other agencies such as the National Assistance Board and the Welfare Department I want to say that the Ministry

of Labour, Community Development and Sports virtually spearheaded the campaign for public awareness where the poverty alleviation programme was concerned. It was Community Development, the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board that held meetings throughout the island to bring the attention of the public to what the poverty alleviation programme was and how it would work.

A lot of the work rested with the agencies that fall under the Ministry of Labour and Community Development and we made the public aware of the devastating effect poverty was having and of the need for us to have programmes put in place to cope with this scourge. It is clear that all along that we had an inadequacy of social infrastructure to deal with the problem of poverty.

I must say that it was like spinning top in mud. That is what we were doing before and I believe that for the first time we are really being focussed as to how we should deal with the whole question. We shifted strategies and...

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, just let me say what we are finding in the alleviation programme. We are finding that the majority of homes that have been submitted for repair, the names of the residents and so on, that those houses are in extremely poor condition and many of them end up costing more than what was bargained for. In other words, if we have enough money at National Assistance Board and we say we believe that this is going to help repair 300 houses eventually we may only end up repairing 200 of those houses because houses as I say end up costing more than bargained for. 3.25 p.m.

We find that a lot of old people are living in rented houses and the owners of those houses are not repairing those houses as they should. The major concern of the majority of people would be for water toilets. It is a genuine concern out there. The Welfare and National Assistance Board have found that a lot of people in Barbados still have pit toilets and that even though sometimes you repair the house for the older people, when they have to go to the bathroom they have to go outside and we are tackling this problem. I can say now that based on the submission by parliamentarians I do not think that we can actually tackle all the repairs for which requests have been made. That is a fact. For instance one parliamentarian in here has submitted in his constituency more than one hundred and twenty houses. That gives you an idea.

Aside.

Hon. Ro N. GREENIDGE: This is not the parliamentarian I was thinking about anyhow. This only

gives you an idea of the number of requests which have been made to National Assistance Board and Poverty Alleviation for the repair of houses. I believe that a programme like this should have started about ten or fifteen years ago in Barbados. We are probably only scratching the surface with it right now. There are lots of people who owe large amounts of money to National Housing and to the Barbados Water Authority. When we ask them how come they find themselves owing \$5000.00 to Barbados Water Authority or National Housing, I am going to tell you the truth, some of them regardless of how long they stay, maybe for their whole life, will never be able to pay the amount of money that they owe. When you ask them how come they find themselves in that position they can tell you the reason I am in this position is that in 1991 or 1992, my daughter that used to help me she got sent home and that is how come I find myself in this position.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT. On a point of order, Sir. I think it is very insulting on the part of the Government that the Front Bench and the other Members of Parliament would not come in and listen to the Minister. The Minister is making a very important speech, a very important point. He is making points that should be listened to by Members of his side and they should be in here. The House is not properly constituted as far as the Honourable Member is concerned, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE. Yes, I was saying that in 1992 a lot of them were sent home and that is why they find themselves in that situation where they could not pay.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I never said it but you can draw your conclusions. The Welfare Department has pledged that it will help those persons who are genuinely in need of assistance to pay the National Housing and the Welfare Department from the same poverty alleviation vote.

Mr. Chairman, it was about three weeks ago on the Floor of this House we were talking about poverty alleviation and the impression was given by the Opposition that the Government was using the poverty alleviation vote almost like how you use a "pork barrel". The impression they were giving was that we were looking after our own and we were neglecting them. That clearly was the message coming from the Opposition. I recall that at that point I made a telephone call. I asked officers to come and bring me certain information about what is going on with this particular vote, to give me a breakdown on what

was happening. Mr. Chairman, I asked them to bring certain parishes for me because they do not have at Welfare or at National Assistance Board anything done in constituencies. They have parishes. When the information came I remember pulling aside the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and I called him aside and I said look here at our St. Philip list and let us see what is happening.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: We had sixteen. St. Philip had sixteen done. There were nine from his constituency and seven from mine. This is the point I am making, that when it came down I said look here. Tell me, is this yours? "Yes, this is mine." There were nine from his constituency and seven from mine.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I do not get myself involved in those things. Mr. Chairman I do not think that Members on the other side can say anything else. When the Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants me to come to St. Lucy to do something for him, I go. When the Honourable Member for St. Michael East wants me to come and do something in his constituency I go. I even go and play tennis with them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I feel, Sir, that the Honourable Member is misleading this House by leaving out information. I think that you should give the House the full information as to why you visit the constituency, that is all.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman if I may just add a few words about the Child Care Board. About two years ago there was a very ugly scene on the television where a Barbadian overseas involved in Child Care was actually found and shown on the television beating a little child, eating the child's food and so on.

I remember that particular incident very well. I was watching it at home and I called the Chairman of the Child Care Board. I said you have to do something about it because when we send people overseas and we do have some care givers in Calgary and parts of Canada and so on, perhaps we cannot even get on board now when people see this kind of thing. I said we have to do something about that.

We have to have a training programme, a certification programme for those involved in child care, so that when they go overseas they have something to show that they actually went through some certification programme. I am happy to say that last year we launched that National Certification Programme and the aim of the programme is to ensure that all persons who are engaged

in the care of children are trained. This is with reference to government day care as well as private day care. Next two years we are going to have a significant number of persons certified and trained. We are now on our second batch of trainees and it is not going to be like one time when you just walked in and said I like to work with children. You have to go through the whole training programme to get the certification.

Today we realise that children are more problematic than before. Some of them begin to show signs from very early. We are forced to exercise some understanding about the developmental stages of children and we must have on board people who can anticipate those problems and people who know how to deal with those problems. Eventually, we hope that everybody who works in day care will be trained. 3.35 p.m.

We are forced to exercise some understanding about the developmental stages of children and we must have on board people who can anticipate those problems and people who know how to deal with those problems. Eventually we hope that every person who works in day care will be trained. The course is not just a theoretical course because it has to be attached to one of the centres. It also involves some practical work as well. It will be a prerequisite very soon for entry into Child Care.

What we have also done, Mr. Chairman, is that at the Training Board when we took over there were about 30 adults. They were over 18 years old, and they were still at the Child Care Board's Homes. In fact, one person was actually 33 years old and in a Child Care Board's home. With the exception of those who are mentally challenged, all those children now who are 18 years and over, we have actually united them with their families and it took a lot of suasion by the Child Care Board officers to get those children back to their families. Believe it or not, Mr. Chairman, the moment that was done this has led to a significant reduction in the abuse and violence and so on at the Homes. It is a fact. There has been a significant turnaround, therefore, Mr. Chairman, in that particular area.

Mr. Chairman, this year we hope to renovate quite a few of the rundown Children's Homes in Barbados. We have money in the Estimates to repair the Sterling Children's Home, Fairs Children's Home and Farris is to be done with money which has been there a long time before we came into office from the CBC Telethon. There was a little confusion and so on between the Telethon Committee and the Child Care Board because at one stage the Child Care Board wanted to use the Telethon Fund for something other than repairs to Farris and it was specifically put there for that purpose.

Mr. Chairman, Haynesville, Sayes Court, Grazettes, and the laundry at Nightengale and John Heckles are all going to be repaired. Colleton Day Nursery is going to be rebuilt. Right now the children are on the other side of the road in the Community Centre because after they had the fire there that is where we had to relocate them. The delay was very long. The reason why there was this long delay was because it took some really hard bargaining and negotiations with the insurance company to come up with a figure which we thought would reflect the real damage done to Colleton.

At Haynesville, Mr. Chairman, this is where the majority of the physically challenged children would be housed. Even though the children are housed at Haynesville, the Haynesville Complex does not take into consideration the disabilities of those children. This year we hope to make Haynesville more friendly for these persons with disabilities. Their bathroom facilities would reflect the disabled. In other words, disabled people who need a certain handrail when they go into the bathroom, who need wheelchair ramps and so on, these will be taken into account at Haynesville.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three minutes.

Hon. R. N. GREENEDGE: It was, just as I said, an ordinary run-of-the-mill place and we are going to try to make it much more friendly for persons with disabilities. As I said, Mr. Chairman, it is virtually impossible for me to get to all of the items under my Head. I have not even mentioned Sports in the opening. I have not mentioned the Labour Department. I have not mentioned the Disability Unit. It will therefore be necessary for me to come back later.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I am reassured by the Minister's statement that he will come back to me with the issue of the Labour Department. The objectives of this Ministry, Mr. Chairman, are set out in these Estimates as follows:

- "(a) to support and encourage the creation of employment by fostering a climate of harmonious industrial relations;
- (b) to formulate and implement labour legislation and policy with a view to enhancing employment conditions, relations and opportunities;
- (c) to ensure an adequate supply of trained manpower in occupations in all branches of economic activity in Barbados."

Now, I rise to make an intervention on the labour aspect of the Ministry because the world is now a changed place as a result of the end of the Cold War and the dismantlement of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The world now moves toward what is called the globalised economy. This has serious implications for labour as a social and economic category. It has raised questions about the viability of trade unions. It has raised questions about the security of employment for workers. I think that this Ministry has been rather subdued over the last 3V₂ years on these pulsating issues.

I am reinforced in that view having regard to the fact that in its Manifesto of 1994, the Barbados Labour Party pledged under the rubric of Social Policy - Labour Relations at page 21 to protect the dignity of the worker in the workplace and to restore his confidence to exercise his freedom to associate with his colleagues in trade unions as an essential element of stable employer/employee relations. It also pledged to consult with employers and workers before legislating a comprehensive Employment Protection Act and modernising other Labour laws, particularly those relating to occupational health and safety.

I think these pledges are very important and so far as the Employment Protection legislation is concerned, this is a promise to which the Barbados Labour Party committed itself in every Manifesto since 1971. In fact, I believe in its 1981 Manifesto the Barbados Labour Party told the country that on its resumption of office after the 1981 election, it was ready to introduce employment protection legislation. We are now in 1998, three and a half years after the Government came back to power in 1994 and we have still heard nothing about employment protection legislation, about unfair dismissal legislation or anything of the kind. 3.45 p.m.

The Minister limited himself to talking about the activities of the Training Board. I commend the Training Board for the efforts that it is making in training youngsters to earn a living for themselves in the economy but there are broader issues of labour which need to be addressed if workers in general are to feel secure and if they are to be able to locate themselves within the economy of Barbados.

I am disappointed that the Minister did not think these issues important enough to demand his prompt attention and to be given priority in the speech which he just made. I hope that before this debate ends, the House can hear from this Minister what his Ministry's views are relating to labour in a changed world environment.

In recent times we have seen the trade union, Barbados' best known and oldest trade union virtually brought to its knees by employers in the offshore sector. From this Ministry the country has heard nothing. The

very right of workers to join trade unions in Barbados was put under threat by some arrogant, perverse and misguided employers in Barbados and on this issue, the Ministry of Labour and more particularly the Minister of Labour has remained deafeningly silent.

I hope that before this Head passes, the Minister will let the country know what his thinking is on these issues because trade unions are central to all that workers do in Barbados. Most of the progress which workers in Barbados boast can be traced to the activist posture of the Barbados Workers' Union which is the oldest trade union and then more recently the other unions that have come into being.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has obviously forgotten that the Prime Minister, I think it was 4n^August, made a statement in respect of postures of Offshore Keyboarding and then when I was acting for the month of September, I also made another statement. If we spoke as Chairman and acting Chairman of the Cabinet, we spoke with the concurrence of the Minister of Labour. He knew at all times.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. I have heard him in mitigation speeches before and he was no worse today than he has been on those occasions when I have heard him.

The point is that this Ministry has been tight-lipped whenever a major controversy has arisen in the Ministry of Labour. It has required the intervention of either the substantive Prime Minister or the acting Prime Minister. It is as though the substantive Minister of Labour does not have any appetite for labour issues and it is small wonder then that in a context of a world that has changed and where labour is now more imperilled than at any other time in this century, certainly at any time since the Russian Revolution in 1917, labour is more imperilled today than at any other time since 1970.

Barbados needs to say where it stands on labour policy. It is very important. We talk about repositioning ourselves to play a role in a new global economy and we have to find out where will labour be located in all of that. We need to hear from the Minister today where the Government is going on that issue. We cannot talk about spending money in the Ministry of Labour when workers do not know how they will be affected by the Government's attempt to reposition Barbados to participate in a new global economy.

I, therefore, do not want to be too expansive at this stage as I have to deal with the Poverty Alleviation issue and the Welfare Department and so on but I got up just to give the Democratic Labour Party's case some focus because I expect to get some concrete answers from the Minister on these issues.

I will come back, Mr. Chairman, later to deal with other issues relating to the Ministry of Community Development but I wish to hear from the Minister on the issues that I have raised.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am particularly happy that this Head is being debated today finally in this Honourable Chamber since I believe that the genesis of any development in this country must be engineered at the community level with tangible contributions coming from the private sector in this country.

Sir, I am glad that additional consideration has been given to the care of the elderly since I have been calling for this measure for quite a long time in this Chamber. Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to revisit the National Assistance Board and some of the programmes that this department has instituted for the care of the elderly in this country. At the same time I would also like to compliment the staff of this department for doing what I would consider a very good job. At the same time, Sir, I believe that the home helpers are doing a very good job but I believe that they should be given five days. I will draw an instance why.

The care of the elderly in Barbados cannot be a Monday to Friday exercise. I believe that it should be an ongoing exercise. I have an instance to report to the Honourable Chamber, an incident that took place in Parkinson Field. An elderly blind person by the name of Mr. Lionel Shepherd. He is living alone and he is only getting home help attention three days out of five. In addition to that he has suffered an unfortunate accident in his home. I am saying that if you take that particular case we will see how many more senior citizens like that in Barbados are suffering a similar fate.

I am saying that if you are going to look at the care of the elderly we also have to look at trying to get our home helpers back to a five-day work week.

Sir, our senior citizens, I believe that we just cannot put or cast them aside like Indians on a reservation. We have this thing in Barbados that once you reach 65 you are supposed to take a back seat and probably hang up your boots and die. I believe, Sir, as we go into the 21st Century we have got to plan serious and tangible programmes to care for our elderly. The National Assistance Board had a promotions committee planning work for them and I believe they still have this committee. 3.55 p.m.

Sir, I would like to see the redevelopment of their memory bank where this particular item used to tap in on the memories of senior citizens in Barbados and store them for posterity. There are only 2 memory banks I know of

in the Caribbean, one in Trinidad and the other in Jamaica and one was being developed at the National Assistance Board when I was there called the Barbados Memory Bank. Sir, we should be able to interact and the senior citizens should be able to fit back into this society and interact with our young people.

I am currently working with the National Assistance Board Drama Group and I am asking the Honourable Minister for a grant for the drama programme that is going on and normally when I ask him he obliges. Sir, it is programmes like these that we need to help with our senior citizens.

I believe that every community, particularly housing areas in Barbados, should have a day care facility for the elderly and I am calling on the Honourable Member, Sir, for a day care facility to be established in St. Michael South East in Haggatt Hall because, Sir, that is where the largest percentage of the elderly of St. Michael South East live.

In addition, Sir, I would like to see that the bus that was donated to the National Assistance Board from a group in London be put to use. The last time I enquired I was made to understand it was awaiting a driver. I stand to be corrected but that is what I was told the last time I checked with the Police Department because it is now in MTW yard. The point is that each and every one of us have programmes within our constituencies planned for our senior citizens. I have regular picnics during the week and when I want to access transportation to carry them to the various venues the only one that is available, Sir, is the police van, therefore I have to dig deep into my pocket for the very little pennies that I have to try to get additional transportation to carry our senior citizens out.

You would be surprised, Sir, to know the loneliness and discomfort that a lot of these senior citizens are currently suffering. They are very happy when they are taken out on recreational activities like this. So I would be very happy, Sir, to see the bus that was donated to the NAB running so that we could access it to carry out our senior citizens.

Sir, I believe that all the housing areas in Barbados should have a senior citizens home. The senior citizens home in Golden Rock is full and there are many senior citizens in St. Michael South East who are trying to get a place in this home and they cannot get in. I am calling for an expansion of the Golden Rock Senior Citizens Home to accommodate the elderly from St. Michael South East.

Now, Sir, we have a meals on wheels programme and again, Sir, I believe that every single parliamentarian in this Chamber should also try to operate a meals on wheels programme particularly on weekends, Sir, so that the elderly in our midst could share this facility.

Also I would like the private sector to listen to me because I would like a donation of one van for the Pinelands Development Council so we could expedite a more efficient service for the elderly in our community, particularly on weekends.

Now, Sir, I want to shift away slightly from looking at the elderly and look at community development. Sir, I think that a revolutionary step, and I keep saying it and I will repeat myself over and over on this, was made by the Prime Minister of this country when he granted \$1.2 million to the Pinelands Creative Workshop. Sir, I say revolutionary because it empowers the community and we need to empower the communities in Barbados a lot more if we are going to really touch the heart and the base of the poverty alleviation programme that has been implemented.

Sir, let me say this. That \$1.2 million has been given to Pinelands Creative Workshop to serve the entire island. I am saying, Sir, that if that \$1.2 million is given to serve the entire country then it cannot last too long but the type of programme that has been presented by the Pinelands Creative Workshop for the \$1.2 million is one that is very innovative. What I am hoping, Sir, is that more grants of this nature would be granted to other community groups across Barbados, like Eden Lodge, Gall Hill, like St. Elmo's in the north, like Bonnetts residents and Haynesville. I am talking about progressive, organised groups in Barbados because if we are going to tackle poverty it must be tackled at the community level and every single Barbadian, every responsible Barbadian, every business in this country, along with Government, must play its role in alleviating this cancer called poverty that is in our midst, Sir.

Sir, if we are going to empower the communities I am calling at this point, Sir, on the 32 community centres across Barbados, that those centres be handed over to those organised communities so that the Parkinson Community Centre could be handed over to the Pinelands Development Council for its management. What we would basically be doing, Sir, is giving the community group the resources to implement and execute their own programme and hence they will generate their own incomes. Sir, if we are talking about empowerment then we would have to look at it in its full context.

In addition to that, Sir, I believe that we have got to fight and tackle this thing at all ends, Sir. The renovation of all school halls in Barbados is a must, Sir, because we have some people in Barbados who believe that education is a 9 to 3 exercise and then after 3:00 o'clock we shut down the schools and that is it. The schools play an integral part in the development of any community, particularly after 3:00 o'clock and I am calling again

and again and I will not stop calling for the school halls in Barbados, particularly at the newer secondary schools, to be renovated and changed into a kind of auditorium so that those communities that do not have access to these kinds of facilities could go to the school and do their own drama programmes etc.

It is at this point, Sir, that I would like to pay particular thanks and give credit to our young community minded person, Miss Hazel King for developing over the years an arts and crafts school in St. Michael South East. I would like the Ministry of Community Development to visit this institution that has been there for well over 2 decades and lend some assistance to her. Again I am asking for a grant although I know community development has been given for its operational expenses of over \$60 000 which I think is good but which I still think is not enough to run 32 community centres across Barbados in terms of their programme. But this particular person, Miss Hazel King, I am asking the Minister, and I believe that he will grant her the favour because what she wants to do is to establish a computer room and also the building is kind of run down and needs some renovations. So she would need a grant to help in this process.

Sir, I was watching CNN and there was an interview with Janet Jackson and one would have thought that that interview would have dealt more with music. General Powell was also at that interview and they were talking about embarking on a new programme in America which basically looks at adopting a teenager and supervising that teenager's development until he reached the world of work. I think we are reaching a serious crisis point here in Barbados where once we get into what I consider the comfort zone in this country we tend to forget those struggling persons in our midst. If the private sector, because I believe that over the years too much emphasis has been placed on the Government, why the Government is not doing this and why the Government is not doing that and sometimes the political cannibalism that exists in this country, Sir, is shocking and even sometimes in this Honourable Chamber. 4.05 p.m.

I think that both sides to this Parliament, Sir, have been elected to run the people's business and to manage it efficiently and effectively, Sir. This programme that I was very surprised when it happened in the United States, I believe we should adopt it in Barbados and we could call it our own big-brother programme within the community groups in Barbados. Each community group should be able to be put in a position where they can adopt less fortunate persons, but they must be given the tools. And if we are going to deal with the whole problem of development, I keep saying that we must empower the communities. We as politicians must turn out and support them, not only for political grandiose, or for somebody to say, "you know, I

saw my representative there." It is not that, it has to be more serious and a heartening approach to this whole question of dealing with poverty, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, in my two minutes I also want to look at sports. Because in my mind sports play a very small profile on Governments and this is successive Governments' list of priorities.

I am saying, Sir, that I would like to use this time to call for a headquarters for the Dominoes Association. Dominoes in my mind is the most popular sport in Barbados and I was at a meeting with the Chairman when they made that request and the Chairman promised them that he would try his best to make sure that they have a home.

Sir, I know that I will have time to come back because I want to talk about the development of youth soccer and other working class sports in Barbados. Sir, I believe that if we do not deal with these types of sports then we will not really be cracking at the base on how we could start working to alleviate poverty.

Sir, before this session is over I would like to make a document of this House a book on a conference that I attended called "Pathways out of Poverty," a conference which was held in New Zealand and subsequently Part 2 of it was held in Trinidad. Because using the criteria that have been set out in this book by the NGO organisations throughout the western hemisphere, and the CBO, the Community Base Organisation, I am sure that this would be a proper directive on how we could deal with the alleviation of the scourge of poverty at this level. As I said when I began my speech, Sir, that anytime we are going to tackle poverty we must tackle it at the community base.

Sir, I am just closing temporarily but I really want to come back and look at this whole item of sports, particularly at the community level.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before you close, I believe that you should quote me in relation to housing for the Dominoes Association. I did say that I was not the Minister of Sports, but I would report it to him because that is what I said on that occasion.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to begin by congratulating the Minister. I congratulate the Minister because despite the image which some Members of the Opposition wish to paint of him and his Ministry, when you examine his performance in terms of achievement, and I will go through some of it here,

Sir, facts not impressions you will see that he has been achieving despite what might be the impression being given.

I also want to say, Sir, that for me it is always a pleasure to hear the Honourable Member for St Michael South East speak, because he speaks with a certain amount of objectivity. When he has to criticise, he does so from some conviction and when he has to give praise he is not reluctant to do so. We need much more of that in politics.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: You all did so badly that I could only congratulate when it was necessary. Therefore when he gets up and praises areas in which obviously the staff and the Government have done very well, Sir, one has to recognise that but let me begin with a few things.

If you look at the figures, Sir, the Government is now spending on social services outside of pensions, about \$62 million a year. The amount being spent on social services by this Government in 1997/98 is \$62 114 498. If I go back to 1993/94, it was \$20 139 133. Under this Government there is a more substantial spending on the social services and it has increased 300% between the period 1993/94, I will let the Members have the figures, and the 1996/97. That is outside of pensions and the National Insurance. When we get to that we will talk about the National Insurance and that therefore what one is seeing is that as the economy improves and as the country can afford it there is obviously a decision by the Government to spend more on the social services.

Sir, I have the same concerns as the Honourable Members have for the aging population of Barbados. At the end of 1996 there were roughly 31 679 persons of pensionable age, 65 and over in our community. At the end of 2001 it is anticipated that these would rise to 31 945, by 2006 to 33 287, by 2016 to 41 760 and if we take the demographic trends in the community, by the year 2036 there will be 74 661 to a working population of 166 000. For every five persons at work, there is one person who is retired. By 2036 there will be 2.23 persons.

Now, that has a great deal of implications for how we treat the elderly. It has very serious implications as well for the social services and it has implications for pensions and what happens in this field, Sir. Therefore we have to start making very serious plans and that is why I am happy to see that the Government has adverted to these matters for the old aged people within our community. 4.15 p.m.

Last year for instance, let me say that we paid out in pensions some \$175.7 million from the National Insurance

Fund. That included both contributory and non-contributory pensions during 1997. So there is no doubt that this House must take very seriously what is happening with an aging population because the health care has improved in Barbados. We have also improved the quality of life for people and as medical science improves it means that people are living longer.

If I may put it graphically, a child born today has the chance of living 11 years longer than the person who is the average age today. That is the reality and the average for women is about 78 and about 72 or 73 for men. I have not got the exact figures. Women are much higher than men.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: It has implications for how we treat the elderly and therefore when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East speak of the type of care that we would be providing or we ought to provide, I think we have to advert to his thoughts on these matters seriously. Institutional care we do have in place. Yesterday Honourable Members spoke about the position at the Geriatric Hospital. That is one form of institutional care. There is the Home Help Service. Now the home help service, what is called home care services was instituted by us some years ago and roughly the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East asked for expansion of the working day of those persons from 3 to at least 5 days.

I would like to see us move to a 7-day week in respect of some persons. Last year, I believe the home care services catered to helping on a regular basis 970 persons who live in their own homes but who need some assistance. Some of them live alone. There were 228 new recipients. These are facts that should be given to the House.

You cannot criticise a department when they are doing better. In my view, as the economy has improved, I believe that we can make here a strong case for increasing the home help service both in terms of numbers, both in terms of quality of service and in terms of kinds of service.

I would like to say, because I have a constituency in which there are a lot of senior citizens. In fact, I am like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in this regard. Every week we go to at least two funerals. He likes them more than I do, Sir. He is usually at the head of the coffin. He told me that I should not only go and hold a seat. He attends several out of respect for the persons but the reality is that some constituencies, like mine, have a large number of what I call old people some of whom are shut-ins. These people do not necessarily want to go into institutional care but what they do want is assistance with making their beds, helping them in shopping and various things. They want not to be preyed on by a few

wicked people in the community who move in on them, get them to sign away their money on joint accounts, some of them take away their pensions including relatives. We have had to deal with that problem at the National Insurance Board where you will find someone coming as a nephew. He starts signing on behalf of the pensioner and the next thing we know the pensioner is dumped at the hospital or at the Geriatric Hospital or in a private nursing home and they are not paying. So we have to be careful of that. I believe the integrity of the people at the home help service has basically been very high. I would like to see that their standards are set there and that the home help service is expanded and that the service is also working, not a 5-day week, but a 7-day week.

I hope that if we reach that stage, from the labour aspect of it, that we are not going to be hearing that if you have to care for the aged on a Sunday that that Sunday is double time and a Saturday is double time. I would like us to move to the position where any 5 days count, anything over that would be the extra time by way of remuneration. It is the only sensible way in which we are going to approach using the resources of our country sensibly in this case just as the nurses have to go on Sunday. I do not want to hear from my friends in the union that they can only work it that way.

Sir, I want to move on to day care in relation to children. I am not going to say much. It is a little embarrassing for me to speak on this matter but I have to speak on it. My adopted mother was one of the first people looking after children and if I may say so, I think she did an excellent job. I am one of the beneficiaries of her generosity in this respect. I therefore had no difficulty when the Government - one of the past governments, I am not so sure whether it was under us or the DLP - invited us to allow her name to be used. I must say that I am deeply disappointed with the attitude of the Child Care Board that things that have to be done at the Madam Ifill Day Nursery seem to have always to rely on me or private sector people and this attitude that they are not repairing the place.

I looked into the Estimates this year and I said I was going to raise it in the House, Sir. I look into the Estimates to see and I heard the Minister speak and the place that is not being looked after is the Madam Ifill Day Nursery. Now, Sir, I do not want to have to withdraw her name but I will not allow her to be embarrassed in this way unless something is done about it. I said that to the Chairman of the Board. I have given them long enough and I want the Director and all of them to understand that. I do not believe that that should be the attitude taken to the Madam Ifill Day Nursery. She has done as much as John Beckles and more than a lot of people in this country in relation to children. She was one of the first people, if not the first, to start a school meals feeding programme in this country.

Therefore I feel that I should reiterate that. I do not believe that it should be allowed to look as it is and I know that it is in my constituency and obviously eventually I would probably pay up but I want that to stop because I do not believe that that is the attitude that we should have to the Madam Ifill Day Nursery. I have not written to the Minister about it but I spoke to the Chairman and now I hear a list of people and that is not included.

I want to move to the question of community development because I think that we all agree on this Side that community development is very necessary and I believe that as Members of Parliament we get a hard time but each one of us pulls our pockets in some respect and contribute to the community development. Now when they pay MPs you always hear the Press very fast to criticise that MPs want more money. All sorts of foolishness they want to put in the papers. They do not make the point that Members of Parliament are probably more community minded than a lot of the people in this country who stand on the sidelines, do not give up a moment of their time, make a packet out of the country, and are the first to criticise politicians.

I feel very deeply about this after 27 years in Parliament. I would like to think that we stop this hypocritical attitude that the people outside who are making money and who sit on the sidelines and who do not have the guts to stand up as politicians are fast to criticise us but when we do work and help in the community as each one of us does and pulls the money that they give us in here in Parliament... 4.25 p.m.

Every Member of Parliament spends in this way in the community. We help the old people, we help community groups. We help them develop. This is what is done and I want to make the point. I can afford to make it. I have nothing to gain now in politics and I know that I can say... I have to put this in perspective, Sir. Take for instance Bonnetts Residents Association. I am very proud of that Association. Those people have managed to come together as a community and have been an outstanding community particularly in running what is called Kaleidoscope. You see the number of tourists who come to enjoy it. Last year however, we got no assistance from any government institution.

I had to make a substantial donation to help the people in paying for their electricity. But the value of the association is that it brings the residents together so much so that they are able to help one another when they are in adversity. And if we are to reinsert in people that we are each our neighbour's keepers we must build up the community groups more and more than we have been doing recently.

When I was a child in Water Street, if my parents did not have meals for me I could have gone across the road at Bobby Thomas' house and eat there and sleep there. And the same went in his case. Nowadays that extended family seems to be dwindling and therefore when I see community groups like the Pine Community Group or the Bonnetts Community Group or other community groups of that nature, I am all there to encourage them and I believe that department of the Government and I say this to the Minister, his Department should be so organised that they are able to go in and help these groups to put up projects as the Pine Workshop has put up - very good projects in order to access not only governmental funds but also funds from some of the non-governmental and other institutions.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I will spend that two minutes talking about the labour policy because my friend the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke about the labour policy. I do not believe there is any Member in this House who will condone the attitude taken by offshore keyboarding company and these other offshore companies on the issue of recognition. Their attitude is of an age that is long since passed. If that is the type of attitude that they are going to bring into industrial relations in Barbados which have been largely harmonious relations, then we can do without these people and we have to make it clear. We want jobs, we want our people to be employed but we also have a thing called our self-respect.

That is why when I have spoken on the issue I spoke out. The Government has spoken out clearly and I would not like that to become a matter of divisiveness in this House. I did not believe that the Honourable Member who spoke intended it to be so, but I would not want people to get the wrong message because I know that the Ministry, including the Director of Labour has given many hours in attending to that and the numerous other complaints that they have had this year in settling disputes. It is not every dispute that comes before the Ministry of Labour that makes the newspaper, Sir.

That Ministry has a core of very well trained people not enough, but it has a core of well trained people who have been intervening when it is necessary and bringing solutions in industrial relations to retain the voluntarism that is part of the culture of Barbados.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member is right to this extent. We can do a bit more by legislation to strengthen the labour laws. We cannot do all and there are some respects in which the trade unions are not yet fully reconciled to legislation of a certain sort, in a labour legislation. We have to carry the social partners with us. I

am one who is satisfied that an Unfair Dismissal Act is necessary,

I believe that there is a draft of that Act within the Department. I believe also that within the Department there have been working on an Act to deal with the issue of recognition and I am sure that the Minister will say more about that. I am talking about these matters in that, in the NIS we have had to be ourselves looking at revisiting the severance payment legislation and we are also revisiting all of the social security legislation and we interact on a daily basis with the Ministry of Labour and particularly the Director, the Chief Labour Officer, who is the Director, who is on our Board and therefore I am kept abreast of these things happening. I would like to see this Parliament deal with the issue of unfair dismissal before this Parliament is dissolved at the end of its constitutional life. So we share that, Sir, and I hope that the Minister will take to heart the urgency with which the House feels on a matter such as this and that we will manage to get the legislation before this House as soon as possible.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I think that one of the very pleasant features of this evening is that after many a year we have heard the Minister responsible for this Head, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North speak. It was quite clear to me that he had no broad concept of his Ministry and he sat down without mentioning the new sections of his Ministry as though they did not exist. He sat down without mentioning them. When I spoke on the second reading of this Bill, I indicated that I thought this Ministry should be abolished. The Minister has now confirmed me in that view by his performance. I think that the Ministry should be replaced with a Ministry with a mission statement in its name that would bring together what is the ultimate objective of all these transfers that we are making in these social areas.

I suggest that consonant with what I see happening in the international arena, and the high probability of significant amount of funds being available internationally for this kind of activity, that it should be called the Ministry for the Eradication of Poverty by the year 2005, according to the NDP's mission statement.

If you do not wish to add the 2005 you can call it the Ministry for the Eradication of Poverty because there are many things in this country that are bothering. We go through these allocations from year to year, extensions of activities but nobody is taking really the broad view of what is happening in Barbados.

We speak of child care in relation to those people who come under the umbrella of the Child Care Department, but nobody recognises the extent to which

the abuse of children is prevalent in this society. Children in this society are raped day after day. Children are sexually abused. Children are impregnated and predominantly by people living and visiting the household. This kind of extensive criminality relating to our children in Barbados, this is something which attracts very little attention by the public agencies in this country, whether it be the Police Department, the Child Care Department or otherwise. The Child Care Department is just dealing with just a tiny percentage of the problems affecting children.

The second point that is hardly ever realised is that when we speak of poverty, children are the most affected victims in this society as a consequence of poverty. Very little attention is paid to that, their whole development, their schooling, the conditions under which they live, the whole question of schooling. All we are doing in terms of poverty alleviation has to focus toward one thing. Poor housing also contributes to these conditions within the home. Large numbers of people are living in a home in which there is only one bedroom, young children exposed to all kinds of sexual activity within their view and within their hearing day after day, night after night within the home. All this kind of thing is really destructive to the minds of these children and it tears their emotions apart. It destroys any prospect of any binding between child and mother, and child and father, and none of these things is being addressed in Barbados. These are very fundamental things and understand that when we talk about these small sums we are putting out here, we are dealing only with a very small aspect of the overall problem. 4.35 p.m.

Then there is this whole question of mothers in Barbados. True, women have made a lot of progress in our society and that is a highly desirable thing but nevertheless, has it dawned on anybody that in the context of Barbados, if you really want to deal with the issue of the eradication of poverty then you have to break it at the point of transmission from generation to generation. The point of transmission from generation to generation is through mothers in the context of the social development of our society. If the Welfare Department wants to focus on the issue of really dealing with poverty and the negative aspects of poverty, you need to focus on what is happening to poor mothers and their children in this society otherwise all you are doing - I would not use the term as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North used it. He said that all you have been doing to help poor people was spinning top in mud. He called poor people mud. I am not going to use it that way.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: On a point of order. I said when we assumed office there was nothing really in place to really and truly deal with poverty and all we were doing then was spinning top in mud. I never called anybody mud.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: But, Sir, you mean he has the nerve to get up and repeat it? You actually confirm what I said that all you have been doing for poor people through the Welfare Department is spinning top in mud and therefore you are calling them mud.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Do not worry. The Press is not going to carry a headline "Minister called poor people mud." They are not going to do that. I know they would not do that.

The point I am making, Sir is this. We have to look at the big picture and I have heard nothing coming from the Minister to suggest that he begins to envisage what is the big picture in Barbados. You have to deal with the issue of transmission of poverty. Now, how do we deal with that?

The Welfare Department has to focus on what is happening to mothers and children in this society. It means better welfare payments to mothers who are not working. It means better payments for children. It means ensuring that children go to school and that they have money to pay their bus fares and making sure that our poor children in this country do not go without food in their bellies. Unless we do this, we will never ever deal with poverty because as the Minister said, to put a more generous interpretation on it, if you do not do that you are spinning top in mud because what you deal with in this generation you are creating probably in another generation. Has that philosophy been articulated to you by any of the professionals in your Ministry? Have you put it across to them?

I am going to send you a copy of our issue on the question of poverty eradication.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We are very well represented in here today. You do not worry.

The point is that until that issue is dealt with and that is accepted as a part of public policy, then you have a problem.

Then comes the other issue, the issue of the elderly at the other end of the scale. That should be an easier problem to solve. It is an easier problem in this respect. Elderly people do not transmit poverty by and large. Elderly females are beyond their reproductive years and you get the odd elderly male who might misfire from time to time and produce a baby, but by and large elderly people do not transmit poverty from generation to generation. Therefore, while you pay attention to the elderly, and

that is vitally important, it has a completely different social significance in terms of the transmission of poverty and the disappearance of poverty from our society.

I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West talk about the elderly. He talked about the situation with pensions. We need to look at our entire welfare system and our entire social service system in Barbados and we need to rethink what we have been doing over the years.

I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the time has long gone for a supplementary old age pension but only, I repeat, only for those who live on an old age pension alone and maybe some who have a minimum National Insurance pension. It is nonsense, in my view, wasting public funds, expanding the amount of money you have to find from the National Insurance Board to be offering old age pensions to people like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who could well do either without a National Insurance pension or an old age pension. He does not need either one.

The point I am making is that we have been rather indiscriminate over the years because we were afraid of introducing systems where we can select the ones in greatest need and, as a result, we have broad-based welfare services often involving large sums of money and the net result is that those who have got access to more money and those who do not have do not get enough. I am sure that within our pension system the money can be found to give our old aged pensioners a supplementary old age pension, that is, those living on an old age pension alone.

Then, Sir, what is happening to support old women's organisations in Barbados? Does the Honourable Minister like or dislike women? I see here under Women's Affairs "Grants to Non-Profit Agencies - \$8 000." What is happening to support for women's organisation in Barbados? Does the Honourable Member like or dislike women? 4.45 p.m.

You have all these national organisations in Barbados including the National Organisation of Women whom I think do a very good job for Barbados and he figures that all they are worth together is \$8 000.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: \$8 000, that is what he has in the Estimates here under Head 39, on page 112. \$8 000 for all the women in Barbados. That is all he can find to make available to the various women's organisations in this country.

Many of the issues that confront this country, the solutions lie in getting women on your side and to get them to help to deal with the problem. The problem of young women in their reproductive years, the problems of child care, the problems of putting an end to child abuse and all this kind of thing like this, you need women on your side and you need to strengthen the women's organisations in this country.

I do not see that kind of philosophy anywhere articulated in the numbers that I see in the Estimates here. I do not see them anywhere. It is about time that we have a Ministry, in my view, which can bring together all the expertise available to these various little groups functioning as little ineffective empires. The National Assistance Board, the Welfare Department, have a Ministry and bring the whole lot together so that when we make a grant in here we know the totality of human resources and the totality of all the skills in this country can be brought to bear on the problems identified on the Floor of this House.

We cannot continue just simply increasing and giving a little bit more to the National Assistance Board. You know something, I sometimes wonder what they do up there.

This is a fact. I had a problem with a house fire in Valery. On the same day that the NAB started to put up a house, a house with one shedroof, an outdoor toilet and the front area - a wooden house. On that same day, a three-bedroom wall house was started about two or three hundred yards from where I live.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They were not building a house, they were transferring a house from one spot to another spot.

Would you believe this, Sir? That the three-bedroom wall house was built and completed before that house could be placed there and made habitable for the people.

I do not understand it, it boggles the mind. And when you look at the quality of the work. I understand that somehow or another a practise has developed there when they do not hire skilled craftsmen apparently. Apparently they hire people who can hardly knock together galvanise.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It was a wall house. That made it worst, it was a three-bedroom wall house that was completed from beginning to end before that house was transferred. It took them longer to get that house ready and the people already built a three-bedroom wall house.

I have been enquiring into this and I am trying to find out what is happening but I am advised that one problem is the quality of workman that they have because these people are prepared to work for less or something like that. The point I am making is that it is obviously a grossly inefficient situation.

I have to be very careful because I have no quarrel with the increase in the subvention but I would like to be assured that there would be greater efficiency.

The second thing, Sir. You are not going to believe it. I saw you standing not far from the spot and I spoke to you on a Sunday morning in the middle of a new housing development. Would you believe that either the Welfare Department or the National Assistance Board, I cannot find out which one did it, went and deposit a house with an outdoor toilet in the midst of this new housing development which is being developed by the National Housing Corporation.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: At Valery. I can carry you and show the house with the outdoor toilet and people have spent money and bought the spots next door. We have to stop this.

I am not going to vote for this thing in the Estimates unless I can get an assurance from the Minister that neither the National Assistance Board, the National Housing Corporation, the Welfare Department will ever again provide a house for an old person in Barbados without indoor facilities. Unless you can give me that guarantee, you are not going to get my vote on this. It is absolutely disgusting and disgraceful or whatever name you can call it by but at this time, in this century, as we approach the 21st century that any Government agency should be offering any house to an elderly person and sticking an outdoor toilet in the house at same time.

I think that it is wickedness. I think that it is a lack of concern. I am absolutely sure that from your response to what I am saying that you fully support my view and that if you had to cast your vote you would cast your vote with me unless it is articulated that what I said would be done.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to this debate, knowing fully well that the concerns of poverty, housing, community development and social welfare reached a zenith around November 1996. This is where the Prime Minister as a major concern in his policy agenda for Barbados...

I must therefore say and state clearly that many of the concerns relating to poverty, many of the concerns relating

to community development, welfare, housing and other social amenities can actually be better dealt with the introduction of community councils and/or the introduction of local government to Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I must tell you that I am very supportive of the Member for St. Michael South Central that by any other name which you decide that the introduction of another tier of local government is necessary in Barbados.

I say that because I am not concerned about the establishing local which has to do whether or not it can be financed but my concern really does depend largely upon the whole concern of equity in the provision of services and goods to a wider cross section of Barbadians at the lower level in the urban and the rural districts of Barbados.

I am suggesting that the best way for Government to tackle empowering the people of Barbados is to ensure that some strategy or some system and structure is put in place to guarantee a continued involvement not just every five years but from quarter to quarter, from year to year in the provision of their own services and the execution of their own services by way of establishing various councils across different parishes and if you will across urban and rural Barbados.

In this regard, I wish to make the suggestion that the concerns at that level would be very wide ranging. We are talking about the provision of housing, we are talking about the provision of community development services, we are talking about looking after the elderly, we are talking about taking care of the children, we are talking about dealing with disability among Barbadians and we are talking about a whole range of wider social services. I must therefore tell you that on that basis if we are really serious then there is already in place a method by which we can finance such a structure and on the basis of the distribution of population in Barbados, on the basis of where we have most of the people living we can make an allocation in accordance with that one factor identified as a first call, that is, we can divide the pie across the various councils according to the population density of the area. 4.55 p.m.

Now, if that is so it means that those councils which are most highly densely populated should get a greater share of the pie and you do not have to introduce another layer of taxation in Barbados because I am suggesting that the existing land tax in Barbados can be easily allocated across Barbados on the basis of land taxes, that is, the financing of a particular council can have its first draw on

the public purse on the basis of land tax collection in the various councils. For example in St. Lucy there is ...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: St. Michael as well. That is not a problem at all because you are thinking in terms of providing these services according to the density of population within the various councils so there has to be an allocation that matches the population distribution in the various councils.

Now, in that regard I am saying that the land tax could easily be used because it can be easily allocated. Land cannot be shifted anywhere so that in the greater Bridgetown area which presently has a population of 103 000 people, land tax collections would very much match that distribution of population and therefore from the point of view of financing there is no difficulty.

In fact I wish to call for the removal of Community Development out of that Ministry. You have Labour, Community Development and Sports together and I am saying that the future of Barbados has more to do with the development of human resources than any other matter in Barbados and that there has to be, if you are serious about developing and being concerned with the human resource you have to separate the Community Development Ministry from Labour and Sports. That would be almost \$40 million out of the existing conglomerate of Ministries which you have, Labour, Community Development and Sports.

Now, those workers in community development can therefore be removed and be given a mandate that embraces not just a small entity like disability or small concern like community development widely defined but they can be given a mandate that takes greater care, greater concern not only for housing and other social needs but anything that you wish to define as necessary in providing services to the youth and the elderly across Barbados. In short, money is not a problem, neither would you require any additional taxation to ensure the establishment of this structure of which I speak.

So I must tell you that notwithstanding that my party dismantled local government and notwithstanding that a political colossus in the form of the late Errol Barrow was responsible for it, the time has come for us to revisit this question of giving expression to political empowerment of the people of Barbados by way of ensuring that a structure is in place. It does not have to be the colonial type that existed then. It has to be something that ensures that the people in Deacons Farm, the people in St. Stephens, the people in the Pine, have an opportunity to participate in the decision making process in providing services to the various communities across Barbados. It is called

empowerment. It is called equity in terms of distributing power and taking the little niggling things out there from the concerns of the politician. For a politician to have to walk around and identify RNC 012 as an electricity post and then to take it to the Barbados Light and Power or to have to take it to the MTW. I am telling you that as a young man I hope not to be in that sort of political stream in the next couple of years where I have to be doing those kinds of things.

It has nothing to do with believing who I am. It has something to do with understanding that the task of the politician must be way beyond those little things and must be far more concerned with developing Barbados in the way it should be developed. I am surprised that the Deputy Prime Minister who is part of an administration that recently established the Urban and Rural Development Commissions does not understand that that concept can be broadened to embrace the concept of which I speak. So for the Deputy Prime Minister to dismiss local government but still to be part of a political decision making process that embraces an Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. It is not I who dismissed local government. The Democratic Labour Party in 1969 dismantled local government in this country. Not me.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I can deal with you any time. It does not make sense to me to understand how you can be part of a process that takes that into consideration and yet still cannot understand the need to inform people at the level of the decision making. But you are prepared to disguise the politics of it under an Urban Development Commission and under a Rural Development Commission which is seeking to provide the same kind of services except on a smaller scale. All I am talking about is broadening the scale in terms of providing these goods and services to the people and all that is needed is a mechanism to do so. So if the Deputy Prime Minister is part of an older process by way of not only of thinking but by way of age that is seeking to deny the people of Barbados that right to be involved in the political decision making then that is her business.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I am not trying to deny anybody anything. Let the Honourable Member tell us who is going to pay for it.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I have already said that financing of local government or any structure which you decide to determine is not a problem. We have already said that. It is not a problem. You were not listening. But then again the Deputy Prime Minister is in no way concerned

in developing this country along those lines or even coming to terms with ideas and creative thinking. She is locked in the past. That is her concern. She is of that ilk. It does not matter if you support her or not. It does not matter. Therefore all I am saying is that there is need for us. Why can't we as a people revisit the idea and the concept?

I know there are some on my Side who do not like the concept of local Government either. That does not matter to me. Are you saying that I have to be trapped in the kind of thinking because there are others on my Side who do not support the idea? Do I have to be contained and streamlined? There are other people so it does not matter to me. The time has come, as far as I am concerned, for the reintroduction of some layer of government to ensure that people have a say in the decision making process.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes. 5.05 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that there is a wider agenda.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, OB a point of order. The Honourable Member is speaking with a forked tongue. The Honourable Member sat down in that seat yesterday and said on three separate occasions that Parliament is a waste of time, and now he going to tell us that we must have local government.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am therefore seeking to make a contribution as an aside. I never said it on my feet, so it does not make a difference. I am saying that, and I remain committed to the idea. So if you think that you can disguise providing these kinds of services under an Urban Development Commission, or a Rural Development Commission and you do not see the need to widen the involvement, then that is a matter for you.

I think the time has come for us to consider, because it is not difficult to finance, some structure which ensures the delivery of these kinds of services and no one surveyor in 1997 can do it. You have to put in place a structure that, on a quarterly basis, people across different constituencies in Barbados, would be able to identify those who are in need of services, the elderly. The young people who are in need of services, those who are disabled and those who are concerned about it every four or five years, will not work. It has to be an ongoing exercise, where you can, from day-to-day be on top of those people who are in need of such services.

I have stated my position quite clearly that a structure has to be put in place. We are capable of financing the

structure. All that is required now is for those who are in favour to meet and think about the structure that is required and so put the legislation in place to guarantee that we can in fact, effectively deliver the kinds of services that come under the Community Development Ministry in addition to the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

I thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, we are discussing the Ministry of Community Development, Labour and Sports and I really do not like when we are doing the Estimates to get diverted by things that have nothing to do with the people. And so I am not going to participate in any intellectual exercise that will mislead anybody about anything when I am discussing the Estimates.

We have a Ministry that has been put in place under the system. We have and what we have to do is to discuss whether that Ministry is fulfilling its responsibility in the context of a system which we now exercise. But lest there are any doubts in anybody's mind about where my position is, let me say that a misunderstanding of terms can lead to further misunderstandings. For us to be discussing "Local Government" in the context of this will only lead to farther misunderstanding. Local Government is a kind of art and those who understand what it means, associate with it a certain system of Government in the United Kingdom which has been extended in other places,

Therefore we cannot discuss "Local Government" in terms of empowerment unless we are going to confuse the people. "Local Government" is a term of art, There is a complete structure in the United Kingdom under their constitutional arrangement for what is called "Local Government" and therefore when we talk about "Local Government" we are suggesting that we want to have a system that is akin to what exists in the United Kingdom.

The Democratic Labour Party spoke on that in 1967. It does not intend to speak about it again in those terms. We will speak about empowerment, but we will not speak about "Local Government" and if the NDP wants "Local Government" it must win the majority and get "Local Government". And if there are Members of the Democratic Labour Party who want "Local Government", they must find a system by which they can get that. But we are not going to be discussing "Local Government" and coming into Parliament and getting confused. I am not going to be confused about it. My position has been clear. If you do not understand the system, then we will have a problem. But the system is a very clear system.

The Democratic Labour Party put its position to the Constitutional Commission. But fortunately for us, we have the kind of Party that all Members are free to have

their view. Unlike the Barbados Labour Party which does not allow, and since you are the Government, you cannot, but this is one of the freedoms of the Opposition.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is a very bright Member of Parliament who spoke his position in the context of rubbish that has come before him.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now, Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister is here and now that he is here, I think I can address him through you. The Right Honourable Prime Minister should do something about the Minister who is responsible for this.

The Minister cannot go on four years in a row coming to this House and giving no account of his stewardship. It cannot go on like this.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you wish to treat it in an offhanded manner that is all right. But the Minister is not an idiot. The Minister is not a person that you would not have regards for. It means therefore that the Minister has contempt. If the Minister feels and if one of your Ministers feels that he could come in here with a whole portfolio and give no account of his stewardship, then you are guilty also of complicity. I condemn the Right Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister together. I want to say that the staff of the National Assistance Board tried its best under the most circumstances. The ones that I have contact with, now they are not sufficient. That is part of the problem, they do not have enough staff at the National Assistance Board. They have not had any guidance. You had a Board that did not meet for a year and you have given no account to the country for it. Even now you do not come in here and apologise for the fact that you had a bunch of cretins sitting on a Board who did not meet for a year.

The Minister ought to have come here and given an account of what happened with that Board. What he did with it and what steps he has taken. Furthermore you took up \$100 000 and did a study. You have not come back to this House to say what has happened. What was the result of the study? How do you get a copy of the study? What are the conclusions? What can we the citizens come to conclude about what they studied? We have seen a little spasmodic representation in the newspaper. You have not come in here to this Parliament where you have to account. At the end of the day your responsibility is here in this Parliament. One hundred thousand dollars is not easy. That is what he heard it cost. We do not even know if it is true.

That may very well be unfair that we are going around saying that somebody got \$100 000 to do the study.

We have never seen the study, Mr. Chairman. We have never heard of the study. We have no idea what it says except for a few spasmodic remarks in the newspaper. I feel that that is an insult to this Parliament. I would like to know what the study says so that I can agree, or disagree with it. I would have been much happier if the Honourable Member was saying in his presentation that he has studied it or the Cabinet has studied it and they have come to a conclusion. We could agree or disagree. But you cannot treat us with the contempt of going on with this very important part of our development where we are talking about the human resources, those to come and those that have been. All you do is come in here and make a few perfunctory remarks. I am unhappy with that and I am recording my displeasure. 5.15 p.m.

The Minister must understand that it is nothing personal. If he has been in this House long enough he can ask any of his colleagues over there. That is what this House is about. The problem, Mr. Chairman, is that this Committee is being perceived by some of the young members who have just come in here as a joke. But it is not a joke. It is a serious business. The Estimates are not about having fun. Ministers are not to feel that the Estimates are about having fun. It is about accountability. That is what it is about.

Senior members of the Barbados Labour Party have a responsibility to tell their junior colleagues that when they come here for Estimates they are to come ready and equipped to give account. That is why they are Ministers. That is why they are chosen above the rest.

Coming in here and making mock sport! And I have no idea how you are going to spend this \$59 million that are put in your hands for the next year. So when you get up the next time, because you will have to get up. We are going to be on this for a long time. Let me hear how you plan to spend it. I want to know. For example, you say you found nothing in place for poverty alleviation, well, let me tell you what was in place. The National Assistance Board was in place and the reason why we had the National Assistance Board and all of the other statutory boards is because in another dispensation it was decided that we needed to have some forum to move away from the purely bureaucratic.

We created a statutory board so that we could get away from the purely administrative system of the civil service. The statutory boards were supposed to deliver services to the people and by name the National Assistance Board, the National Housing Corporation, these agencies were determined to help to separate those who

needed assistance from the rest. They were supposed to alleviate poverty. It is simply that the catch phrase had not yet emanated from the United Nations and the alleviation of poverty is a result of what has to be done by the international civil servants. They have to come up every 3 or 4 years with a new catch phrase to keep themselves in work.

Alleviation of poverty has been the work of every Barbados Government for the last 30 to 40 years. That is what it was about. So the people who used to have pit toilets now have water toilets. The people who could not read and write and for whom a green verb was the norm now know the difference between "have" and "has". Education - free was the alleviation of poverty. Teaching people how to read was the alleviation of poverty. We have not gone anywhere near where we can go but to say that you found nothing in place, no programme for the alleviation of poverty is to give no substance to the reality of our existence.

While we may make a little mock sport during the political campaigns, when you get down to the serious business of Government you ought to understand what it is we are about. What we are about is transforming a whole people from a pastoral community and this is 35 years ago to where we are now regarded as the top developing country in the world.

It could not have been done by the Democratic Labour Party alone. It had to be done by each party when it becomes the Government carrying on the programme. So to say that you found nothing in place is really a manifestation of your own misunderstanding of your responsibility and your role and the system which you are working.

I do not mean that in a personal way, because he is not a person whom you can dislike on sight and I do not wish anybody who hears me to think that I dislike him. My first contact with the Minister, I found him to be proficient and that is why I am angry that he comes in here and behaves like a Minister who is not as proficient as he should be. That is my position on that particular Minister. I expect him to be better than he is.

I want to spend the next couple minutes on sports. Barbados continues to treat sports as if we had a physical education programme at Combermere when I was there in 1948. We have not yet come to grips as a country with the reality of what is required in the globalisation of sports. We watch television and we see people performing and we say how wonderful it is and when Obadele Thompson and Leah Martindale take us to heights we say these are our people but there ought to be in the Estimates some line which says what the athletes are going to get. In the same

way we allocate money for roads, we should allocate money for athletes.

I am saying that we have reached the stage by now where a cadre of our athletes who are going to be trained for higher service, for Olympics service, ought not to have to be worrying. In the same way the Chinese take responsibility for their swimming athletes we ought to be able to take responsibility for our athletes. We should be giving them a stipend that is worthwhile along with any other assistance which they can get so that they do not have to have some of the difficulties in training which we hear about.

I do not know enough about it to speak with the kind of authority which I hear others speak, but it seems to me that we need to change our philosophy at the level of the Government and it is no point anybody saying not the Government. In Barbados anything that is going to have a lasting effect gets its genesis from the Government. Anybody who wants to challenge that thesis let me say that in 1975 we were still marketing sugar by going to the CSA and finding out how many pence they are going to increase the pound by and the Government took hold of the marketing, decided that they were going to market sugar from thence and sugar became an important product for Barbados in the context of the world market and the Lome Convention.

So even at the level of the private sector, they look to find out what the Government is doing. I am suggesting that as the Minister responsible for Sports you can probably take your place when we are going to the Olympics. Nobody should ask if the Minister should be there. You do not have to hide. The Minister should be going to the Olympics as a matter of course because the Government should have invested sufficient money in what is going to happen at the Olympics that the Minister can go and lead the national team.

We do not understand nationality in this country as yet, although most of us talk about it. It is something that you have to invest in. You have to show a young boy - I heard somebody say today in passing that Barbados at the moment has the fastest 14-year old boy in the world. I do not know if it is true. I know that on the call-in programme... They will say I do not know anything about it so I should not talk about it but in here I know about in here and I can talk in here. If he is the fastest boy in the world now Barbados must invest money not talk in ensuring that he is the fastest 16-year old when he gets there, and the fastest 18-year old when he gets there. You should find out from a reputable group how much it costs and the Government must vote for it in the Estimates.

Do not let us go out there and ask people to put in a little penny and a cent and then you have people who

make the most money in this country writing and saying what we should and should not do. You have to lead. You have to go out and say this is what it takes, what we are going to do.

When Cuba was assailed by the massive giant in the north it is sports that kept the Cuban people together. Castro understood that better than anybody else on earth that you must invest in your people in a particular way especially in an area where they can improve. Can you imagine that if we were able and we had a government that could have invested in the Three Ws and Nurse and Wes Hall and Griffith and Sobers where we would have gone? To say nothing of the Chair. 5.25 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am asking the Honourable Member to wind up now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I think I have said enough, but I hope that in this contribution I have triggered my friend the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to get up and show me the fire in his belly and tell me what the Ministry has been doing and more particularly what it proposes to do. I am grateful to Your Honour.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to lend my very strong support to the Minister of Labour, and Community Development and to compliment him on the extensive work which he has been doing in that Ministry particularly in relation to the provision of social services.

I believe that this Government over the course of the last two years has ensured that the level of resources placed behind the social services in this country has become second to none at any other stage in this country's development. Indeed, Sir, the figures available to us will show that the spending on social services has moved from a meagre \$19 million in 1992 when it was severely cut back by the then Government to a massive \$62 million in this current financial year. I want to repeat that because I believe that the Democratic Labour Party has absolutely no moral authority to speak at all about the spending on social services in this country nor indeed Sir, in the alleviation of poverty.

The Budget in 1992 was \$19 million and the Budget in 1997 - 1998 some \$62 million. This has moved, Sir, primarily under the stewardship of the Honourable Minister of Labour, who has seen to it that persons throughout the length and breadth of Barbados can now have the opportunity to receive benefits under particular areas of activity.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber and I believe that she has a duty to check the facts before she speaks so vehemently on such matters. In 1992 the Ministry was the Ministry of Community Development and Culture only. This Ministry involved Sports, Labour and other additional Ministries. It is a very simple issue. If you track the Estimates you will see that the budget was more significant than \$19 million exclusively on social services at that time because they were spread across a wider range of activity.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am going to make a document I have, a document of the House because the Leader of the Opposition, particularly since he held the portfolio in 1991 and 1992, should know better than that. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is the one who presided over the worst cuts in the Social Services of this country, the worst cuts that led to people who were already being sent home and that is the point, having been sent home and having the social and safety nets removed from them at a time when they most required protection of the Government.

We know of stories that are legendary across this country as to the manner in which families were forced to divide, families were forced to suffer, all because they presided over cuts. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am going to give you the figures. The figures I spoke about constituted \$19.9 million had nothing to do with community development. It has to do exclusively... \$1.5 million to the Welfare Department in 1992. The grants in welfare institutions in 1992, one million...

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the figures are here. There is nobody hiding the figures and I know exactly what I am talking, \$19 million. \$7.4 million went to the Child Care Board. Cuts from \$9.3 million, a two-million dollar cut, an over 22% cut the time when the spending and the security services were being increased in this country. The National Assistance Board had almost a one-million dollar cut, \$3 million went to the National Assistance Board, the assistance to persons \$7.8 million in 1992. What is that same level of expenditure now, Mr. Chairman in respect of assistance to persons in 1996 - 1997 under the Honourable Minister of Labour? It is now \$15 million. A vote that was \$7.8 million five years ago is now \$15 million today.

It should not have been cut as you all cut it because you cut it from 8.5 down to below 7.5 at a time when people most needed it because you sent home 4,000 people not to mention carrying away 8% of people's salaries. I want to suggest to this Honourable Committee that

the Democratic Labour Party has as much right to talk about social services spending as they do on solid waste. They did not provide the resources at Mangrove and they ended up in trouble. They did not provide the resources either for the social services.

I want to suggest also to this Committee, Mr. Chairman, that at the end of the day, the most telling part that makes up that \$62 million is not only increasing the amounts that were available to Child Care, National Assistance Board, assistance to persons, but was the almost \$30 million that we have included this year in the fight against poverty alleviation.

Nobody stopped the Democratic Labour Party from putting aside \$30 million to do that. Nobody stopped the Democratic Labour Party from giving assistance to minimum wage earners. Nobody stopped the Democratic Labour Party from making sure that they could carry out a more comprehensive programme for fixing people's houses, and I want to agree that we have reached the stage in our development where the presence of things such as pit toilets in our country must be a thing of the past.

This Government has committed itself to making sure that pensioners in this country, or anybody for that matter should not have to resort and live in those conditions; and if it takes us through a period of consistent spending over five years to do it, it must be done. It is a priority, Mr. Chairman, but it does not stop there. The provision of social services is not only about the provision of large sums of money. We can see that. It is also about the capacity to be able to co-ordinate the delivery of those services. It is no sense the Child Care Board giving assistance to a family and the Welfare and National Assistance Board refusing to give that assistance to that particular family. What you do is to cure or to try to deal with a particular problem but you do not empower that person to rise above his circumstances and provide for themselves. 5.35 p.m.

I am saying to you that as a Government we cannot therefore be satisfied purely with the delivery of benefits to a family without seeking to move that family from a position of where they are recipients of the benefits to one where they can provide for themselves. None of us in here, I would like to think, would want to see us continuing to have to pay out these benefits year after year but we would like to be in a position in this country where people can provide for themselves. We accept the responsibility, however, that where that is not immediately possible, the State then has a higher responsibility to provide for those persons.

Sir, all we are saying is we believe that at this juncture, particularly where there is the benefit of economic

growth at hand, that the Government has a responsibility to ensure that we can provide for these persons, reduce the level of suffering they may have or the difficulties they may be facing, reduce the level of pain they may be suffering but, at the same time, ensure that they are in a position to be able to learn a skill or learn a profession that would allow them to be able to provide for themselves. That is why already in this debate I have stressed the fact that this Government has almost doubled the training available to people in this country because they must be put in a position to provide for themselves, not only the younger people with whom we are pretty much going well with, but we must also be able to expand that to persons particularly in the age range of 30 to 60 years old, particularly single women.

We have said, Sir, that we may need to tailor-make some programmes just for them because their responsibilities sometimes do not allow them to be able to attend classes like how a person who is not a mother or the head of a household can attend, or they may not have the financial resources sometimes to even deal with things such as bus fare in order to get to the classes. Therefore, we may have to look at decentralising that level of training.

It must be possible for a number of women in this country to feel that they are capable of achieving and they are given the opportunities to achieve without feeling that all that is their lot in life is to come to a politician and to ask for a job and hope they can get security of tenure if that job is with Government. We must be able to provide better opportunities for our women in this country.

I want to suggest that if there is any area in which this Government needs to expand forcefully in the course of the next two to three years, Sir, it will have to be in the area that allows the women who control households to be able to have opportunities so they can plan effectively for the raising of their children.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in his speech earlier said that the root of being able to get at the problem of poverty alleviation in this country is, in fact, the capacity to be able to reach those very same women, because more than 70% of our households are headed by single women and we must be capable of giving them the kind of confidence because they have first to believe in themselves.

Many of us in here, Sir, have to deal with them on a daily basis and they come to you first and you ask them "what can you do" and they will tell you "nothing." Now, these same people keep a family together. They have 3, 4 children providing for them out of nothing. They are making sure that all the clothes they have are darned or whatever to get to school. They are making sure that

they can use their ingenuity and wit's end to keep the household together but when you ask them what they can do they can still look at you and tell you nothing.

I want to suggest to you that a large part of that is because the society as a whole has not given them the confidence to be able to believe that they can participate in formal areas of employment using many of the skills they have developed over the years, and unless they have five CXC certificates they are worth nothing in terms of their capacity to get a job.

We have, therefore, to reorient their perspective of what is required from them in order to participate in the economy in this country. We have to make sure that those who would wish to be self-employed have access to forms of capital as well as the types of training and also the technical expertise they may need. In a very funny way, Sir, that is why I am so happy that the Urban Enterprise Fund and the Rural Enterprise Fund are capable now of acting as agencies to which those same people can go to borrow money to be able to start a little business or, indeed, the Micro Enterprise lending institution to which the Honourable Member for St. Philip South referred to yesterday.

I do agree that if, in fact, they are requiring three guarantors that is wrong because a lot of these people do not have the capacity to be able to call on three and four people in order to back a loan. The very idea that motivated this Government to form the Urban Enterprise and the Rural Enterprise Funds had to do with the fact that these people must be able to go through a process to achieve money without having to go through the red tape and be made to feel less than human as they do when they go into Broad Street to a commercial bank.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, in so doing, Government in a way was subsidising it because when we put \$2 million or \$3 million in each of these funds, we expect there will be a default rate, but we are prepared to fund that default rate because these people only need a chance and if 3 out of every 10 or 5 out of every 10 default, then the 5 that get must still be given that chance.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those people will not have a chance anywhere else and the Government must be able to provide for those persons that one opportunity to be able to get a chance in life.

I want to suggest to this Honourable Chamber, Sir, that if we are capable of helping to reorient the perspective

that many of these women who are between the ages of 30 and 60 have on life, we are capable of fighting half of the battle because if a woman is capable of providing for her family and instilling the correct values in her children, then many of the things for which people call out for today will be irrelevant because they have the character to face difficulty in life, they have the capacity to shun and move away from violence and criminal activity and they have the capacity to provide for themselves.

Sir, I will come back in this debate because this is too important a debate and this Government has done too much not only through the social services under the Minister of Labour but also through entities like the Urban Enterprise Fund, the Rural Enterprise Fund and the Micro Enterprise Fund.

Sir, I am going to come back and talk about what we have done in the Ministry of Education with the continuation of subsidies and the provision of services to help those who can least help themselves in this area.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to react to a few comments made by Members on the Other Side in terms of giving an account of my stewardship. I thought when I introduced this Head that I certainly gave what I considered to be a good enough account of my stewardship in the areas I mentioned in the half an hour allowed to me. I thought clearly from the reaction that everybody was saying "Well, your Ministry did extremely good work." 5.45 p.m.

I know very often, Mr. Chairman, that when your opponents realise the extensive work which you have done and which your Ministry is doing that sometimes it sends a message to them and you can see the political animal coming out.

Mr. Chairman, I do not really and truly want to praise myself and I do not want that when history is written that "Cappy" Greenidge did this or that the Minister did this or anything. Mr. Chairman, I do believe that someone would say that it was under this Minister that Barbados got its first astro-turf. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that someone would say that it was under this Minister that Barbados got its first disability unit. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that someone would say that it was under this Minister that Barbados got its first hostel for battered women. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that someone would say that this was the Minister that commissioned a study on the social services of Barbados. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that someone would say that it was the Minister under whom the National Certification for the training board in

Child Care was done. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that someone would say that it was the Minister that in 1997 revised the minimum wages for Barbadians.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I believe that the Minister should not mislead the House. The Minister is making statements to suggest that he is the first Minister that conceived all of these things and has participated in all of these things.

In every single item that the Minister has identified, there are just simply matters that he has continued. The astro-turf was conceived and promised by the Democratic Labour Party. The leasing of the land for example was done by myself when I was the Minister of Labour. It had nothing to do with you. All of the plans were in place. It just so happened that when you came you were just the Minister that signed the dotted line. You did not conceive it. You did not create the idea.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you are not making a speech. You have made your point. Will the Honourable Member please sit, you have made your point of order.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I was just mentioning a few things that I was responsible for. The figures which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East quoted just a few minutes ago showing the savage cuts in social services by the last administration certainly around 1992/93 when some \$19 million, that was the full allocation to social services as compared to some \$62 million now.

Mr. Chairman, the truth of the matter is that it was around that time when they savagely cut the allocation to social services that these experts in social services now...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I did not expect the Honourable Member to compound the folly that I heard earlier by that assertion. The budget alone for a smaller Ministry in 1992 was \$30 million. That was just Community Development and Culture. You now have \$64 million for a number of Ministries, Labour, Community Development and Sports. If you do not understand what you are reading, say so.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Can I clarify this. The Member is misleading the Chamber. He is referring to the statistics that I made a document of the Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, the departments that constitute the \$62 million do not include Labour, do not include Community Development, do not include Sports. They include the Welfare Department, the grant to the welfare institutions, the supplies of materials, the assistance to

persons, the National Assistance Board, the Child Care Board, the Poverty Alleviation Fund, the Rural and Urban Development Commissions and the Social Investment Fund. The money is being spent by them.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. We are debating a Head 39 which is a vote for \$59.3 million. That is what we are debating. If Honourable Members are telling us that we are debating something else, then we need to be informed. This is for \$59.3 million under Head 39 and I am now hearing \$64 million including Urban Development and Rural Development which was passed in here this morning without debate and not one of them on the Back Bench had a word to say about it and all of that they want to debate through the back door now. I did not know that it was so dishonest what was going on in here that information was being given before this Chamber dishonestly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. Will the Honourable Member please sit down.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has to withdraw those remarks. Nothing in here is dishonest. Those amounts under the Poverty Alleviation Fund and the Urban and Rural Development Commissions are spent in large part by the National Assistance Board at the direction of the Poverty Alleviation Programme in the Prime Minister's office. They are spent on social services. I am not going to sit down in here to have anybody refer to any remarks or anything I say in here as being dishonest particularly when, Sir, they do not know the meaning of the word 'dishonest'. I am asking that those remarks be removed from the record.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot be offended by the word 'dishonest', if she says the person does not know what the word means. It is impossible for her to be offended.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I asked for those remarks to be removed from the record.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I thought I was debating Head 39 but apparently either somebody on this Side is confused or there is an element of dishonesty because we are now hearing that we are debating \$64 million.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are debating Head 39.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I would like a ruling because I was told that I was being dishonest in the use of these remarks.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have made my ruling. Please carry on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I asked for a ruling on this matter. Mr. Chairman, I asked for the remarks to be struck from the records. I do not get in here and talk about anybody being dishonest or anybody writing exams for their brothers or anything else. I am not going to go down that line, Mr. Chairman. I asked for a ruling and I am going to keep getting up until I get a ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have made my ruling already. Please carry on with the debate. 5.55 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, the point I was making was that in 1992/93 when something like El Nifto struck and all of those persons were sent home and forced into what could be called poverty that one would have thought that if it was one area that needed some increase it would have been the social services. But, Mr. Chairman, the opposite happened and the Democratic Labour Party savagely cut the social services to the point that there were certain people who went to welfare asking for assistance and were told, we cannot help you. This is the point I am making. And now these same persons claim to know so much about social services and what you should do for the social services and so on, the exact opposite of what they are saying they did when they were in office.

In other words, Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that they treated social services almost like a drowning dog and they pushed the head of that dog under the water and finished drown him altogether. That is exactly what happened with the last administration.

I want to make the point, Mr. Chairman, and I want to reply to a few things said first of all about the Labour Department. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that if a single dispute burst out of the Labour Department where there is no settlement then it seems that the Labour Department is the worst thing in the world, they cannot settle any disputes. But I want to make the point, Mr. Chairman, that the Labour Department over the past year was called upon to intervene in approximately 55 disputes and in almost every case there was a settlement. The truth of the matter, Sir, is that the Labour Department does not come out and make a public statement on every dispute it settles. The Labour Department does not look for headlines. It has to keep fairly neutral and you are not going to see big headlines that the Labour Department settled this dispute, the Labour Department settled the next dispute. That is not the way the Labour Department operates. The Labour Department does a lot more conciliatory work than actually hits the newspapers or actually hits the headlines. I get reports about settlements at the Labour Department very often, Mr. Chairman, and I know that they do good work

there. The impression being given that no disputes are settled at the Labour Department is completely wrong. Unions and so on will come to the Labour Department. They will bring matters and the matters will be settled.

Mr. Chairman, let me say something. They also spoke about the matter involving Offshore Keyboarding and that burst from the Ministry even in my absence. I was not even here and it went to the Prime Minister. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the big one before that was the Light and Power Company and I kept on that matter for hours and hours night after night. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that at the end of that dispute, both sides, the Union and the Light and Power Company commended me.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I sat on Light and Power myself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member for St. Philip North take his seat.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: There was one particular day I was 14 hours straight with the Light and Power.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you take your seat, please. A point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member is misleading the House but I will not stay in this House and allow any Minister to take the credit from the Prime Minister. It was the Prime Minister who settled that dispute.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I said it was settled under the Minister of Labour.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got 2 minutes.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I want to say something about the disability unit and I realise I cannot do it in 2 minutes. What I will do is come back on that one, Mr. Chairman.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the matters covered under Head 39 are not frozen, Sir, in a moment of history. There is a very recent, very important history for the management of our labour affairs, to the management of our policies in relation to the social services to the community development, to the management of women's affairs and the management of sports. It

would be safe to say on an accurate reading of that recent history that in the last 10 years but more especially, Sir, and I want to stress especially so, in the period between 1986 and 1994 a kind of institutional paralysis set in, that hamstrung the functioning of the Ministry of Community Development, that a kind of intellectual dependency set in, that hamstrung our approach to occupational training and there was a state of flux governing the way in which our sports affairs were managed.

I say institutional paralysis, Sir, because there is a history. In 1986, on assuming office, the first thing that the Democratic Labour Party did as a signal of its intention to chart a new course was to carry out a commission of inquiry into the activities of the National Assistance Board, a committee constituting a Mr. Oliver Jackman, a gentleman from the Central Bank, a Mr. Springer and others. Arising from that inquiry recommendations were made that were intended to serve as the basis for the charting of a new course in relation to the meeting of the needs of the indigent and marginalised in our society.

I remember, Sir, that the Committee recommended that there should have been a re-ordering of the relationship between the National Assistance Board and the Welfare Department and that many of the structures in the National Assistance Board should have been done away with and the Welfare Department should have been put back in a position of pre-eminence where meeting welfare of the indigent was concerned.

For the entire term of the Democratic Labour Party between 1986 and 1994 not only were the recommendations of that committee ignored but there was absolutely no initiative taken to redefine the nature of poverty in this country, no initiative was taken whatsoever to find new institutional and non-institutional ways of meeting basic needs. 6.05 p.m.

And the same old rickety structure was retained to the point, Sir, where I am qualified to say that there was a form of institutional paralysis obtaining. That institutional paralysis was compounded when the country got into economic problems and a bankrupt administration of the day felt that the burden of the adjustment should fall more severely on the social sectors of Barbados.

As a result, Sir, and the numbers have been a truce from Members speaking from this side, cuts in the order of 25 percent, reductions in allocations were imposed on the Child Care Board and the National Assistance Board. So you had budgetary severity adding to institutional paralysis, giving rise to a genuine crisis in our social sector. And that is perhaps, Mr. Chairman, why the Roett Report had to be occasioned, because Barbados' progress on the economic

side was not being mirrored in corresponding changes in our capacity to meet the needs of the indigent.

I say also, Sir, there is a kind of intellectual dependency that was imported into the way in which we sought to deal with our training. The Democratic Labour Party came and found a National Training Board, home grown that had been changed by some of the most eminent men in this country. May I remind the House, Sir, that the first Chairman of the National Training Board was the late Sir Hugh Springer. And, rather than seek to build upon it, Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party's approach was to go to the World Bank to get guidance from the World Bank about something called a TVET, a council in which no Minister at all could have any role to play.

And as a result, Sir, all kinds of foolish ratios were imposed by the World Bank, all kinds of foolish conditionalities, Sir, imposed by the World Bank that would have also included the abolition of free education in this country became part and parcel of the definition of occupational training programmes in Barbados. It is a shameful, shameful, shameful episode in the history of this country. Where rather than build upon something that was home grown and that was working, the Democratic Labour Party accepted wholesale, a foreign model from the World Bank with the result, Sir, that there has been a stagnation in the training effort of the National Training Board, arising from the fact that the resources that should have been going to the National Training Board were diverted to other foolish purposes. This resulted as well in the fact that we have not been able to have a supply of skills commensurate with the demand for skills as they have evolved and are now evolving.

Mr. Chairman, in the area of women's affairs, in the area of sports, it was the kind of business as usual, a lack of focus. It really is true to say, that there was no concept of the social sector as a sector of activity in its own right. There was no development philosophy, which informed the previous administration and which should have alerted to the fact that they had to be a deliberate process of social engineering in order for us to be able to translate continued economic and material progress into social gains.

Sir, at the worst there was institutional paralysis, there was a bad allocation of resources and my Members have referred to it. It reflected itself in a sharp cut in allocations to the social sector, precisely at that point in time when the human condition was under the greatest stress. I say, Sir, therefore as I suspect it has been said in this debate before, that the Democratic Labour Party's approach in this area is equivalent to their approach in solid waste management.

The Democratic Labour Party has no more moral authority to speak on social service issues than they have any moral authority to speak on the management

of solid waste facilities, Sir. The experience in both areas has been a dramatically shameful experience and the Minister of Labour and Community Development has, over the course of the last three years in his own quiet way, but purposely so, been trying to break the institutional paralysis to infuse the sector with greater resources, to bring a greater sense of coherence in the relationship of the principal institutions, particularly the National Training Board.

Also, Sir, to energise institutions like the National Sports Council which has a role to play in the development of this country that goes to the very heart of the matter of creating well-rounded and decent citizens. The increased allocations that have been granted under these various Heads reflect the commitment of the Government to use the Ministry of Labour and Community Development as one of its principal instruments for social engineering.

But we have, Sir, been also supplementing the efforts of the institutions under the Ministry of Labour and Community Development with new institutions, because they recognise that the social sector in Barbados was not functioning because institutional paralysis had set in at its core. It was clear to us that the old Community Development Division, as conceived historically, could not in and of itself deal with the fundamental problems of sharp poverty in areas of rural and urban Barbados. And therefore we have a Community Development Division of course, but we also have evolved specialised institutions to deal with the severe incidence of poverty in those parts of the country where poverty must be addressed.

That is why expenditure under this Head has to be seen in conjunction with other expenditures because they form part of a holistic approach, Sir, to cause the social sector of Barbados to be perceived and to function as a similar sector, as manufacturing is a sector, tourism is a sector and the like.

Mr. Chairman, these Estimates reflect a policy, first of all to rescue the social sector of Barbados from the dilapidation to which it was condemned by the Democratic Labour Party and not only because, Sir, of the recession, but because of a lack of fresh thinking of that Party over eight years. It reflects, Sir, not only that initiative but it also reflects an initiative to broaden the scope of opportunities available to the ordinary Barbadian citizen by a new exciting range of initiatives arising from the Ministry itself.

I would be glad, Sir, if the Minister would speak to what is contained in the Sports Programme because this has been gone through with great particularity and it is our intention to use sports, not just as a creative outlet for the energies of the young, but also to try to make sports an

increasingly important avenue for increasing income earning opportunities for Barbados.

We will, through these Estimates, Sir, for example, bring the first mini-stadium to Barbados to bring semi professional sports to the communities in a way that it has never been done before. And, I could go on, Sir. But I just want to say that the reform of the social sector of Barbados at the turn of this century represents itself as one of the most exciting areas of public sector endeavour. And that essentially this debate on Head 39 should be concerned with the way in which these Estimates this year, will contribute toward the building of a defined social sector, Sir, and the enhancing of its role in national development. 6.15 p.m.

Now there are aspects of the Head that I would like to deal with particularly. At the start of this administration I said that there were 3 essential aspects in the sustaining of employment. First was to create conditions under which new enterprise could evolve, the second was to create conditions under which existing enterprises could be expanded and the third was to make sure that to reconcile the supply of skills with the demand for skills as they are likely to evolve. Those are the 3 major planks of any serious programme of employment creation.

Jobs come from only two basic sources, the creation of new enterprises or the expansion of old ones but we can create jobs but not be able to fill them unless you deliberately reconcile the supply of skills to the demand for skills as they are likely to evolve.

At this juncture in Barbados where we have established the two first conditions, namely conditions for the creation of many new enterprises and secondly the condition for the expansion of many existing enterprises, the same conditions become increasingly crucial to whether or not we will satisfy and reduce unemployment to manageable proportions.

I want to add that at this juncture we must be careful to reconcile supply of skills with the demand for skills as they presently exist and as they are likely to evolve. This casts an enormous obligation that is paramount and profound because we have to face the prospect of generating a large number of new jobs and now have to ensure that Barbadians with the requisite skills will be in place to fill the jobs that will be created and the National Training Board and the TVEC Council therefore has the strategic role to play in the achievement...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is a foolish approach to Government to feel that no Minister can have a role to say how a council should be composed. Foolishness!

Mr. Chairman, it would behoove the House for us to treat the accounts of the National Training Board and the training institutions with seriousness, Sir. The National Training Board's allocations are intended to enable them to expand substantially training opportunities to ensure that at this stage of our development we do not find ourselves having many jobs created but not the relevant number of skilled people to fill them.

I would like the Minister to elaborate on those programmes because there have been a large number of important initiatives taken by the National Training Board to frame the way in which to change the concept in which we used to train young people.

I saw at Eden Lodge a module for training that is so relevant to our century where young people under a past dispensation were trained in masonry and carpentry by being taught how to patch houses and so on. The new approach of the National Training Board took them as a corps of workers and caused them to build a house from the start so that they are endowed not just with the specific skills but they came to understand the construction business.

Other similar modules are now being devised to be implemented by the National Training Board and I am pleased with the programme that lies behind these Estimates. As I said, Sir, they are all intended to put the social sector in its rightful context in the development of this country and I want to support Head 39 and to support the Estimates.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful to enter this debate at this time. I want to say that any government that brags about spending \$59 million, an increase of \$39 million, and has a society which is still scrambling to get certain services that we would regard as basic services, I am saying that that is money not well spent.

Old people should not be given home help service on a 3-day per week and we clap our hands and behave as if we are doing something for old people when \$20 million was being spent and they were still getting the 3 days and sometimes 5 days. The old people who looked after this country, who worked in the fields and who sweated to put this country where it is, deserve to get care for 7 days and I will not support any estimate in this Assembly that can only account for looking after old people for 3 days. They have worked hard enough.

Let me tell you something. I have said before that I came in this House of Assembly in 1994 and I can only account for what happened after 1994. I have seen in these Estimates that old people are being cared for on a 3-day a

week basis. After an increase of over \$39 million I am saying that they deserve more.

I am also saying that the old people in this country should not be paid bi-weekly. They should be paid weekly so that they can better budget their finances. So I am calling on the Prime Minister to make the necessary finance available so that the old people can get their pensions on a weekly basis. You divide 2 weeks by 2 and give them 52 weeks which would see an automatic increase of 2 weeks' pension for them. He cannot quarrel with that for the simple reason he has enough money from the VAT that he can afford to pay the old people that money.

The Prime Minister in his Second Reading speech talked about how we should look after the old people and I agree with him and one of the best ways is to make sure you give them more money so that they can employ people to assist them.

I am calling on the Prime Minister to give the old age pensioners their pensions on a weekly basis. Instead of giving them 2 cheques, send 4 cheques per month and 52 cheques per year and I do not want any 48 cheques. I want 52 cheques for those old age pensioners. It is only an additional 2 weeks so that is nothing hard. VAT can afford to do that.

We have another serious problem in this country where we have children's homes like Barrows, Fair's and others. We do not have the necessary security and most of those areas the staff are women and we do not have security at those areas. I am calling on the Minister of Community Development to make sure that he puts the necessary security, especially at a place like Fair's, where those women at night have to walk a long road to get to a bus. They are unprotected and not only that, we are facing a particular problem where some of the kids are involved in things that they should not be involved in and where people who are involved with that situation are threatening the staff.

We need to protect the staff or soon we will have a situation in this country where we have homes but we do not have people to look after the children in the homes.

So I am asking the Honourable Minister, with the increase that the Honourable Minister of Education bragged about, to take some of that money out and provide it for security for those women. I am also asking you to make sure that those roads have street lights so that the women can walk and at least see who are about to interfere with them.

We must look after not only the children in the homes but the staff who work in those departments. We must

understand that they are people and we have to look after their welfare.

We also have another serious problem in this country and sometimes I wonder whether what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was correct and it seems to be correct to me because whenever I look at the Budget I cannot understand why the NAB cannot deliver more houses to the poor people in this country. The Minister has a mandate to make sure he provides and repair houses for the old people in this country. 6.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am sick and tired writing and begging on behalf of poor people. I do not believe I should have to do that. I believe we have people and I know they do their jobs, welfare officers who go around and make sure they write the names of people who need assistance. I know they do it but yet still you cannot see the results. On top of that you have politicians doing the same thing. The old people in this country deserve to be treated better.

I am saying that with a vote of \$62 million we need not to be worrying about this. Sometimes you hear ideas and sometimes you do not support a particular principle but when it is properly explained even those who do not want to be converted sometimes must be converted. I must admit. It is very difficult to convert me into certain things but after listening and watching what goes on in this House for four years I am saying we need to find a system in this Assembly where we allocate resources to constituencies better.

I am convinced that something is wrong that every year as the MP for St. Lucy I come here and vote on Heads, believing that my constituency will be benefiting from something and at the end of the year I cannot see one thing that it will benefit from. I am saying that we need to see the Estimates broken down in such a way that at the end of the Estimates I can go to my constituency and tell them \$2 million or \$1 million is allocated to my constituency for road building this year, but after these Estimates are finished I cannot tell my constituency how many roads will be built in my constituency.

I think it is unfair and we need to get a better system. That is why we as young politicians need to come up with a system where we can come to Parliament and discuss Estimates, and you know that Christ Church South will get \$2 million for roads, St. Lucy \$4 million, and some other parish another set, but we need to know by the time the Estimates are finished how many roads will be built in a particular constituency. It is a waste of time coming to this Assembly and just voting money and you do not know how it will be spent.

I do not believe that any Minister or Chief Technical Officer should be the ones deciding what roads are to be built. This Parliament, the one that votes for the money should be the one to decide how the money should be allocated and where the roads will be built. Prior to 1994 I was told that would be the ambit of the Chief Technical Officer. All of a sudden I do not know who is responsible for that. You must admit, Sir, that roads are important for old people. They need proper roads to walk on.

I was sent a letter asking me to identify and prioritise the roads within my constituency. All I had to do was to prioritise them because the first thing I did when I was elected was to go and sort out the roads to be constructed. I sent it to the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Transport and Works. That was nearly three years ago and I cannot tell you what is going on. I am saying, Sir, that if you expect me to come to Parliament and vote for those Ministries, then I need to know what I am voting for because as it stands now, I am only voting for money and I do not know where it will be spent.

Young politicians are not going to come to this Assembly and tolerate this type of foolishness. We need to find a situation and a solution where we need to know and we want to know what we are voting for. This is not a Sunday School or something where when you go the priest says one thing, you agree. This is Parliament and you have been elected by your people to go and represent their interest and not just a vote for a large sum of money and you do not know.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Of course I speak to my conviction. You know that well. Let me say something, Sir. I want to congratulate the Minister of Community Development and the National Sports Council also for giving us a token sum at Rockfield and North Stars. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the good people of St. Lucy took it upon themselves to build a project for over \$350 000 and Government found it difficult to find \$100 000 to give them, when I would have thought that with a project of that magnitude on Government land, that the Government would have said "this is a good example and we will give this project \$100 000."

Mr. Chairman, would you imagine that the Government could not give North Stars \$100 000 to build a pavilion, and to develop a playing field which everybody is now admitting that it is the replacement for Kensington? I will make sure that it happens because what we have down there is proper parking and a beautiful scenery. That is what the tourists will like.

We did not finish there, Sir. We went to Rockfield, Sir, and the St. Elmo Club along with the Windsor

Club and the Youth Uprising renovated a community centre which we were told by the builders were of no use. Now when you see it you would not believe it is not a new building. Community Development helped us again but yet still they could have gone further. On top of that we had a situation where the Prime Minister came in here and voted \$500 000 for Gall Hill.

I must congratulate him but I am also telling him it is a bad example in light of what we just did in St. Lucy. You should have given them some money and told them "look, find some for yourselves because St. Lucy has set an example that you need to follow." I am saying that any Government which cannot see it fit to give a place like St. Lucy and those clubs \$100 million and 50 in another situation they need to ask themselves some serious questions.

I am calling on (he Minister of Community Development to make sure he goes back to his Ministry and he asks his people when are they going to repair the old people's home in St. Lucy. I am not happy to be writing people and not getting results. It frustrates me and I put down the pen. I will find another way. I like the idea of my comrade because it means that when you divide the land taxes I will get so me money to repair the homes in St. Lucy and we can allocate money for homes and roads and lights, then that is a good suggestion.

We understand there might be particular problems and we need to solve those particular problems but we cannot come in here and dismiss a good idea just like that. We must be prepared to listen to the young MPs when they have constructive ideas to give to this Parliament. We do not come in here to create strife. We come in here because we have something to offer to this Parliament and we will continue to offer it to this Parliament.

The 21st century is coming and it is the youth you have to look after. Do not create the same problems that you have created in the street, where you have neglected the youth and now we have this crime problem. Do not let it happen in here. Let us continue to provide an opportunity for young people to share their views.

I am saying to the Minister for Community Development that the home helpers should be given a seven-day week, however they want to float, and get two off-days; that the old age pensioners should be given an additional two weeks and fifty-two cheques instead of 26 per year. We want to see that additional two weeks in their pockets.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you very much, Sir, and I am saying to the Minister, I do not want to see us going to the Olympics spending a large sum of money, going to the Olympics, and not spending the money on our athletes. Because it is a waste of time going to the Olympics every year with people who are capable of winning gold but at the same time we are not doing enough as a Government to make sure they can win gold. We need to have a programme to look after those youngsters and to build them up. Mr. Chairman I am grateful to you and I will be back. 6.35 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller: Mr. Chairman, there are a disproportionate number of women among those who are unemployed and also those who appear to be unemployable in Barbados today. I have a very major concern about this. I have looked...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is stating a known fact that women are brighter than men in Barbados today.

Mr. Chairman, it concerns me very greatly that in particularly the 25-55 age cohort in Barbados, and I believe that again I can speak for Honourable Members on all sides of this House on this matter, we see them day in and day out in our constituencies, these women who today find themselves unskilled and unemployable, women who have raised families.

A few weeks ago one lady said to me: "Mistress, I even build a house" but there are women who today see their children picking up the jobs in the industrial estates and we have to be aware, of course, of the way in which the industrial estates in Barbados have totally renewed themselves in recent years.

Mr. Chairman, 20, 25 years ago the industrial estates in Barbados were, to a large extent, employed with the garment industry but we have seen in recent years that there has been a complete turnaround. There are very few industrial estates in Barbados today and you have some, I know, Sir, in your constituency, which are dominated by the garment industry today for all kinds of reasons which I really do not want to go into now because time is limited. I think most of us in here understand the way in which the new technologies have overtaken the estates in Barbados.

It is a very concerning and worrisome thing for me as a woman, for me as a representative in the City of Bridgetown and for me as a person with a concern particularly for women who find themselves in this situation in the urban setting. In rural Barbados it is a different kettle of fish given imperatives in the rural

setting, but in urban Barbados this is a very serious problem. I want to invite the Minister of Community Development and Labour and of Women's Affairs, and the Bureau of Women's Affairs, to address this matter specifically. It is a queer thing.

These women come to us and they are looking for employment. You have to be telling them week after week, month after month, nobody is looking for a maid nowadays. Everybody has a washing machine and a vacuum cleaner. Nobody is looking for that nowadays. When people call, they are telling you: "I want a mason. Do you know a carpenter? I want a lady who can do pastry or fine sewing." What people are doing, Sir, is they are identifying skills. It concerns me that the initiatives for putting at the disposal of these women skills, are to be found in the Ministry of Education, are to be found in the Ministry of Youth Affairs but not sufficiently in this Ministry which carries Women's Affairs.

I have in my constituency in the City of Bridgetown a wonderful Skills Training Programme and this is coming now under the auspices of the UN, the Drug Resource Centre. The concept of it and the idea that you would actually write up a project and you need to have specialised skills to write up a project, I am proud to say that there was, at least, one person who could do this. Just sitting in my constituency office, the concept was born. Today, at the Emmerton Community Centre, every evening between 5.00 and 7.00 p.m., you can go and for the sum of \$15 only you can select two of a list of skills which are available, and good skills, predominantly for women, although I am happy to say that there are some men in the programme. It has been going now for two years. It is administered by young people from the City itself, which is a matter of great pride for us.

Mr. Chairman, you pay \$15 and you can choose two courses. A term is three months and it is usually two evenings a week. These are skills which can make these women into earners. These are skills which can be turned to a profit. You know how often I have to be counselling women? You do not always have to be thinking in terms of working for somebody. It is going to be very much a feature of the early 21st century that more and more people will work out of their homes.

Two years they have had two graduation ceremonies, and I have been privileged to be invited to address the graduation ceremonies. But the most exciting thing - apart from seeing young, middle-aged, older people, all sorts, and right across the social spectrum, they are now coming from St. Philip and St. Lucy, I would like the Honourable Members for those constituencies to know - they are coming to join this programme.

The computer component within the programme is always oversubscribed. You have to be prepared to wait sometimes three or six months to get onto that. But one of the most engaging aspects of the graduating ceremony for me was at the end of it to visit the exhibition. The level of the work is superb. I saw lingerie there that looked ready-made to me. It looked as though it was imported, and these were beautiful things. I saw draperies, pastries, all sorts of wonderful items displayed, but the important thing is how women are using these skills to earn a livelihood. There are a number of canteens, restaurants, hotels too who do not engage the services of a fulltime pastry chef. There are a number of women who are making desserts, who are preparing chickens and meats and other foods, who are making Jamaican patties, rotis and samosas. It is nothing new. 6.45 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is the same thing as the pudding and souse but they are doing this as a full-time job. There are women who are making fresh fruit juices. I am grateful for this. I have never understood why we felt in the Caribbean that we should be drinking so many juices out of cans. There are women who are engaged in that now and women who are educating children, buying motor cars or small vans to help them in their business and in building houses.

There is a particular woman who gets up at 3 o'clock every morning and at 10 o'clock, she is outside Sandy Lane, making a good living. More and more women going into, not only the old traditional cottage industries but new, home based industries are coming out of this.

As I said, Sir, it concerns me greatly that the initiative and the impetus for this is not coming out of the Ministry which is responsible for women's affairs.

I want to appeal to the bureau and to the Minister to look at this because you are talking about a wide age range - age 25 to age 55 - that is the usual age range where these women come to us. I would like to feel, Mr. Chairman, that the Youth Affairs, the Education and Training, the UNDCP programme and other programmes including the Youth Enterprise Scheme could somehow find a way to consolidate some of the several programmes which are available in Barbados today.

There is a fairly high level of duplication here but it is really very important. It is alright for the Bureau of Women's Affairs to talk about mainstreaming gender in development and this kind of thing. We all know about that. I chair a council for the President of Inter-American Development Bank, which is coming to Barbados at the end of this month to have its meeting which monitors

the Women in Development within the bank and to satisfy itself that women's issues and women's concerns and priorities are mainstreamed in all of the bank's programmes. I well know of all of that.

I am talking about at the grass roots level now where it is the difference between being able to feed a child and not being able to feed a child. That women in Barbados are still greatly disadvantaged in everything that is happening. There is a great deal to be proud of that we have been doing.

I agree with the Honourable Prime Minister. The set back of the early 90s, we are paying a high price for them. I remember making speech after speech in here and saying that you cannot cut back at the cost of the social sectors. Instinctively, in respect of the World Bank, in respect of the IMF, that has always been the first reaction. As soon as they rush in and say, you have to cut back, instinctively, countries, not only in the Caribbean but in Latin America it is the same thing, instinctively they go first to cut education. I have never understood that. First they cut education and health.

Mr. Chairman, I would be willing to come back to this because this is a matter about which I feel very strongly.

I am much obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If I were travelling on a plane, I would be in Canada now. I was here for five hours.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and begged for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

It is proposed that lunch will be available from 12.30 p.m. and that we will resume at 2.00 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 2:00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 6.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, when the House last met the Honourable Minister who is not now in his chair, and I am not surprised that the Honourable Minister is not now in his chair, because that is symptomatic of the kind of performance we have had from the Minister in relation to his Ministry. He is now making a slow entry which as I said has been traditional with the Minister.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister in his intervention last night seemed to have wanted to suggest that the Barbados Labour Party suddenly came on the political horizon and developed all of the programmes for community development and that today in 1998 all across Barbados we have a wonderful collection of community events that really signal the work and the efforts of the Barbados Labour Party Government and the Ministry of Labour and Community Development.

The reality is that the evidence is clear that the Ministry has done little or nothing in terms of developing community programmes aimed at improving the quality of life in the community.

The Prime Minister spoke in terms of cutbacks in the social services during the period of 1991-92. In all fairness, that must be properly explained as part of the records of this House. The crisis of 1990-91, coupled with the advent of the Gulf War was triggered to a large extent by irresponsible statements made by a senior member of the Barbados Labour Party the then Leader of the Opposition, who triggered this entire country into a state of panic with the promise that he had seen a document which fell off a truck somewhere along the St. George Road which suggested that the Barbados dollar was going to be devalued.

That comment by the honourable gentleman I am submitting to this Honourable House had a tremendous impact on the well-being of this society to the extent that large scale panic set in. Within the 3 months that followed those statements, by February 1991, we started to see the negative impact on the society when those comments were taken to heart and taken seriously. The rest is history because we found ourselves in a situation where there was a rapid decline in our foreign reserves. I am saying

that those irresponsible statements contributed significantly to the panic that set into the society and as a result brought on some of the crisis in 1991.

The entire world was in a recession and if you examine the pattern of control within the entire region you would notice that during the period there were significant cutbacks, not only in Barbados, but throughout the region where people had to restructure economies and look for a new direction because of the advent and the likelihood of a Gulf War which was pending, the World Trade Organisation's influence and many other factors that were impacting on people.

So there was no deliberate attempt by the Democratic Labour Party to cut any social services. The record of the Democratic Labour Party is the strongest on record in this country. We have demonstrated more than any other political party that we have developed programmes, certainly with educational programmes, to develop the mass base of people in this country. That is a fact.

So you would appreciate that when you compare the 1991-92 period and you say that there was a cutback in the spending at that time I have to compare that to 1994 when the same Minister of Finance who was talking last night about cutbacks would have the temerity to cut back the Ministry of Health by 11%.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, if the Ministry of Health is going to be mentioned I want to put on record in this House what the vote to the Ministry of Health has been over the last few years which will make it apparent to all who are listening that the Honourable Member is misleading the House and I want your patience, Sir, to make it all apparent.

In 1991-92, the vote to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was \$67 508 362. In 1992-93, it was cut by the Democratic Labour Party Government to \$57 755 479 at a time when they were also savaging the other social services and when it was most needed.

In 1993-94, \$57 809 916. In 1994-95, \$58 450 207, and that was the last year for which the Democratic Labour Party Government made provision. The 1995 - 1996 budget which was the first budget of the Barbados Labour Party we raised it to \$63 853 648 and supplemented it by \$10 million to pay for debts left by the Democratic Labour Party. 2.10 p.m.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, just let me make the point that this year the vote is \$81 275 938.00, so there are no cuts by the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am talking about the Estimates of 1998 - 1999 which have been cut in relation to 1997 - 1998.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said that the vote for the QEH had been cut. The vote for 1998 - 1999 is \$81 275 938.00 the largest allocation ever to the Ministry of Health and Environment and indeed the whole Ministry has its largest allocation ever.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am submitting that that is a significant indictment on the Government's part if at a time when the economy is going so well, if it is doing marvellous as they are suggesting. We acknowledge that cuts were effected when the economy was tight in 1991 - 1992 and that period was provoked by a Member of the Barbados Labour Party. I placed it on record that comments made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West when he made those irresponsible statements people tended to believe them because he carries that kind of stature in the society and when he makes a statement to the effect that the Barbados dollar was going to be devalued, I am saying that panic set in. Likewise, if any Honourable Member who is perceived to be senior in any part of Barbados makes a comment to that effect it will have the same results.

None of us should indulge in the political warfare because it had damaging effects to the extent that the economy was worsened and you would have seen the kinds of cuts that took place, but that is fine. They are now saying that the economy is fine, no problem, everything is buoyant and yet we would see these cuts in the social services and a public relations programme using the Ministry of Labour and Community Development about poverty alleviation, assistance for the elderly and so forth.

These programmes, Mr. Chairman, are programmes that cannot be done on a piecemeal basis. The facts remain that when we look at the future of Barbados 655 of our children do not make it into the mainstream of academics. A large percentage have no skills, are dispossessed. Many of them come to your offices and you ask them how far have you gone in school? They have gone to fourth form. Many of them have not even done "School Leaving". There are no 'O' levels and you realise that the future is bleak for them. They have no skills, they have nothing, nothing to rescue them.

The Barbados Labour Party would want to give the impression that all of a sudden they came up with the idea to cater for those people who are not making it into the mainstream. The facts remain that I negotiated almost single-handedly to cater to those people who are not making it into the mainstream. The facts remain that I negotiated almost singlehandedly with the World Bank to set up the TVET Council where they were providing funding. The present Minister disagrees with me because I selected and put in place a very responsible committee headed by the Head of the Community College, who still is the Head today, with right-thinking Barbadians and their role was to develop programmes and identify the specific training needs of the Barbadian society as the group.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: On a point of order, Sir. I did not agree with the Honourable Member because he put a responsible committee in place headed by the Head of the Community College. I disagreed with him because there was no ministerial position on it. Even though the Minister is responsible and whatever goes on the Minister would be blamed for there was nothing on it that suggested that the Minister had any control at all over the things that went on. That is what I disagreed with him for.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman the work of the TVET Council is a profound work. We recognised that Barbadians needed to be retrained. It does not need political interference. You take responsible people in the society who understand that if we need a thousand gardeners we teach them to be proper gardeners. We thought that we would have taken the staff at the Transport Board and we trained them so that they would understand their role in developing the society. We thought that we would take persons who were interested in becoming seamen and trained them to be seamen. We thought that rather than have a programme at the National Training Board where people were only being trained for three months and really could not boast of having developed proper skills.

We went on, Sir, and we had discussions with business colleges in Oklahoma where we would, apart from possessing people with specific skills having been properly trained, that we would have certified them as small business people, giving them specific business training so that they would have been able to develop their skills for self-employment as we looked at development in Barbados. There was a profound programme left in place by the Democratic Labour Party.

I must say to the present Minister that he was polite when I spoke to him. I am not sure how far it has gone, because he has not explained it in any detail, and I hope that at some stage the Minister can give the House the benefit of the progress of the Council. But that Council clearly would give the direction as to the type of focus that

the Democratic Labour Party left. We did not leave people stranded without any focus or presence for the future. We understand the problem so the Barbados Labour Party is not doing anything new. There is no destruction of families. We are talking about men in crisis in this country in terms of societies. Women in this country were disadvantaged by men for many years. Not only in this country, all over the world. Men took advantage of them because they were the major breadwinners. They left women in doubt as to their own survival, month after month, week after week. Women organised themselves. Women were without opportunities and men dominated but women did not sit back and say we are trodding on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Women organised themselves, fought back in their society, prepared themselves for the world of work, and now are major players in the world society. You have to give the women of the world the compliments because they understood development. The women reorganised and created new opportunities for themselves and a lot of the new growth that is effected in all societies has been triggered by women because women have had a major dynamic driving force behind families, communities and development more so than men and it is an empirical fact that today that trend still continues. I do not think the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister should come in here and try to suggest that there was any callous approach by the Democratic Labour Party to community development or to social services. We left a profound track record and we have never really had a forum to explain the kind of programmes that were put in place. I wish I could go into detail and talk about the kind of development that we had envisaged for the development of communities in Barbados. But right now it is insufficient. 2.20 p.m.

The Barbados Labour Party, one of the major thrust right now for their community development is to take the Independence programme, I do not know if it is funded through this particular Ministry, but they have taken the Independence programme and Independence is a part of our history that the Barbados Labour Party totally rejected.

Many times between 1976 and 1986, you could not see a Barbados flag anywhere around Barbados. They had almost killed off Independence celebrations. It is now fashionable to pick up the Independence activities to develop communities as if it is their very own and that is offensive.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think you should wind up at this point and come again. Please wind up. You have only two seconds.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Chairman, cannot speak to us on this issue. They have to accept that they are at least attempting to follow what we left in place but they are doing the kind of job that we thought they would have.

I will have to return because there are so many issues that we will have to debate under this Head.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member is not speaking the truth in this instance. Yesterday morning, the Government came here prepared to do business as indeed it has done on Monday and Tuesday morning and this afternoon as well and it will come again tomorrow morning prepared to do the people's business.

There was one solitary Member on the Opposition benches, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. We waited and it was way pass 10.15 a.m. and we had to get on. We could have passed all of them if we had wanted to do it. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East who is deliberately now trying to mislead the House because he may fancy that he is responding to bad press. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East did not grace us with his presence until late in the afternoon yesterday. I am amazed that he is in here at all today.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is taken.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not think that the Honourable Member for the City should be so uncharitable. I thought that when we spoke in here that we spoke to the people. You do not speak to the Opposition. If we are not here, you still have a duty to speak to the people. You are representing the people, not us. So our absence cannot make you not debate. I have debated to empty Opposition benches. That is irrelevant. You should speak to the people because you are paid to speak to the people, not to us.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I want to remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael East of the fact that he will soon have an opportunity to be really educated about the respective contributions of the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party to the social improvement in Barbados. As far as I am concerned, both political parties have made tremendous efforts which have been successful...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. At no time during my presentation was I trying to put down the Members of the Barbados Labour Party. The Right Honourable Prime Minister in his presentation, tried to destroy the track record of the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I said he was trying.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I just want to remind him that he should pay particular attention in this particular year that we have now where we are celebrating the contribution of one of the distinguished eras of Barbados and he will be really brought up to date.

What I want to congratulate the Minister about is the fact that in these Estimates, it is very pleasing to note that the developments in your constituency and my constituency and other parts of Christ Church which have come to a temporary halt over the last nine years between 1986 and 1994 are now being restarted.

One of the points that I have always made in here, Sir, is that people must recognise that the largest possible concentration in this island of houses and of people, takes place between Gall Hill in Christ Church and St. Davids and by Sargeants Village by the roundabout by the Life of Barbados.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is a highly intensive developed area. You have to go through there and see the houses. In that area the facilities were deficient in relation to the population. The situation has unquestionably been compounded by the fact that over the last ten years, some 6000 people now live in Kingsland, Wotton Stage I, II and HI.

Gall Hill was in dire need of facilities. It is also of significance that those communities are producing a number of very very successful sportsmen, particularly football. I am pleased to see that consideration has been given by the National Sports Council for the improvement of facilities for footballers in that area.

At the present moment, teams like Gall Hill and others have to go and beg, virtually beg the Headmaster of Foundation School to use the Foundation School as their practise ground.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is a fact. They use the Foundation School as their practise ground.

I must say, Sir, that the Headmaster of the Foundation School has been very generous in his attitude and the Board of Management and my understanding is that provided they accept the disciplinary regulations that is imposed to ensure that the ground is not destroyed, that they are allowed to use it. Now I hope that that will be a thing of the past because, Sir, as you and other Honourable Members who represent Christ Church in here know, we have been agitating for some time for the acquisition of that piece of land which is part of Cane Vale and which all of us know is very often flooded when it rains. It is not good, they used to grow cotton when I was a boy

and then they tried to grow canes and it also became a kitchen garden...

You have the same problem when you have a large concentration of people and you try to practise agriculture in that area, namely the problem of praedial larceny. The situation now is that the owners have virtually abandoned it. It is not good for housing because one would have to dig some 11-12 feet before one could find good ground. I strongly support that acquisition. I know it has the support of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. 2.30 p.m.

In addition to that, Sir, the area of Maxwell Hill where again, because of the way the new road, the ABC Highway, subdivided the land at Briar Hall those areas have been used by some of the residents in the Warners, Vauxhall and Sargeant's Village areas. They have been used as a playing field there during the time of the Honourable Member who was Attorney General from Christ Church.

I am pleased to see that that plan is being continued. That is a genuine case of saying that that plan that the Democratic Labour Party started on will be continued. That is a fact. That was started, I believe, by the Honourable Member and we will finish it.

I also want to draw the position of Christ Church South at Enterprise where the boys have to play in what was in essence a sandpit. A developer tried to sell an area of land for housing when in truth and in fact that land was reclaimed land. It was a sandpit when sand was being mined there and some of the people who bought the land had to be given back some of their money because they could not find a foundation. That is ideally suitable again for use as a playing field.

Of course we have the problem at Dover. The developments that have taken place there are such that the playing of cricket has become inconsistent with other activities. Any time a man hits a six at Dover there is big trouble because he is going to hit somebody's house, some roof or some motor car that is parked in the yard. You will all agree that that small playing field at Dover cannot accommodate the 700 members of the Dover/Paradise area.

Now people do not realise the importance of a club like that in that community. That is a club that draws its members from all classes, all races. You only have to go on that playing field and you will see that is an area where all sections of Barbadians, all classes, all creeds come into contact with one another. Indeed the community spirit in that area is so strong that they are able, to a large extent, to be very self supportive and they have taken to all types of sports, basketball at one end, there is cricket, there is netball, there is volleyball and they start young children from as early as 6 years old. They have a youth programme. I believe that next to Pinelands it is probably

the most active area where community activity takes place. Whereas the Pinelands specialises in drama and a lot of other things they specialise in sport but the concept is the same. We have to do something about finding a playing field for the cricket.

Now, there is an area of land to the west of the roundabout. I know it very well. It is government land and I want to say quite clearly and I believe everybody will agree, all the time that land has been planted I do not believe the Government has reaped \$10 000 in produce out of that land. They have now decided virtually to abandon it because they put peas in there and everybody who pass there gets peas. I am searching the Estimates to see what is the contribution to the revenue of agriculture. Beautiful produce, because it is irrigated and every thing, out of its own water from Graeme Hall springs and I see the total vote for all of the land in Government property, \$80 000 in revenue from the sale of produce. I believe that that would make a small contribution. Common sense dictates that that area should be looked at in the context of a better utilisation.

There is no prejudice of course to the other area of Graeme Hall which will be developed as part of eco-tourism. So I am very happy to see that the Estimates this year will reflect the idea and the needs of the representatives of Christ Church.

Of course in Christ Church East the plan at Inch Marlow will be pursued too. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph and others who have been around Christ Church will tell you that that area at Inch Marlow is an area that has been used for certainly 20 to 30 years. It is an excellent playing field and there again the community there makes full use of it. It provides an excellent opportunity for social contact and for the improvement of the conduct of the people in that district. So I would like to congratulate the Minister and the Minister of Finance for accepting the pleas that we made in that direction.

Now there is only one other area, Sir, that I would like to speak on under this Head and that is the area of training. I am exceedingly pleased, Sir, to see the efforts that are being made to convince young people that they should take advantage of the facilities that the Government is offering at its institutions and through the National Training Board to train these young people.

I would like to go further. I notice they have increased the publicity about these programmes on the television but I want to go further because I still see some young people liming on the block. I want the Youth Commissioners to take out pamphlets. I want them to make a dedicated effort to ensure that these programmes are brought to the attention of the people as part of their daily work. I want an integration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training and I want to say, as I said in the Budget when I spoke to the programmes,

that what we are trying to introduce here are programmes which are being used in the European Economic Community as part and parcel of their attempt to deal with youth unemployment. The only thing is that they are saying they are going to make, going to the programme a condition of getting welfare. Well our welfare does not extend to the youth. What we have to do and what we did this year is to give them the inducement by paying them, when they go to skills training, a stipend. So we are the reverse of them.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The Honourable Member is very fortunate. The Honourable Member knows that \$75 a week is nothing to him but I know that \$75 a week is a lot. It is not lunch money and bus fare because even if you live in St. Lucy, as I understand it you only pay \$3.00 a day and 5 by 3 is 15 and if you use \$5 a day for lunch, 5 by 5 is 25 and you can calculate good and you know that 25 plus 15 is not 75.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got 2 minutes.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Our position is, Sir, that this is an attempt and the Honourable Members on the Other Side support it but I would just like to see the integration because I believe that with all the talk about social services and the spending, unless you have integration of all of the agencies, unless you have what I like to call a holistic approach, unless you have co-ordination of the activities, all of the money will not be spent how it is intended to be spent. Parliament intends that the maximum value should be achieved by the community out of this large amount of expenditure. It is our duty to see that we tailor our institutional framework to ensure that we have that maximum value and that is why there is all this argument about local government.

All of us are groping for forms to ensure that the money that we vote goes to the people that we intend it to go to and it serves the purpose for which it was voted. That is all, Sir. I thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I believe there are many people of my generation who would have been brought up on a diet of state sponsored community programmes which I think were very successful and I always speak with fond memories of the work which was done by our outstanding community workers in the seventies and in the eighties among young people like myself.

I remember in the seventies, it is true it was under a Barbados Labour Party administration, but I am not going to be as partisan today as was the Honourable Member for St. Peter last night. Young people were involved in programmes funded by the UNDP through the International Year of the Youth like the understanding programme on

television, the youth's inquiry programme, which brought us into contact with prominent people from the society on a range of social and political issues. And then on very small budgets, Mr. Chairman, community and youth workers in Barbados were able to sponsor programmes like the drama festival, the choir festival, all of those things were done by the youth and community development department. 2.40 p.m.

Many of us participated in debating programmes which the Government, again through its community development was able to sponsor. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. Philip North hears us speaking in these debates he has to understand that we are seeking to throw out some ideas and to assist him in the process. Our job is not to be partisan and divisive. I always wonder why the Honourable Member for St. Peter has to speak as if he is delivering an unsworn statement from the dock. Nobody has accused him of anything. They have asked the Minister to explain his policy and I think that that is a good thing and he will have plenty of opportunities to do so. But there was no need for anybody to rush in here.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John in using language of that tenor is suggesting some sort of imparity, improper or criminal activity to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, because to say that the Member speaks as if he is delivering an unsworn statement from the dock is to in fact suggest that he is a criminal and we cannot have that in this Chamber, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Therefore I would like to request that the Chair have it struck from the record, especially in the absence of the Honourable Member. In fact he might be more charged with criminality than the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have had many clients who have given unsworn statements and have been acquitted. That may not be the Honourable Member's experience, but as a lawyer I have had many who have given unsworn statements and have been acquitted. So there is no attribution. I said he acts as if he has been accused. I did not say he is guilty. I said, therefore his demeanour suggests to me. But I thank the Honourable Member for her sworn statement from the dock in defence of the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Chair has got to rule in this matter. Honourable Members are entitled to the protection of the Chair and I am asking the Chair for your protection and for a ruling which will allow me to be clothed with your protection, Sir, - it is to be struck from the record - because he then went on to say that I was making a sworn statement which suggests criminality to me as well.

Asides,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please sit. I believe the lawyers have reached a point whereby they are talking about sworn statements from the dock and unsworn statements. I would ask the Clerk to give me a little guidance on this point.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Honourable Member for St. John to rephrase his statement, please.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what the Honourable Members on that Side want from me. Do they want me to say the Right Honourable Prime Minister is not a criminal? I am saying the Honourable Member for St. Peter is not a criminal and nobody has said that.

I said that in these situations he puts forward a defence as if he is accused of something and I said we do not accuse him of anything. So he does not have to get so heated in defence of my parliamentary representative who has quite adequately explained himself so far in the context of this debate. That is all I am saying. So Mr. Chairman, if I can continue.

I was quite upset yesterday to hear the characterisation of the social programme under the Democratic Labour Party between 1986 and 1994 as being, based on budgetary severity and institutional paralysis and he was Minister of Community Development and Culture and I want to start by saying that I take exception to that, not on my own behalf but I want to honestly say that in the time of greatest economic hardship that there were civil servants at every level of that Ministry who were willing to put in extra time, creativity, hard work and make great sacrifices on behalf of the people of this country.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I think that the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. What the Honourable Member for St. Peter said was that the institutional paralysis was not only as a result of the budgetary constraint, but he specifically made the point that they did not give any new form of policy or direction and that they continue to do the very same things in the very same manner indicating that there was a level of paralysis in policy direction as well and not simply as a result of budgetary constraints. He did use the budgetary constraint, but that was not the only reason he gave for the institutional paralysis.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, you can expect a lot of points of order when I am speaking today, because the Honourable Members on that Side are not going to like what I have to say but I am not speaking for myself.

Because if there was institutional paralysis, it would not have been possible for the public officers to come up with a programme to start the Barbados Youth Service out of which a lot of people are benefiting from a lot of public relations gimmick in 1998, backed in 1991 on a budget of less than \$400 000. And they would not have been civil servants in this country who were willing to start that youth service with a complement of 100 at Grazettes Community Centre under the most difficult of working circumstances. But there were civil servants who recognised that we needed to get into communities where there were problems and to stamp our authority and our programmes on those communities.

I congratulate them and nobody can tell me that you can have institutional paralysis in a situation where those people were able to work so hard and in such a dedicated manner to deliver programmes even in the face of budgetary severity. I will go on, Sir. The youth and business programmes which have now flowered into other institutions over time, funded by the OAS on a very limited budget, but again, dedicated public officers in Barbados in a time of budgetary severity and so-called institutional paralysis were able to plant the first seed which has germinated into a whole range of other programmes aimed at helping young people to acquire business skills and to be involved in sustainable economic activity.

I do not deny the contribution you all have made to that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East must not be so anxious to get out of her seat to prove that there is a disconnection. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said there is Government continuity and I praise the public officers, who with limited resources, this is why what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said does not always make sense. You can have a massive budget and find that you still cannot get that money on the road and into the homes and houses and communities and areas where they are most needed.

The Honourable Member for St. James South despite saying that they have this massive increase in the budget for Queen Elizabeth Hospital was heard to say on the radio some months or years ago that it seems as though the more money you give the Hospital the more problems the Hospital has.

So all this argument about the number of dollars you are giving as budgetary severity, the greatest creativity that I have seen in Barbados in the public service came at a time of the greatest budgetary severity and that is why they argue that the public officers in this country need to be handsomely rewarded for that sacrifice. The sacrifice was not just salary, it was the additional effort which they put in during that time of great economic difficulty.

So we hear about institutional paralysis. We resurrected the National Youth Orchestra without a cent

And got the lady Miss Archer from CP to come and donate herself free of charge. Today there are people who want to take the credit. We heard that the Youth Service started in 1995.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That was in the Advocate newspaper.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Not only was that fact incorrect that the Youth Service started in 1995, but that same story in the Advocate carried also another incorrect story that the Caribbean Governments are looking to use the Youth Service as a model. What it was is that they are looking to use all three youth programmes and for the record, this Government has always gone on the record stating that the Youth Service was a programme worth carrying on and that is why we did not only build on it but we expanded the programme because we felt that it was worthwhile. 2.50 p.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That information helps in my argument and every time the Honourable Members get up they add to the sum total of the contribution that I want to make on this subject in here today.

We started a television programme for young people which they themselves produced. The National Assistance Board in that time of budgetary severity designed a senior citizens' residential centre at Sargeant's Village in Christ Church and was about to get approval for setting up a similar one at Good Shepherd down by the Good Shepherd Church in St. James, a high level of creativity at a time of great budgetary severity.

That idea did not come from me. I never had to say go and design it. The civil servants were constantly working on those programmes. It is for the Minister in defending his record to say to us whether that is the direction he thinks his Ministry should be going in or whether he is taking another direction and let us have a debate at that level.

The question of certification and monitoring of old people's homes, that is a project which the Director of the NAB has been asking about for the longest time - the design of legislation and a programme for certification. Again in a time of budgetary severity.

I hope the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter understands that it was because we did not have institutional paralysis that in a time of very scarce resources we were able to extract every ounce of creativity, every ounce of initiative, every ounce of hard work, working together with the public officers in Barbados and

that is the story of community development and social programmes. That is not the story of institutional paralysis.

In 1997, a report which cost \$100 000 to tell us how to rationalise social services when the civil servants had already sat down - the Director of NAB, the Chief Welfare Officer and the other agencies - and worked out many years ago a formula for rationalisation of the social services. The recommendations of that report which cost us \$100 000 are almost the same as those very creative public officers who sometimes we are quick to criticise who reduced it to writing on files in the Ministry since 1991. So don't tell me about institutional paralysis, lack of creativity, Ministries directionless and that kind of thing because my experience was a different experience.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I will say a bit more about it.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, if, I was part of a feeble, tired, weak and sleepy administration I would have made a similar defence too.

I just want to put a few items into the record. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West yesterday made the point that he did not think that we were doing enough for our top athletes. I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that about a year and a half ago the Barbados Government and the Barbados Olympic Association entered into a matching-a-fund agreement to assist our athletes *par excellence*, the ones who had their eyes set on the Australian Sydney Olympics. The programme is called 2000 Sydney.

A lot of athletes are now benefiting from that particular agreement and names like Nikki Neckles, Kirk Cummins, Cherita Howard and Victor Houston get every month a sum of money to assist them with their expenses and so on.

In addition to that, whenever they have to go to games overseas, because in order to qualify...

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: On a point of elucidation, if the Honourable Member will give way.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: You mean you have to get permission in here to elucidate now? The Chairman gave me permission.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: The Attorney General should go back outside or come and sit in his accustomed place and stop grumbling.

Sir, the point I was making was not to criticise the Government for what it has done or not done but to recommend a new paradigm shift in the approach, that is to say, not to assist the athlete but to vote a sum of money for the athletes so that they will have a different mentality. Because some of the framework within which the athletes have to grow up, their homes and other environments do not allow them to have the right attitude because they still have to be worrying about the matching funds.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: You see, I was checking the records to see if when there were previous Olympic games under the Democratic Labour Party administration if they ever gave any of the athletes assistance.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, we did not have any good enough.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, in addition to that we have also come to an agreement where the Barbados Olympic Association will be looking after coaches for table tennis and hockey and the Barbados Government will shortly be bringing in coaches in other fields: swimming, volley ball and boxing.

I do not think that something like this has ever happened in Barbados before. We are going to have this amount of top class coaches to coach our athletes in about 5 or 6 disciplines and these are disciplines in which we have our eyes set on the Olympics. We hope to come back from the Olympics this time with at least one medal.

The private sector has also joined and I must say that there are some companies - I don't want to call the names - that actually take a particular athlete and say they will look after him and this athlete gets a sum of money from these two companies every month.

Mr. Chairman, last year we constructed and it is not quite finished yet a pavilion at Bridgefield, St. Thomas. We also constructed one at Brereton in St. Philip and on this one at Brereton St. Philip I must say that I did get a recommendation from the National Sports Council that this pavilion could very well be called the Wayne Daniel Pavilion after the only cricketer of note that actually came out of that district.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say too that we have completed repairs to the Zenith headquarters. We developed a playing field at Flat Rock, St. George and we actually went to Crab Hill, St. Lucy and we levelled the playing field at Crab Hill, St. Lucy.

We resurfaced the hard courts at Lammings, St. Joseph, and repaired all the lights at the National Stadium. Mr. Chairman, this year we have money to do a new pavilion at Ellerton, St. George. We are going to be establishing our first mini stadium at Briar Hall, Christ

Church. I may very well go down in history as the Minister that brought the first mini stadium to Barbados. 3.00 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am just giving an account of my stewardship.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, if I may continue, new hard courts. We are doing new hard courts at Hill Road, Dash Gap, St. Michael. I know the Speaker is going to be very pleased with this.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Sir, I am trying to understand what the Minister is saying, did he say Brereton or Bayville?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: He said "Brereton."

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, if I may continue, hard courts would also be constructed at Grantley Adams School, St. Joseph and at Bonnetts, St. Michael/Christ Church area and I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West will be very pleased about that.

We are developing playing fields at Cane Vale, Christ Church and at East Point, St. Philip. And I want to say where East Point, St. Philip is concerned, that the Clarke's Hill Sports Club is an extremely good football team. It was edged out last year in the finals by Notre Dame. That is the finals. These young men from East Point, St. Philip have to practise their football in the road. They do not have any playing field at all. Also, at Water Street, Christ Church and we also have plans for developing a playing field at Inch Marlow, Christ Church. I inspected the Inch Marlow facility myself with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. He was the person who made the request that we upgrade that particular playing field.

We are putting lights on the hard courts at Holy Innocent, St. Thomas, Horse Hill, St. Joseph, Church Village, St. Philip, at Boscobelle, St. Peter, at Checker Hall, St. Lucy and at Hill Road, Dash Gap, St. Michael. Mr. Chairman, I am asked to give an account of my stewardship and it would appear as though the Honourable Members on the Other Side do not want me to give an account of my stewardship. It would appear, Sir, as though there is too much that is happening in the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: It is not a pork barrel and I will not have it. Mr. Chairman, if I could be allowed to say a few words on the Disability Unit and I say so...

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister must be misleading this House and the country, because the funds that he is proposing to spend comes out of the taxpayers of all Barbados and the programmes that he has just enunciated seem all of them or 90% of them to be based in BLP constituencies, and we cannot have this kind of thing in this country. Each constituency is entitled to a fair share out of the public purse.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I was only highlighting some of the work which we will be doing. I am not detailing every single thing which we will do. I was only highlighting some of the work for our benefit.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I want to ask the Minister a question before he moves to the Disability Unit. I want to tax the memories of all Honourable Members. There is only one Barbadian athlete who has ever won an Olympic medal. "Lolly" Wedderburn ran third in the 4 x 400 at Rome in 1960. I want to ask if he ever got a national honour for that. He is the only one who got a medal and I wonder if he ever got a national honour for that. My memory tells me he did not get one. We named gates and so on after him but I do not think he ever got a national honour.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. My understanding of the award of national honours during the time I was part of the Government, was that there was a non-partisan committee that was responsible for recommending people for honours and such recommendations as were made, I was never privy to them and therefore for a Member of the Government, and especially the Attorney General to address that matter in the tone and terms used by the Attorney General, might mislead the population into thinking that the Government *per se* makes the decision about national awards. I just wish to say that I have never had the opportunity to make a national award in my life.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: In answer to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas certainly as far as my memory goes I do not remember Mr. Wedderburn ever getting a national award either. What I can say is that when we took the position where we were going to name gates and stands and so on after our top athletes that Mr. Wedderburn, I actually saw tears come to his eyes when he spoke because we had named a stand after him at the stadium. This is no exaggeration. This was a way of his saying to us thanks for what we had done in our little way for him but certainly there was never any national award as far as I am aware. I will come back to the Disability Unit, Sir. 3.10 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, the estimates of the Ministry of Labour, Community

Development and Sports provide us an opportunity to discuss matters of importance both at the national and the community level. So you would forgive, Sir, if I steer clear of sworn statements, and statements from the dock, budgetary constraints and so on.

In the course of the second reading speech the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter made the point that we are managing a boom economy at this stage. It seems to me that an important component of that level of economic activity which we are experiencing is really construction. I made the point in the course of my contribution to the second reading speech that we are experiencing...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just hold on a bit.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, you are hearing me now?

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: May I propose that we break for five minutes while these mechanical repairs are carried out?

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I was making the point, Mr. Chairman, that construction is, to a large extent, energising the boom. We are told that we have a deficiency of skills, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, steel bending, tiling and so on. Yet, the Prime Minister felt confident to say that he had every reason to believe that the level of economic activity certainly being experienced can be sustained into the future.

I want to enquire of the Honourable Minister what plans he has in his Ministry for ensuring that that deficiency in skills can be corrected in the short run so we can be sure that we will not have a break on the current level of economic activity resulting from the skills' deficiency.

I did suggest in the course of my contribution that it would appear that many young people are not aware of the fact that the skills training programme exists. I was happy to be corrected and assured by the Minister that there is a high level of publicity on the many organs of public information particularly over the last three to five months about the skills training programme. I am happy about that but it would seem to me that it is not reaching those on the block. I encounter many of them on a weekly basis who seem not to be aware of the fact that the programmes exist. So that the Minister may wish to evaluate the effectiveness and the impact of the present publicity arrangements and really determine whether some alternative techniques such as have been suggested by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South ought not to be put in place. I am particularly attracted to the suggestion that the youth

commissioners ought to be given the additional responsibility of bringing to the attention of the young people the existence of these programmes.

I did hear in relation to upholstery over the last year that several people who were in the course withdrew because the tutor turned up infrequently and on many occasions not at all. That is a detail which the Minister may wish to investigate. But many women in particular find upholstery attractive and I was disappointed to learn from two of them that they had to leave the programme because the tutors were busy at work in other areas, their own private business, and often came late and on some occasions did not turn up at all.

I want to deal with another matter, Mr. Chairman, which has to do with the plight of our agricultural labourers. I mention that in the context of the Ministry's responsibility to ensure the participation and the integration, particularly the marginalised and the disadvantaged groups, into the developmental process.

Resulting from widespread mechanisation in the sugar industry, we have the situation now in Barbados today - only this morning I came across some cases in the constituency where agricultural workers are working one day a week, in some instances two, a maximum of three. Now, that is what we used to hear about in the hard times, out of crop season, but now in Barbados agricultural workers in the midst of the crop season are working as few as eight hours one day, often two days, at most three.

The position is, Mr. Chairman, that they are really as badly off in relative terms today as they were in the 1940s. I mention it because clearly we have to give new thoughts. Many of them are on the way out of agriculture. There are very few young people in it but they are still a sufficiently large number of them in it who have another 10 years and more that we really have to arrive at a formula for dealing with that particular problem. There are in some respect second class citizens in the country where first income earning is concerned. 3.20 p.m.

We have been talking about the reversed credits. The tax payments once a year to those who are below the poverty line. I believe in the last year the Government gave some \$12 000 to them...

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: No, no, it will continue. You mis-appreciated what the Honourable Minister of Finance was saying. He said that he will be addressing us shortly with respect to a new mechanism for ensuring its continuance. I think you might have missed that point.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the level of poverty now being experienced by agricultural labourers is so acute

that we ought to consider differentiating the cash payment. So that the agricultural labourers are given at a higher level than others who may be falling below the poverty line but not really earning as little as the agricultural workers are earning.

Let me explain what I am talking about, Mr. Chairman, suppose we set \$8 000 as the poverty line and those who fall below it we are giving them this reversed credit annual cash sum. There will be those who are falling below by a \$1 000 and there will a large number who are below \$1 000 to \$1 500 but if we find that the agricultural labourers, as I suspect that there are, are \$2 000 or \$3 000 and more below the limit, I am recommending that there be a differentiation in the payments so that they are given a payment at a higher level than others who are below the poverty line. That is only one suggestion. I think that we need to address the whole issue of the plight of the agricultural labourers in what new considerations we ought to be applying to their situation.

I want to deal quickly with another issue. I appreciate that the Honourable Member in his most recent intervention did not have the opportunity to speak fully about all that is intended and planned by way of provisions of community centres in the year ahead.

I want to remind the House that St. Joseph remains the only parish constituency in Barbados that has not had to date a Government sponsored pavilion. It is the only parish constituency to date that is without a Government sponsored pavilion.

I am happy with the news that one is about to be built at the Grantley Adams Memorial and that it will come to pass in the year of the 100th anniversary of his birth. I welcome that and I know that the Headmaster and the members of staff and the students and the residents of the surrounding areas of Blackmans and Coffee Gully will also welcome it.

In terms of servicing a larger area, the one that I have long requested for St. Elizabeth is urgently and badly needed and I hope that when the Minister comes to speak more fully on all that has been planned for the year ahead that he can assure me and the people of St. Joseph that they are included in his plans for the year ahead.

I want to conclude by referring to a matter which I raised in the course of my contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. It has got to do with the disadvantaged and the handicapped in the country. I really feel that in this period of surplus revenue that we really ought to be paying much more attention not only to the elderly because I know that plans are being made for them but also to those who are disadvantaged by way of handicap.

I do not want to overstate it but I have come across four or five in St. Joseph who have not been able to get transportation to the Challenor School as used to obtain in the past. I am saying that we ought to provide the school

with a vehicle or two so that those children can be transported to and from the school and give the parents an opportunity, particularly the mothers to go out and work.

I just want to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by making the point that in the plans for a suburban centre at Horse Hill, opposite the St. Joseph Primary School to be built on the 23 acres of which we have acquired half through compulsory acquisitions, that there is need for a baby creche to be added to that complex.

I have written to the Attorney General whose Ministry is the lead Ministry in relation to the project but I wish to make the call for the inclusion of that facility publicly in the hope that the Minister will be alerted and that his Ministry will lend support to that suggestion. It seems to me as if at long last we are doing something good in St. Joseph and that we need to do it on a thorough basis and that all the facilities that are needed should be included in the project so that not only we in this House but the people whom it is intended to serve can be truly proud of the project when it is concluded.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to address the issues relating to community development.

In beginning my short speech, I want to refer to a comment made in the book *"Persistent Poverty"* by the late Mr. George Beckford who is well known to students of the University of the West Indies. I know a lot of fellows who did agricultural economics would have studied him very well like the Honourable Member on the next Side from St. James North.

I wish to quote from him, Sir, the section which reads:

"For economic development to proceed with certainty in any country, a social environment favourable to it is absolutely necessary. Economic development requires a highly motivated population, with progress oriented values directed to the development effort and with social institutions that provide the necessary incentives and rewards."

Sir, this was written many years ago and I believe those who are taking care of community development need to bear these words carefully because they still apply in 1998. I am hoping as we move into the next millennium, we will address a number of these issues.

Sir, I wish to refer to him again when he speaks about factor mobility and the hindrances to factor mobility. His references to class presenting rigidity and preventing factor mobility from taking place in communities such as ours that came of the plantation societies.

Sir, from my observation, there has been no change in community development over the years. The community development department is hardly recognised for what it is doing and I would have wished that the Ministry would have addressed what that department is doing.

What I know, Sir, is when the officer in Parish Land tried to get his efforts involved in the community he was stagnated because there were problems that he had to present his programme months in advance to senior officers. Then there were problems of availability of finance and there were all of these problems. All we heard about was these problems which prevented the officers from effectively putting programmes in place in a place like Parish Land. This is just an example. 3.30 p.m.

I ask myself, Sir, what is the use of community development if it cannot effectively link with the community? I also want to know, Sir, what is the use of community development if it does not recognise that it needs to link with the National Cultural Foundation so that cultural officers can come to help the people in the community? If it does not understand that it has to link and use the services of people in the National Sports Council and that there needs to be a linkage, a clearly defined linkage, between these organisations so that the community can benefit from this Community Development Department?

If you look around Barbados, Sir, you will find that a lot of youngsters are into sports. You will know that very well from your capacity in Sports, Mr. Chairman, and if you want to involve communities you have to find ways of creating programmes to assist in the community. This brings me to the organisation of that department.

Sir, we have gone through a change over the past 20 years from the old traditional communities where, with free education and access to greater educational opportunities, people have been able to build houses in places like Ealing Park and Chancery Lane and Gibbons and West Terrace and all those places. We now find a burgeoning development of a new middle class but we seem to forget that the children of this new middle class also need to be involved in the process of community building. I am not hearing what the community development is doing in that regard. I wish to give an example.

Last year, through my company, I organised a softball fun festival which involved the communities of areas like Inch Marlow and Parish Land and we also integrated areas like Ealing Park and Lowlands and Callenders and those areas. We need to understand that we need to link the old traditional society with the emerging one. A change has taken place but community development has not moved with the times, Sir.

We have examples in the States and those places where they have institutions established like neighbourhood development corporations. They have the neighbourhood service centres and things like these and we have to make the point that even though volunteers are essential, volunteers also have to be involved in their own struggle.

More women are working and they are coming home late and therefore they cannot input into the community organisation as they did before. We also have the case, Sir, where the youngsters are more interested in sports. Those who are not interested in sports perhaps do not have the skills to organise the community. So what this means, Sir, is that there needs to be a greater dependency then on community development.

As a matter of fact, Sir, that word community development is outdated. It is not a case of community development it is a case of community organisation and in the Third World a number of countries have abandoned anything about community development, it is now a case of community organisation. You are looking at community organisation because we know where we want to be, we know where we are going and there needs to be some level of organisation. This is what the Community Development Department, as it is called, needs to get involved in. Sending out people who are mature enough, who are trained enough, who are aware enough to organise the communities. This is what I am not hearing anything about. This is especially essential when we are crying out about the youth doing these things, in an era when we are prone to look for the heaviest penalty that we can impose, Sir, in an era when we are quick to say they want locking up, they want hanging, they want putting in a Government institution. We are more focussing on these things, Sir, than focussing on developing and organising the youth in our various communities.

I am speaking not only of the traditional communities like Parish Land and Silver Sands and Gall Hill and Vauxhall, I am speaking about the new communities like Baling Park and Chancery Lane. I was surprised, Sir, that Chancery Lane was the team that got into the finals of the softball tournament. These are old established cricket teams. This was Chancery Lane. Sir, we need to look at that scene. I am not hearing about this new vision coming from that department. Where is that vision that is so required in order to take these communities forward.

Sir, George Beckford stated clearly that we have problems of class which have remained and this is an issue we have to deal with as well. Also, Sir, he said there is a correlation between class and race and this is also another issue we seem to skirt, the problem of race. We think it is a bad word. Sir, I have no problem with race.

In 1991, as President of the Public Relations Association of Barbados I organised an inter-racial debate at the Hilton Hotel at which there were whites, there were Indians and there were blacks and they were all willing and ready to debate the issue of race so why are we, as a Parliament, afraid of debating the issue of race? Why are we afraid to debate the issue of race? Sir, when we spoke about the BS&T and the issue relating to the Director who did not know about these shares being sold and all that, on both sides of the House we spoke about race. So why do we have to panic about these things when we can discuss them in an open way and understand that we need to have better relations in this country? Sir, issues of race affect the mobility of the factors of production. That is undisputed.

I just received a call this morning, Sir, which clearly showed to me that a particular company, I am not going to call names, was still in a mode of employing people who were either white or as near to white as possible. The person who called me put the case that he suffered because of that. I have not investigated fully yet but I am making the point that there are still some cases where a preference seems to be given to a person because of issues relating to race, class and colour and these are things that we need to bring on the table. At that time we were not afraid to discuss the issues of race. The Indians were not afraid to do it and I was the moderator of the programme. I am not afraid to discuss it in here, Sir. This is 7 years down the road. I am a Member of Parliament now. I would discuss it more so now. So who is afraid to discuss it, I am not afraid. I am hearing reports, Sir, that problems of race still cause problems when it comes to the factor of mobility in this country, after we have gone from Independence in 1966, after we have passed through the plantation era and into a new era going into the 21st century. We need to approach it in a systematic way and I am saying it relates to the development of communities which have become so diverse over time that these issues need to be addressed as well.

Other countries have had race relations and we need to look at things like that because as you get a more educated population, as you get a wider level of expectation, Sir, frustrations will arise and it is about time we tackle these problems up front instead of waiting for people to get incensed about these things. 3.40 p.m.

Sir, if you check around here you will find that there are a lot of constituencies that do not have a district emergency organisation. This is something that is very very important and this is something which MPs should take a lead in ensuring that there is a district emergency relief organisation. But they will wait until an emergency arises, they will be looking around and then they would not even know what is a district emergency relief organisation,

they would not even know what CERO is for that matter, as evidence in the past has shown that even Members of Parliament did not know what CERO was all about.

This is a serious problem, Sir, and that is an organisation at the basic level to protect itself in the case of an emergency. That is very important, Sir, and I am not talking because I have a mouth, because the first thing I did was to reorganise a District Emergency Relief Organisation of CERO in my constituency.

Equally as well we need to have a linkage of the old with the new and that is why I set up a Christ Church East Residents Association which was supposed to look after the Organisation of the whole affairs of the community. The Organisation was able to provide funds to people who had funerals and could not afford to pay the expenses and things like that. And these are the kinds of things that we, as community leaders, because MPs are community leaders, which brings me on to the point, Sir, that a constituency office is not just a place for the MP, anybody who wants to use it for a community effort should be able to use it. People have to understand that it is also a community centre in a way, Sir. That is where the focus of community leadership should emanate from, if the person is doing his or her work.

We need to understand that in a changing society these concerns need to be addressed and I know the Honourable Minister is from my era with the boys from Cave Hill when the fellows used to stay in the lobby on the phone and talk. All this talk about men are racist and so on, we talked about that since 1970, so we do not have to talk about that anymore. I think he has the background, Sir, but I am saying he just needs to bring all these things to the fore and let us have a new vision for a changing society.

Thank you.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Some time yesterday, Mr. Chairman, I made a brief intervention in this debate in which I sought to focus on some of the big issues as I saw them. It is instructive to note that until very recent times there are many people who pretended that there was no poverty in Barbados. As a matter of fact, they became offended when people like myself spoke to the issue of poverty. The physical structure of Barbados has so developed that people could visit this country or even live in this country for a prolonged period of time and never recognise the severe poverty that exists in this country.

If you look at the physical development, the way how our highways run, the way how housing developments have taken place, you will always find that the poor live very

much in areas that are not seen. They are not seen, they are not heard and therefore when in a national forum such as Parliament or elsewhere, the issue of poverty was raised many people felt that this was an over-statement of the situation in Barbados.

I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that it is no over-statement, that there are pockets and a lot of pockets of appalling poverty in this country. I have not participated in the debate since then, because in a sense I am not turned on by the almshouse approach towards dealing with the problems of poverty. For example, I have heard again and again that over the past 50 or 60 years everybody was dealing with poverty in one form or the other. All that is true, but the reality is that at the end of the day there has been an accentuation of poverty among a large number of people in this country. Therefore new initiatives, new directions, new concepts are very necessary in order to focus on this particular programme.

It is not going to be eliminated through the traditional programmes that we have been debating. It is not going to be eliminated as a consequence of economic growth *per se*, it is going to be eliminated only when the matter is confronted conceptually, when there is a fundamental philosophical difference in the approach to the poor in this country and when resources are targeted in a constructive and a definitive manner in order to deal with this problem.

Consequently, Sir, I strongly believe that there is a need, not only for the conceptualisation of selective targeting of resources in order to deal with those who have been left behind and still live in the most indignity in this country, but you also need to be looking fundamentally at structures.

Now if you keep on with the status structures, and you keep increasing resources by 10-15 percent every year and the number of poor people continue to expand, and poverty becomes more and more accentuated then quite clearly, you are not approaching the matter in the right way.

Sir, I firmly believe that poverty in Barbados can be eradicated. I believe this country has the resources in order to achieve that laudible objective. I also believe that wherever there is a problem, no matter where that problem is, you have, whilst you are dealing with that problem, you have to find out how you are going to stop it from reproducing itself. That is why I address the issue of the transmission of poverty.

All that we are doing, or say we want to do in relation to poverty, if there are 10-20 people in abject poverty in Barbados and we do not block the transmission of that poverty to the next generation then you have

achieved nothing. All you have done, you have dealt with what exists and then you go on from generation to generation doing the same thing over and over again.

Therefore the issue of blocking the transmission of poverty is one which should be reflected in the philosophy of these Estimates and I do not see it here. I have identified that this could only be done by dealing in the context of our society with mothers in their reproductive years who are unemployed and otherwise dependent on the state for assistance and to make sure that they are lifted above the level of poverty and that their children are lifted out of poverty. Unless you do that you are going to have a problem. So step one must be to focus resources to block the transmission of poverty and I have not heard any philosophy articulated in that direction. 3.50 p.m.

The second and most important area I want to reflect on is the whole question of structure. The only reason why poverty is transmitted from generation to generation is the helplessness, the lack of empowerment of poor people in their community. This is why I am satisfied along with many international agencies and many social thinkers on the subject that unless you empower poor people politically in their communities then you do not stand any chance of eradicating poverty.

Call it what you may, I believe that some modern form of local government that is in tune with the democratic needs of a democratic society in 1998 is fundamental to this objective. People have to be empowered in order to contribute to their own development and it is not going to happen otherwise. I am very glad that among the young people in this Parliament I am seeing a quiet revolution. It has nothing to do with the voltage inside a party or outside a party or otherwise. I believe that these young people on all Sides of the House, which includes me, because I constitute this Side -1 am the only one on this Side so I am young in thought.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. Am I to believe that included in those young people that the Honourable Member is referring to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South also?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Of course, he is young at heart and young in spirit. Forever young.

The important thing is I think that the young people are beginning to recognise the importance of political empowerment and we must not allow ourselves to be trapped by what decisions were taken in the past by anybody. Past decisions might be correct or wrong in the circumstances of the time. The point is that the young people have to deal with the present and the future. I am

with them on this issue of local government and I am very glad that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West made a very important contribution in taking that process a step forward in that he identified, in a very compelling way, the financial sources which can be used without affecting the budget for this kind of purpose.

I also believe and I have heard one or two younger Members on the Other Side and on this Side and on the Opposition looking at possible ways of financing aspects of local government by whatever name it is called. So I am satisfied that there is a movement.

I was very disappointed and I do not like to attack members when they are not in the House and I hope that he will come in the House now, my good friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, and I told him this outside, Sir, so I can repeat it inside here because I have already told him... I came in here expecting to hear his views on local government which he has been articulating for many years, but what did I hear? Just a kind of Mickey Mouse rhetoric. He has been speaking on the issue of local government for a long time.

On the other issue, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph seems to be a bit concerned on how to reverse credits. These are people from whom you have taken money by VAT and you are giving them back some taxes by the VAT but they do not earn enough money to do it through the normal income tax system. It is a fairly simple matter.

I believe that this can be done in a very simple way. That is, those people who claim a VAT credit which under the present income tax system would be those \$13 000 and under, then what they can do is to have a simplified form of VAT credit claim form on which they can claim it and then through a budgetary measure you can determine what kind of sliding scale you would use. So there would be an official form which you would apply for the VAT credit on and there would be a system like any other income tax system where you would get a reversed credit according to your level of income.

In other words, somebody who has \$12 999 would not get the same VAT credit as somebody earning \$499. So just as the income tax works, that would reverse itself in the same way under that kind of system whereby people can apply on an appropriate form stating their income and stating their claims in accordance with the schedules established through a budget. Whether it is done under the Value Added Tax Act or under the Income Tax Act, it does not really matter.

It can be done as a very simple and efficient administrative matter. So when I talked about the tax credits last year to offset the VAT among the poor I

also talked about how it could be done and I checked out how it is done elsewhere. So that I can speak with some authority of the mechanisms by which it can be done. The only question now is the costing of it and so on.

Another factor that I do not think has really dawned on people as yet. We speak about the young people and crime. We hear all kinds of theories but nobody really knows what is causing the crime in the society or what causes crime in respect of a particular individual; but one thing we know for sure is that if you keep young people busy in their communities between 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 12 o'clock at night, you are going to get less crime in that community, whatever the causation of crime is, whatever speculations there are about the causation of crime.

That is why 10 years ago I pulled my pocket for over \$10 000 and put up lights in Carringtons Village and the crime rate has rocketed down in that area over the past 10 years. I pay the electricity bill every month too and cannot get the Chairman of the Sports Council to take over the monthly bill. Up to now, out of my humble allowance that I get in this House every month, the first charge is the electricity bill at the Gully Hill.

The point is that we need to get those lights up and get posts and so on so that we can get this kind of communal activity in most of the areas or all of the areas throughout Barbados. The dividend that you get on that investment is just fantastic.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is speaking with some knowledge because only recently we would have announced that Government would be putting up through the Ministry of Youth Affairs a coordinated programme to develop activities for young people so that they can be involved in recreational activity at night, a programme where we would be putting lights and a number of hard courts across Barbados.

Indeed, Sir, this programme would be an assistance to the Sports Council who would pay the electricity bill. It is about to start all over any minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very happy to hear. I sincerely hope that Valery in Brittons Hill will get some of those lights and I sincerely hope that since I have started the development out of my own pocket at the Gully Hill and put up the lights that I will get a pavilion next door to the lights as well in order to build the community in that area.

As I said, I want to see this generation of Barbadians really commit themselves to the elimination of poverty in this country.

When you think of the events that have taken place over the past century in Barbados, I think there is one thing that we must commit ourselves to and I think it is well within our grasp to so restructure the human and financial resources of this society that it targets those who have been left behind in the 20th century so that when we look forward to the next century we would be able to think of a Barbados which is free from the scourge of poverty. Let not those people who misquote the Bible and claim that the Bible says that the poor will always be among us and blessed are the poor and all that. Yes, blessed are the poor and blessed are the meek. All that is very nice but there are other ways to seek blessings other than through poverty. Over and above that, Sir, let us be clear about what we are saying.

We recognise that a baby today who is born in poverty who is born deaf, dumb, blind and crippled will be very unlikely to be able to earn a satisfactory living at any time in his or her lifetime. 4.00 p.m.

But what is important is that although that person may be poor he does not have to live in poverty and therefore it is the responsibility of this Parliament and the responsibility of the total society to make sure that we do not have people among us condemned to living in poverty from generation to generation and that it can be overcome. Sir, have you spoken to the officers of the various welfare agencies at anytime?

If you would speak to them you would discover that there are a lot of people who are highly intelligent with a lot of creative minds who are capable of coming up with programmes to deal with it. Let us give them the structures and the resources and poverty can be eliminated in this country. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman I believe that as Members of a Parliament at this juncture in the history of our affairs that it is most appropriate that we should debate this Head and that we should concentrate both on the nuts and bolts and that we should also look at the broader picture. I think that it is most important that we should seek to give a clarion call to this country and indicate where it is that we wish to see our country positioned and what steps we are going to take in order to reach that particular point. One thing is sure, Sir, that in order to have a clear vision of where we wish to take the country, and also in terms of the means by which we are going to reach there, we must have no doubt at all as to what our fundamental values are. And there is absolutely

no reason why a House constituted as this one is, should not be able to sit down and put our experiences, our knowledge and our visions together, in order to give leadership to the country.

We must be serious about what we are doing and we must realise that this particular Ministry and the various components of the Ministry, whether it is Labour or the Social Services such as they are and other components are seen as a totality without which this country cannot go forward. It is all tied in, Sir, with our economic aims and objectives, how we can push our production possibility frontiers forward in order to create the wealth that will enable us to improve the lot of the poor, the disabled and the disadvantage^

If we are to get a coherent view I do not believe that we can be splitting up the components of this Ministry as it is being split up. We talk about poverty alleviation, poverty eradication, or whatever terminology we may use in respect of the subject, but we cannot deal effectively with this if the major funding for this programme is taken away from the Minister responsible, and is placed somewhere else in the Prime Minister's office or the office of the Minister of Finance. I do not know what it tells us about the Minister of whom I am very fond. I am not being critical of the Minister at all.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. My understanding of "fond" may not be the same as the Honourable Member and I wonder if in the process he can explain "fond" so I will know exactly what he means.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, if we go into the etymology of the word we may find that "fond" may also mean foolish. That is one interpretation but it is not the one I am using in this sense, let me put it that way. The Minister is a man after my own heart and it is those whom you love most who will do you most harm, so I am not going to complain about the lack of lights in my constituency. I am not going to complain that the hard courts, we have two of them badly in need of repair, both at Bay Street Police Boys' and Girls' Club and at the Bay Pasture. I am not going to complain, I will simply mention the fact and pass on. I realise and I have a sure hope that under the leadership as presently constituted on this side that there will be a turn of the tables and that we will be able to spread the resources of this country in an equitable manner.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That is why the BLP has not changed theirs. From the mouth of the Minister we heard the list.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You better call all before you are finished. He did not call, Sir, but there is no reason why the Honourable Member for St. Joseph should be as deprived as the Members on this Side. He is one of the experienced persons in this Chamber and we are all the wiser for his knowledge and his erudition in matters of public policy, no reason at all. There is one grain or more than one grain of truth in the call by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for a more transparent distribution of the resources of the country particularly when it comes to the question of those issues which are of very great importance for the social development of the country and there is one thing that the Minister said which has caused me a little concern. Not only one, Sir, but there was one thing that I will mention now. 4.10 p.m.

He said that in his Ministry there were 58,1 believe he said, work stoppages in the country.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: He said disputes. I was thinking, Sir...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Minister gave specific references to work stoppages and went on to indicate that he had personally handled and solved the problem at the Barbados Light & Power. The impression was clearly left that he had solved 58 disputes which resulted in stoppages, major disputes including the one with the Barbados Light & Power and that he had in fact solved it. The impression was left clearly in the minds of Parliamentarians.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: When the Minister gets the information, I will pursue that matter. Sir, I will suspend my comment until the Minister clarifies in his own mind what it is that he has said.

I wish to go on to another aspect, the aspect of sports. I speak on this particular subject because like you, Sir, we have dabbled in the higher reaches of some sports and you earned some well deserved reputation in that regard.

I believe that sports constitutes an important aspect of the social services of this country. I think that it is tremendously important and we have not yet reached that level of appreciation of the role that it can play. Not only the major sports but the other sports as well. We need to become more structured and more organised as a nation and as a region.

My Government had taken the initiative to start a programme to bring those athletes in Barbados who were in need of assistance and training under a programme

within the discipline of the Barbados Defence Force. I believe, Sir, that programme is languishing and that like most things started by the Democratic Labour Party Government it is being abandoned.

Just as the BOB has been abandoned, just as the Eye Care Centre sponsored by the Lions Club which was very important for the development of this country and I know....

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There has been no abandonment of the Eye Care Centre. We have had a study of the Centre done by the Boston University Consultant Team, they rendered a report last year which said that in terms of the demand for the centre, it has been overbuilt and recommendations are now being made in relation to how it can be best utilised. I am going to release the report to the public.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I sit and I stand in this Chamber and I am sometimes very greatly amused. I have never said anything adverse about that Minister. I have never read literature in Geneva with her. Never.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We have different interest in literature.

Sir, I believe that as a country we should pay greater attention to our sports and the development of sports and I wish to call once again for a regional approach in certain sports. There is no reason why we can only have a regional cricket team. There is need for approaches in other sports as well and I would ask the Minister to take an initiative in this particular regard.

Sir, you gave me two minutes, those have now expired. I may speak again.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I am speaking in this debate to lend support to the Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports and the staff of his department for putting together these Estimates that are being debated here. I want to say that this Ministry is helping in a way with the unemployment problem in Barbados. In essence, these Estimates are geared towards bringing down the unemployment in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that the Ministry will continue in this vein. I have noticed from the Estimates that this Ministry is putting lots of effort into the training and getting more and more young skilled people in Barbados. 4.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, when one decides to join the police force he has to be trained. If one wants to be a nurse one has to be trained. A lawyer has to be trained. A fireman has to be trained. Mr. Chairman, there are lots of young people in this country who are out there unemployed and many of them come to my constituency office and when I explain to them that, yes there are jobs out there for you but you have to be trained for that job they look at me and tell me that they only want piece of quick money. I try to explain to them, you have to be trained in order to get a job out there.

Mr. Chairman, this Ministry has recently embarked on a programme where they advertise on the radio encouraging young people to come to the skills training programme but I know there are a lot of young people who do not watch television and they would not be seeing these ads on television. I am saying that the Ministry can look at putting these ads on 95.3 Liberty, the kind of radio stations that these young people listen to at the peak times when they are listening to certain programmes. I hope this would be one area where the Ministry would be carrying this message to the young people.

Recently I heard on the television the Managing Director of the Sandy Lane Hotel speaking about spending \$342 million on a new look Sandy Lane. I understand they are going to be tearing down the old Sandy Lane and they are coming from scratch right up spending over \$342 million. I also heard Mr. Williams saying on the television that they will be needing skilled labour and that they might have to be importing people from the Caribbean countries to work. He also mentioned along that line, Sir, that he knows they would have to apply for work permits.

Now, I know, Sir, that the Skills Training offers these training programmes for a period of 9 months and I do believe that we still have some time to get some young people trained out there to work in this programme at the new Sandy Lane Hotel.

Mr. Chairman, my other point deals with the elderly. The elderly have played their part, they have made their contribution significantly to the development of Barbados and I believe that in their sunset years they should be taken care of. There are many occasions on which old people are abandoned by their own relatives. Many times I go to certain parts of my constituency and I talk to old people. I ask them if they do not have anyone that can come and they say, such and such a person, I do not see them any more. I have been on my own for the last 3 to 4 years. I do not know where "X" or "Y" is. What is surprising to know, Sir, is that when this same old person dies or takes sick and has to go to the geriatric hospital and be institutionalised there, that within a period of 6 or 7 months you see someone coming and claiming the old lady's or old gentleman's home.

I remember as a young boy, or like the Honourable Member says, a younger boy, there was a church that we used to call the Close Brethren. We called it the Close Brethren because they used to carry on their services in a pattern where all the doors would be closed and nobody from outside could go in or listen to the service. As the Honourable Member for the City says, you had to be a member to go in there but I do not think I would want to be a member.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying this organisation worked in this way. They used to take the old people that lived on their own and put them to live, say 3 or 4 in one house to live together with the strongest member seeing after the care of the older people. Then the church itself would take the home of the other members, sell the homes and put the money into a fund that would take care of those who were living together. What I am getting at, Sir, is that we should be looking at getting together some villages for these older people.

There is an old school in the Peterkin Land area, the old Washington High School. It has 23 or 24 rooms and I believe that this Government department should be looking at the possibility of acquiring this property and making some kind of old people's village for these old people. As I said, Sir, there is plenty of abandonment in Barbados.

At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital we have a problem of people abandoning their relatives. When these same old people go to the geriatric hospital many of them are there just without anyone to come and care for them. At times I am quite sure their lives would be longer if they knew their relatives would come and talk to them and care about them.

My other point relating to the old people is this. I believe that successful corporations in Barbados can add something as good corporate citizens if they can make some kind of annual contribution to taking care of these old people who have made such wonderful contributions to the development of Barbados and to these same people's businesses also.

My last point, Sir, is to touch a bit on the Welfare Department. I do not believe that we should be living in a total welfare state. I know the Welfare department takes care of a lot of people out there who are not in a position to help themselves because of disability, not working, the destitute, the mentally impaired and all these things. I know they help with their rent through the National Housing Corporation, their water bills, their light bills, uniforms for school children and a little voucher to help with food. 4.30 p.m.

I am saying Sir, that this is well and good, but my problems stem from complaints that I get from people who are on welfare about the way they are treated by some

welfare officers. You know, you are going to these people with cap in hand and at the end of the day when they come back they complain about a particular officer said this to them or that to them and not only what they say, but the manner in which they say it. But the people can do no better than that. So they have to go back next week begging again.

These welfare officers who are guilty of this practice, they must remember that what "ain't pass ya ain't catch ya yet". They do not know how they will fall at some time or one of their relatives. I can tell you that I went to the office one day to see an officer, and when she was told that someone was out there to her, when she came and saw me, she pushed her mouth in the air.

Aside.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: I am going to keep going there all the time because it is my duty to represent the people of St. Michael West Central in particular. I represent Barbados in general, because I am in here to represent people and this is a practice I am not going to go and complain and call anybody's name. But I am going to monitor the situation myself and see how it goes.

I believe when you are in a job, Mr. Chairman, in order to do a good job of it, you have to first like your job. You have to be happy in your job and if you are not happy in that job, look for another job. That is the way I see it.

Another thing I want to look at last but not least, Sir. There is a particular company in Barbados that is in the business of recruiting people for overseas travel to work on ships. One of my constituents called me and told me he put over \$1 500 into the hands of these people and every week he is calling asking about when he is going on the plane to get the job overseas working on the ship and he is told "next week" and this is three months it is going on. They sent him to get medicals done and he did his medicals.

My constituent found out something was fishy and he got on the phone and he called the principals in Miami and he was told the truth. He turned around and checked then with the hospital where the medicals were done and he was told that his medicals came to \$173.50 but was told by the company that it was \$350.00. I told him to go and get back his money and if you do not get your money within a week to give me a call and I will deal with that for you.

Mr. Chairman, I said I congratulate and support the Minister on this Head.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish that I could join in the congratulations to the Minister. As

a matter of fact I first wish to register my complete unacceptance of the fact that the Minister is not in his seat. The whole system which we operate on...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:... for so long? All right, if you say that he is nervous and he had to spend sometime there, I would accept that. I understand but he is to come and hear what we have to say.

Mr. Chairman, I wish I could join with the congratulations that are being heaped on the Honourable Member and the last Member who sat down, but I would be dishonest if I did that because I would not be doing my duty. I have some questions which I wish to raise and I am going to raise them with him. It is going to take a long time so if I do not finish in 15 minutes, I will come back again. But before I begin, I want to take up a point which the Honourable Member who just sat down raised and he talked about the elderly, the senior citizens and he speaks with passion and I believe it is genuine passion and any representative who is involved will have that concern as Your Honour has that concern. I believe most Honourable Members have that concern. I believe and I said it often enough that I hope, it is like a mantra that how we treat the elderly in our society or in any society is a manifestation of what constitutes that society.

When I had responsibility or part of the responsibility for looking after the elderly, we developed a series of plans which were identified by some people as too grandiose and much too expensive. I for example recall that we had a blueprint, an artist's impression of how we were going to build a new set of housing units on land just outside, where the current St. Lucy District Hospital is now. The land is owned by the Government. So the cost is not going to be prohibited. But it would have been where those persons who are still mobile would have been able to go in a village concept and they would have had decent housing. They would have been on their own but they would have a supervisory situation so that they would not have to be doing matches. They would not have to be using kerosine oil, but they could leave and go to town. They would have recreational facilities and some commercial activity in the area so that tourists who are coming through would stop in the village that we would design and purchase from them but that would have been one place. The study which I referred to before would have seen a similar system being built in St. Thomas to replace the St. Thomas Geriatric Hospital. Because we recognised back then that housing constitutes one of the most fundamental aspects of poverty in this country. It is second only to health. If you wish to eliminate poverty, health is at the center of development in any community, especially one like ours. You have to provide a quality of health for the elderly and the disadvantaged groups that is superior to the hand out and the almshouse mentality.

I have to say with much regret that I have been very worried that when our elderly now go to the Geriatric Hospital they are going there to die. 4.40 p.m.

It causes me real stress that going to the Geriatric Hospital is like putting something in the larder so that for those people who are there, even though the system for admission and all these things in place allowed for a higher quality of existence some time ago, the fact still remains that the aspect of rehabilitation from the Geriatric Hospital is almost absent.

When people get into the Geriatric Hospital it is just before they die and, as I said before, I go there almost every Sunday and it causes me stress because you see a whole room full of elderly women, ill, some of them, but some of them not so ill but you can see a change coming over them week by week by week as they lose hope. They are not interested in what is happening anymore. There is no programme and this is not an attack on the Minister of Health as it is I am calling on the Minister responsible for the elderly.

There ought to be a programme where these people, those who can, should be going to church if they used to go to church every Sunday. I know that there is a makeshift church arrangement where somebody comes in but we have the scenic tours and there should be an organised programme for the elderly in this country that other people...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is just like saying that there is a line in the road for when you are going around the corner. I understand what you are saying. Let me take it as given that there is such a programme, a higher level programme. I want to talk about the elderly but I do not have enough time. I just want to say that what the Honourable Member talked about is something very near and dear to my heart and there is no amount of money which we spend that is too much. There is no amount of money which we spend on making the elderly happy that is too much because they have earned it. Which brings me to another question.

The Welfare Department is responsible for the distribution of assistance in kind for certain types of people. The amounts are ridiculous. We talk about poverty. Anybody who is receiving welfare grants in Barbados is well below the poverty line and we collectively never review this and when we review it we put on 3% or 4%.

What the Honourable Member said, whether we like it or not, that is all the complaint that we hear, that when the people go to the Welfare Department they have a

sense of hopelessness. There is another problem which some welfare officers have and I think the Minister needs to have it changed even if he has to change the legislation. There are certain specific illnesses which are identified as disabilities in the legislation and there are other illnesses where the people are arguably more disabled than any of the illnesses listed but the welfare officer in question says that if it is not there you cannot get your money.

I take on the responsibilities in my constituency because of this interpretation by welfare officers because someone who has myasthenia gravis, that person is not deemed to be disabled by the legislation because it does not appear in the legislation. That is clearly rubbish. It is the spirit of the legislation that should count in determining since the welfare officer has some discretion. It is the spirit of the legislation which should determine whether the officer is going to recommend that the person gets welfare.

I am saying that in the delivery of welfare services we need a rethink - "we", meaning Barbados not the Welfare Department - because we are behaving like in the New Testament where those who go to church regularly and who pay their tithes and who do whatever they are supposed to do believe that they have discharged their responsibility to humanity when in fact a more careful examination of the results would show that nothing is happening. It is business as usual.

It requires special capacity to fight back. Sometimes you have to fight within your own system but you are not going to convince me that you are serious about the alleviation of poverty if those who depend on the State are being treated as just barely human. It is really the State that is showing compassion when the State is building facilities that are not merely makeshift and providing in those facilities the quality of care which people should have so that you can begin to say this is a country that has a philosophy about poverty.

I agree with the Honourable Member who raised the question. I do not agree with his dissertation on local government, as I said, but the Honourable Member is not an expert in that field. I listen to him on medicine but on matters of government I would not listen to him because he is not an expert on that. I would not go that far. He had an opportunity to become an expert and he frittered it away and I hope it is not too late for him to understand the matter.

Quite seriously, nobody can disagree that we have to empower the citizenry and that only if they are empowered that they can participate in the decision making. That is what I have spent the last umpteen years of my life teaching the people in my constituency as you can verify.

I teach them that when they go to the Hospital they have to ask what is your name when a nurse comes to you. When you go to a doctor at the Hospital ask him what is his name. And I am saying to the Minister of Health in passing that the doctors should wear -1 wrote it down and you will find it there if you have not agreed to it, think about it. They should wear something saying who they are. Do you know how often they come and report to me and I say who was the doctor you went to - "a curly-haired Indian". He says, "But Lord, they have nothing but curly-haired Indians in the Hospital".

So I have been teaching my people and I recommend that if they are not doing it that that is how you empower the people in the constituency. You have to teach them to look everybody in their face and because your circumstances require you to get welfare it does not mean that you cannot look the welfare officer in the face. I try to have no sheep at all in my constituency. When they come in my constituency even the real sheep if they come in my constituency you will see that they stop at the red lights.

Quite seriously, I try to teach the people in my constituency and I think the Honourable Member for the City tries to do the same thing when she is there.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: When you are not in Geneva chaperoning people.

Mr. Chairman, seriously, empowerment is a state of mind. Empowerment requires constant teaching. I am not going to agree ever that this little 2x3 country with 250 000 people needs 3 tiers of officialdom, 3 tiers of politicians, 3 tiers of confusion, 3 tiers of bureaucracy. We were supposed to cure the bureaucratic problem we have in the central government by the establishment of statutory boards. We have not been successful. We need to revisit that.

We need to decentralise services. A whole lot of things need to be done and there is need for reform. Nobody is saying that there is no need for reform but you have to understand what terms you use. If you use terms and you do not understand what they mean you will confuse yourself and by extension the rest of the people. I do not wish anybody coming in my constituency and confusing the people. What we want is delivery of services for which the taxpayers pay.

Now the Honourable Member has in the budget here for example that the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board are supposed to assist with the payment of certain bills. That is the theory.

For the first 2 months of every financial year it is all right. Thereafter, the constituency office at the corner of Richmond Gap and President Kennedy Drive becomes one of your agencies except that we do not get paid by you. We have to pay bills at the Light and Power because after a person goes to one of the agencies 6 or 7 times and discovers that the water bill is far from being paid and has been accumulating and that they then get a letter from the Water Authority saying that they are going to cut off the water we do not worry anymore. We go into the pockets or write a cheque and pay the water bill. It is easier to pay the water bill then, I have to stress. I do not think that people understand that.

The problem is that we never have enough money in the vote to pay the amount we are supposed to pay. It is therefore a rotten trick to play. It did not start with this Minister. Lest it be said that I am always on to him. You have to pass through the fire so that when I am gone you will have to be on to somebody else if you are still here. 4.50 p.m.

He does not exercise clear choice. He does not understand how to choose but that is a separate matter. Mr. Chairman, this is not good enough. Come June, July we will have people lining up saying that they cannot get their water bills paid. The criteria for getting your water bill paid should be published. We should all know what it is. It should not be luck and chance. The criteria for getting your light bill paid should be published. We should not be guessing, and you should not have to know somebody in the Department.

You should not have to go to your politician to call somebody in the Department to get your light bill paid if you are entitled. These are entitlements. We are giving them entitlements through this vote. It is my contention that if they are too many, then you have to find a way to reduce them, or you would have to say to the Parliamentarian you will have to take 1%, but let us know that is what is required. It is not now said that we took 1% in my constituency. If you doubt me you can come on Thursday evening. I am very sorry that you had Cabinet today because if I had to choose between there and here to be honest with you, I prefer to be there. It is much more fun, more refreshing and there is some variation. In here it is the same old thing.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT. You see what I mean? In that two minutes I want to ask the Minister if he or any officials in his Ministry responsible for pavilions and community centres know where Passage Road is. I want to tell you it is that road from Bank Hall to Westbury Road. It is

Passage Road. It has a pavilion that was put there a substantially long time ago. Nothing has been done to that pavilion since it was opened.

There is no road leading to the pavilion. It is the only pavilion in Barbados where you have to drive over a pasture off a street. It is the place that was designed for people from St. Michael West and the City. It has now been taken over by the National Sports Council and the National Sports Council now uses it for all kinds of regional tournaments. In fact, the parliamentarian has to get in touch with the Chairman of the National Sports Council to get people from Passage Road to be able to use it. We have to beg for permission now.

I have warned the Chairman that arson is a very strange item. I am very serious. I told the Chairman that in the interest of the development of harmonious relations that he should allocate some time to the people for whom the pavilion was built, that there should be a road by now. It is a disgrace. When the rain falls they cannot get on to the place. They have to park on another person's property. The slabs are there.

There is one woman who I hope she has found a proper lawyer but she stepped off one of the so-called seats and stepped right into a hole. Her foot has been hurt. She has witnesses. She said Louis Tull was out where he should not be as I understand it. Do not put him in this. This is serious business although I sympathise with him. He was not watching any sports when that happened, no matter what he says, but this lady has hurt her foot and you know what is pathetic? What is pathetic is when I said to her you have to go to see a lawyer and let the lawyer sue the National Sports Council she said to me, calling my name, "... but if I do that they will know that it is me." Then she told me what would happen to her. I spent a lot of time since then explaining to her that nothing can happen to her, but she is prepared to take the pain because she fears that she would lose her job. I am not saying that it is so. That is a fact. The point I am making is that the pavilion where she stepped in a hole stepping from one seat to another. The Chairman of the National Sports Council has seen it. I see no evidence in here that the Minister was told about it and was sympathetic to that.

I go next to Spring Garden. All of the young women who play cricket in Barbados play at Spring Garden. I have written to the Chairman of the National Sports Council. I am embarrassed by the fact... You see when the men were playing and the men had to go in the bush, that was acceptable, but the women play there. We cannot have a situation where we are discussing the alleviation of poverty and women go to play sports at a sports field that is administered by the Government that has no toilet facilities, none. We have put one of those chemical toilets there.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: But that cannot be right. The Attorney General is reminding me that there is another playing field somewhere that had the same fate when we were the Government, *mea culpa*.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: No problem. I acknowledge that if it happened during our time it was equally bad but I did not know about it, and I do not represent up there. I know about this and I represent down there and I am saying to the Minister that he...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: The women that play down there are not from my constituency. They come from your constituency. I will tell the ones from St. Thomas that the Attorney General said that he does not care if they have to go up in the bush.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly. 5.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I would want, first of all, to compliment and congratulate the Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports for the splendid work he has done over the last three years and six months to bring his Ministry into a modern fashioned Ministry which is working tremendously well in the interest of all Barbadians.

I personally, first of all, Mr. Chairman, would want to address a few concerns today. I have listened quite

attentively to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I think I can agree with the suggestions he was making in terms of community development affairs. It is indeed important for us to look quite carefully at the role of the Community Development Officer within the community. That role has now been superseded by the Parliamentarian because we are now doing the duties of the Community Development Officer. I think there is a need to strengthen the role of the Community Development Officer within the community. He has to do more in terms of promoting activities, in terms of searching out what is happening within the community, what skills exist and how these skills can be put to use.

It is the Member of Parliament who has to look for the bridges, the street lights, all these little problems within the community, yet there is a community officer. I came up at a time, Mr. Chairman, when the Community Development Officer used to be around in the community promoting plays, youth groups and a number of skills. I believe that this department is one of the departments that needs to be looked at in the new financial year. I believe that as we turn into the new century the role of the community development officer should be widened. That is why I totally agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East in his presentation.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the question of poverty has always been talked about by all Honourable Members. In fact, I believe all Administrations since adult suffrage have tried to tackle this whole question of poverty. I am not sure that poverty would ever be totally eradicated. I think we should aim at the alleviation of poverty, to some extent.

Poverty is basically based on one's income. All Governments have put tremendous resources in the welfare programme. We have tried to curb poverty. If you look, for example, at the role of the National Assistance Board you will see that between the years 1991 and 1996, more than 1 200 persons applied to the National Assistance Board for repairs to houses. During that period more than 900 persons' homes were repaired. A number of new homes were added to the National Assistance Board so that I am saying that both political parties have tried to address this question of poverty and helping the poor.

I heard yesterday afternoon one other Honourable Member say that during last year the National Assistance Board did not meet but yet, even though the Board did not meet in that year, one finds that the Board still kept faith and over 300 houses were repaired in that year, and it is above the average, so that the National Assistance Board has indeed helped to curb this question of poverty.

The question of education, in my mind, is primary in dealing and tackling this whole question of poverty. We will never be able to fully eradicate it but people need to be educated. They need to be taught skills and I will be dealing with this whole question of skills training in a while. But education, to some extent, has helped to curb poverty.

As a people we know that if you look at the history of our people you will notice that it is through education that most of us have arrived to some level and we must continue to promote skills within the villages. We must promote education. I believe that primary education will have to play a bigger role in helping to solve the problem of poverty. I believe we need to teach people to do things for themselves and this is where the Community Development Officer needs to come in contact with the people within his community. If this is done, Mr. Chairman, I am sure that more and more people will be able to find work within the community.

There are a number of people out there, Mr. Chairman, who do not have skills. There are a number of people out there who cannot find work because they are not masons, carpenters, steel benders, electricians and they come to us at our constituency branch office asking for jobs. They cannot find jobs and the reason why they cannot find jobs is because they do not have skills and this is where poverty lies.

The question too, Mr. Chairman, is that I believe a number of people remain poor because of themselves. We must face facts. A number of people remain below the poverty line because sometimes they are too lazy to go and look for work and they expect us to find work for them.

We, as mature citizens, must teach the poor persons in the community to be trained. It is no sense telling a young boy or a young girl at 18 that they must go and find a job. But sometimes what he or she does? They cannot do anything, so you need to train them.

I am happy, Mr. Chairman, that the Vocational Training Board has undertaken a number of activities over the past 15 years. I believe that this institution should be upgraded. I believe that more resources should be put behind the Vocational Training Board. Mr. Chairman, you may be aware that this Vocational Training Board is teaching more than 15 trades. More than 700 youngsters are being trained by this institution every year in these 15 trades. Do you realize, Mr. Chairman, that between 160 to 175 young apprentices are now under contract with various tradesmen across Barbados including the garages and some of the construction companies? This is important because I always believe that tradesmen are important. I always believe that trade and the apprenticeship system is

important. The reason for this being that when persons go to learn a trade from a contractor or from any person for that matter who is teaching the trade, he learns the habits, he learns what this contractor has experienced over time and this is important. You need to teach the youngsters some form of discipline. There are a number of youngsters who need to be disciplined and when this is done, Mr. Chairman, I believe that we would have achieved something. 5.30 p.m.

I believe that this programme, the apprentice programme should be expanded, it should be encouraged and the Minister and the department should do whatever they can to upgrade this programme and encourage other persons to get involved. I understand that the demand for young tradesmen have increased over time and it is my understanding too that the aim is to make sure that more than 250 persons become apprentices by the end of this financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I am also heartened by the fact that the industrial climate in Barbados today is good. Everyone is aware that industrial disputes over the last three years were at its minimum and that there was scarcely any industrial dispute over the last three years. This is because the department, Mr. Chairman, is being run in a modern and fair way. The number of employment laws and legislation has been looked at. There is one that I would like to ask the Minister to elaborate on - the Unfair Dismissal Bill.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that this is important today because there are too many youngsters who work in the industrial sector who are still facing a number of problems and these problems have to be addressed. There are a number of cases which have come to my attention where young girls and boys have been treated very badly and have been dismissed and sometimes they do not have anywhere to go. Sometimes they go to the department but at the end of the day, the unions sometimes do not make a difference....

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by stating that it does not make any sense going to trade unions for representation. I cannot support that, Sir. He needs to clarify that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I did not say that the unions were a waste of time. What I said is this: that there are a number of cases where the unions cannot help the worker within the legislation. If there was an Unfair Dismissal Bill, there are a number of things that can be done.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the department should be looking at an Unfair Dismissal Bill. I have looked at this department quite recently and I have noticed that there is a Department of Women's Affairs. I salute that department but within recent times there have been lots of calls for a department to deal with the issues and problems that men face.

I think that this department should be renamed to look at all cases involving the cases of men as well as women.

I will come back at a later stage, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am glad that I have been given the opportunity again to join this debate.

Sir, as I sat listening to Honourable Members in this Chamber, particularly discussing the whole issue of community development, I had to look back at the role that the Community Development Division is playing in the development and harnessing of communities within this country.

One of the major problems with the community development division is that most of the work that they are currently doing is not well advertised through the GIS programmes. It would be an understatement in this Honourable Chamber to let the public believe that the Community Development Division is not doing anything. I think what we have to do is to take a holistic approach at this whole issue of community development.

Like the Honourable Member from St. Michael North West, I too believe that the Rural and Urban Development Commissions should be under the Community Development Division and that the Community Development Division should be a Ministry of itself. I remember the late Dr. Eric Williams, when he was Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, he had the Ministry of Community Development under his portfolio and he never let it go and that is why probably he was so successful as Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago.

Sir, there was a time in Barbados when the Community Development Officer would spend at least half of his day in working in the community and then return to the office late on evenings or probably at the end of the week and do some theoretical work. One of the best exponents that I know of the art, because working in the community is an art, you have to have the right skill. It does not take nine and ten 'O' levels or a degree to work in communities. It takes careful understanding of how to interact with young people and people in general. One of the best exponents of this art and I call it an art, is Mr. Ralph Walker.

He was sent in the community, probably to fail. Because at that time when he came to that community in St. Michael South East called Pinelands, that community was probably at its lowest ebb and he transformed that community by instituting both developmental programmes. Now that community is the model community of the Eastern Caribbean. It is a Barbadian that has done it.

In addition to that, it is directly through the same community development officer that Hamilton Lashley happens to be right here in Parliament. He worked at the community level, showing what the power of work and harmony at community level can do. It shows that there is a silent revolution being created in this country as we go into the 21st century.

I predict that probably as we go into the 21st century, Sir, that the majority of the leaders who will enter this Honourable Chamber are going to be drawn from the community. There will be community leaders, Sir. Because let's face it, we as politicians - not me, because I do not consider myself in the true style or characteristic of a politician to be a politician. I consider myself to be a leader rather than a politician but politicians inadvertently are leaders too but if they follow the correct way they would be more of statesmen.

Sir, what I am saying is this. I just want to stray a bit off community development and edge into sports hoping that I do not get caught at first slips. There is a need to increase the grant to non-profit sporting organisations in Barbados. Everything that happens in Barbados in the development of sports and development of culture must happen at the community level. There is a need for an increase in the grant to non-profit sporting organisations.

Sir, why I say that is because if you travel around Barbados on Sundays, you will see for the first time in the history of this country, you will see so many women engaging themselves in women's soft ball cricket. I believe that we should give them a grant.

I also believe that we should provide a grant for all organised community sporting organisations in Barbados. Because whether you like it or not, that is where all activity begins. We cannot allocate just \$6 000 every year towards non-profit organisations.

Another thing that is bugging me, in that these same community based organisations when they approach certain national funding agencies in Barbados or the commercial sector or private sector for sponsorship, they are told that you have to be a national organisation. This cannot be right.

Therefore, Government as a responsible agency of the people have to make these funds available for non-profitable sporting community organisations. 5.40 p.m.

Sir, I want to draw an instance. The recently held World Cup in the United States of America grossed \$67 million profit from that football tournament, Sir. They have just developed their major league soccer and the majority of those players are being drawn from the Eastern Seaboard of the United States and across the Caribbean and even now they have ventured into South America and Europe.

Sir, I believe that if our sports are going to be developed we must expose our sportsmen to the best level of competition there is in this world and if the dollars are in America we cannot stay in the Caribbean all the time and let the Americans hold the dollars. We have got to develop our sportsmen also to compete on that circuit. So let us take a situation. Suppose we wanted to carry a football team from Barbados to the United States of America to compete, the first thing that is going to happen is that each individual sportsman has to pay a \$90 tax to get a visa to travel to the United States. If there are 20 players in that team that is equivalent to \$1 800. That means that group will have to look for that first. So let me deal with that.

All I am saying, Sir, is that our Government talk to the officials at the United States Embassy and see if we can have a measure in place whereas the tax which is on these visas be waived for sporting groups travelling to the United States of America.

Now, Sir, if they decide they are not going to waive it what we could do, we could charge an arrival tax at Grantley Adams International Airport for all persons coming out of North America to Barbados and take that same money and channel it back into a fund for non-profit sporting organisations. That is all I am saying, Sir. Somehow when you mention the United States of America Honourable Members seem to get frightened in this Chamber but when America decides to institute a policy they institute it and they do not care whom it hurts so we cannot be frightened.

In addition to that, Sir, a ticket travelling to the United States of America is \$1 076. I am saying, Sir, that when we ask our groups to travel overseas we say to them in eloquent terms, you are an ambassador of Barbados when you are travelling but what status do we give them. What rights do we hand over to them? None.

I am asking, Sir, that we carefully examine the fact that tax on airline tickets be waived on groups travelling out of Barbados, not only national groups but community

based organisations, NGOs, whatever, once they are representing Barbados.

In addition to that, Sir, that is why Jamaica is so successful because their sportsmen do not go under this psychological stress when they get to the airport and are asked for departure tax on producing a passport *etc.* We have got to make it a lot easier for all our sportsmen.

Therefore I am also saying once you are an organised sporting organisation or cultural organisation representing this country, do not just say we are ambassadors, that tax should also be waived. It cannot hurt the Treasury because the development of this country cannot and should not always be measured in dollars and cents.

I have spoken to the Minister of Sports. We have had a head-on meeting, Sir, and I will meet with him again, Sir, but presently a group of young Barbadians from my constituency are organising an international Caribbean Youth Soccer Tournament running from the 8th April until the 14th April. Some 600 young people from the Caribbean all under the ages of 17 will converge on our shores to participate in the first ever Caribbean Youth Soccer Classic and I will tell you why, Sir. In the Year 2000 Trinidad will be hosting the under 17 world series, Sir, and out of those 600 young people that are coming to Barbados, Sir, some 400 are coming out of Trinidad along with Trinidad top coaches to monitor those youngsters for that youth tournament in the Year 2000.

Now FIFA, the major sporting organisation in the world of soccer, has allocated for that tournament something to the tune of nearly \$10 million to \$12 million and the FIFA representative, Jack Warner, has made a pertinent statement that that tournament is going to be employing almost a quarter million Trinidadians. I am saying that if we are going to take the development of sports seriously then therefore we have got to examine it now. We cannot talk about when people achieve. We have got to help them to achieve therefore we have to deal with it at the community level.

Now, Sir, in addition to that what I also want to speak about is the lighting of hard courts in Barbados. Every time that something innovative happens in St. Michael South East it is the community themselves, sometimes with assistance from Government, sometimes with assistance also from the private sector.

There are some private sector firms in St. Michael South East, Sir, that I would not use this occasion, Sir, to castigate them but they need castigating because they do not contribute one single iota cent to the development of St. Michael South East and one of these days I would take the Honourable Minister of Sports and the Minister of

Culture on a tour of St. Michael South East and point out these firms because if I had my way, Sir, I would extradite them out of Barbados.

Sir, what I am saying is that I made a call earlier in this Chamber for the lighting of all hard courts across Barbados. What we have to understand is that the development of this country and when we talk about developing people it cannot be a partisan thing, it cannot be a BLP thing, a NDP thing or a DLP thing it would have to be a people's thing. And we need to approach it that way because when elections come Bs will vote B, Ds will vote D and if somebody more popular comes they would get that floating vote. You cannot look at the country in that manner. What we have to do is look at putting these facilities in place so as to counteract the scourge of crime *etc.* So that when you Honourable people in here are sleeping in your beds at night you can sleep comfortable knowing that your young people are involving and engaging themselves in something productive on the hard courts of Barbados at night.

Sir, night soccer, that is why I was asking for a mini stadium because we need to develop the facility to encourage this game called night soccer. Thousands of people every night converge on Pinelands to play. Young people watch and play night soccer. All I am saying is that I do not want these things only for Pinelands. I am hoping that Government could take this up so that all communities in Barbados could play night soccer and have night activities.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One more minute, Sir.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, in that one minute I want to look at the fusion. Personally I believe that in the integrated Caribbean it will happen but I do not believe it will happen at the political level because we have failed at that. I believe that grass roots organisations in Barbados and throughout the Caribbean interacting at that level is what is going to create a harmonious and united Caribbean. Why I say that, Sir, is because there is currently a fusion between Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and Jamaica, that is going on. I am saying, Sir, it is because of this fusion that has made travelling to other countries so much easier and if we use all our resources, helped by the private sector in Barbados, in addition to the relevant Government agency, life would be easier at the community level.

Finally, Sir, let me say this. Sir, I always say I do not think that members take me seriously when I say that the development of this country cannot and should not always be measured in dollars and cents. Sir, if we keep down the path of dollars and cents only and forget the other agencies that go along with it we are going to find ourselves in

trouble. Let us all, using all the resources that we have in this country, develop a respectable model and a model that will forge a continuity for our young people and older people as we go into the twenty-first century. I want to thank you, Sir. 5.50 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East wanted us to state exactly what our attitude was with relation to the NGOs and grants to the NGOs.

Mr. Chairman, in 1991/92 the grant to the Barbados Legion, the old soldiers was \$10 000. By 1992/93 that was slashed in half and the grant was \$5 000. This year, Sir, the grant to the Barbados Legion, by this administration is \$20000.

Mr. Chairman, in 1991/92 the grant to Family Welfare League was \$1 500. By 1992/93 that was slashed, in fact it was removed altogether and there was nothing. By 1998 the grant is \$7 000. In other words the last administration removed it altogether and the Family Welfare League was getting nothing.

Mr. Chairman, the Council for the Disabled was getting in 1991/92, \$2 000. By 1992/93, it was getting nothing and this financial year it is getting \$5 000 as a grant.

Mr. Chairman, the feeding programme for the Salvation Army was \$66 000 in 1992/93 and this year, that grant is \$110000.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just want to put those figures in the records to show the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East what our attitude is to NGOs and to grants to NGOs.

I want to also respond to a very good point which was made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and it related to the empowerment of people generally and in particular to people who were on welfare. Because, I believe like he does that the whole question of welfare cannot be just hand-outs and that we need to go a step beyond that. I must admit, Mr. Chairman, that I am a bit disappointed that in this particular area, we have not done as much as we should when it comes to actually empowering people.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am very frank and I admit it. But what I can say though, Mr. Chairman, is that where a Poverty Alleviation Programme is concerned, the Welfare Department, the National Assistance Board, and

indeed the Training Board have instituted a type of enhancement policy where when you go to a home and there is at that home, let us say, a young person and the young person can be trained, that person is actually singled out and is taken by the National Training Board. But the point is that they are doing an enhancement programme, trying to enhance the person's capabilities.

We believe that if we repair in 1998, Mr. Chairman, we should not have to come back in 2002 to repair the same house because the same person is in it and that person is doing nothing to further himself or herself. We think, Sir, that the combination of the Welfare Department and the Training Board, that combination is doing a first-class job.

I cannot call the persons by name. In fact I cannot say that I know them. I know of one person for instance, who was on welfare and the Welfare Department in going into the house found out that this person could do something for himself and it might sound like a little thing, but that person was actually given a weedwhacker. I am pleased to say, Mr. Chairman, that that person is now working for himself and is no longer a recipient of welfare.

This is the type of enhancement programme that I am speaking about. We have encouraged recipients of welfare wherever possible to become work oriented because we believe, Mr. Chairman, the only way that we can break the cycle of dependency, is by getting some of the recipients off welfare and into the world of work.

Mr. Chairman, I want briefly to speak on a matter raised by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the whole question of disability. Indeed what he was saying is that he believes that we should do a bit more for persons with disabilities. I believe that regardless to what is done in the next five years, that someone will still be able to say that we need to do a bit more for persons with disabilities. Because it is a cry throughout the world that we need to do a bit more for these persons.

It is precisely because we thought it was necessary to do something more for persons with disabilities that we actually set up the disability unit. In a very moving speech, I must say about a year ago by a young lady in Queen's Park, a disabled person, you could hardly hear what she was saying, in her own way and in her own manner of speaking, and almost moving the entire audience to tears, she said "when you all set up the unit, please do not put us in the hickey" and those were her actual words. She thought that the attitude toward people with disabilities generally was to take them and put them down in the back as she also said, "down behind God's back."

I have to say that on the 3rd of December 1997 we opened the Disability Unit, it is now located in Hastings

Towers. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, you can say that our attitude to the disabled is putting them behind God's back. On the contrary, they are very much on the front road. That unit, Mr. Chairman, is not yet ideal either. But I want to say that we have things like the rails in the toilets so that when the disabled come to the unit that it is accessible.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: We made sure that we put it in the Unit, because we did something which was never done in this country before, we set up a disability unit. And right now what we are doing, Mr. Chairman, we are trying to get our register up-to-date. And we want to have a register of all persons with disabilities in Barbados. We want to know where they are, we want to know their names and we want to know the nature of their disability.

I believe that we have now gone way over 100 persons and we have reached this number because the individuals themselves have called. We have reached the number because their families, friends and concerned citizens have called to say that they know this person by name, the person has a disability and the disability is such. So we are having a disabled register and we are having it up-to-date so as I say we will know where the disabled people are in Barbados.

We have found it necessary too, and I believe we will have to begin early in the financial year, because we know that a lot of the families, I mean families of disabled persons will have to be trained. I will give you an example of what I mean. Mr. Chairman, you may train a deaf and dumb person in the whole art of sign language. A lot of them go to these schools and train in the art of sign language, but when the person goes home in the evening and the person has to communicate, the family at home does not know anything about sign language and therefore we think it is necessary to try to sensitise those families that they too need to become part of the whole thing and they be trained in the art of sign language and so on as well.

So it is not that we are out there slugging away in the dark. We know exactly where we are going with the unit, Sir, and Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph also mentioned the whole question of transportation for the disabled. Right now in Barbados we only have one special vehicle which is really and truly available for persons with disabilities. It is not a brand new vehicle. It is a vehicle that came from England and the windows at the top were very small because it was made for the cold climate and we have had to have some alterations done. I believe we have received an estimate for that in the vicinity of \$8 000 or \$9 000 and we are

working on that because we hope that in about 3 or 4 weeks time that vehicle specially designed for disabled people will be under wraps. We will have one specially designed vehicle for disabled people in Barbados. 6.00 p.m.

Where legislation is concerned, Mr. Chairman, we had a young person from the Lodge School put together all of the legislation in Barbados related to persons with disabilities and that paper was taken to Cabinet. We are very selective on the areas that we are going to take out of her paper and we are going to have the approved legislation.

Mr. Chairman, if I could briefly touch on the hostel for battered women. This is something which the Ministry is also actively pursuing because, do not let us fool ourselves, there are a lot of women in Barbados who have become the victims of domestic violence and a lot of them have had to stay in the homes because they have nowhere else to go and they have to put up with the battery and so on. We believe that the time has come in Barbados for us to do something about that.

Mr. Chairman, we have arranged with the Business and Professional Women's Club to manage the hostel. The money is going to go through welfare and welfare in turn is going to pass the money on for the Business and Professional Women's Club to manage. We feel that the same way we know that people in Barbados are going to become sick and need a hospital that young people in Barbados need education and you need schools. Do not let us put our heads in the sand we know that some people in Barbados will become victims of domestic violence and we need to address it and therefore we set the hostel up.

I am not saying where the hostel is for obvious reasons but it is something that we have to address.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got 1 minute .

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I just want to say, Sir, that there were last year somewhere in the region of 450 cases of domestic violence before our courts and that is where we got our numbers from. Only 30 of those were men who were beaten by women. There might have been others who were too ashamed to come forward. I will have to come back.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one listens to the Honourable Minister speaking on welfare one gets the impression that so many things are being done for the Welfare Department out of the \$252 million surplus VAT funds. One would have gotten the impression that there would have been a large increase in the vote for the Welfare Department.

I want you to know, Sir, that the approved Estimates for 1997-98 was \$19 230 771. For 1998-99, the approved Estimates was \$19 310 990. When you subtract that figure, Sir, you will see that the Department got \$287 217 and everybody on that side will clap and say it is a lot of money but when you look at the emoluments and at National Insurance you would recognise that \$199 698 goes towards National Insurance and emoluments leaving a balance of \$87 521 to be spread among travel, utilities, rental of property, library, supplies and materials, maintenance of property and other operating expenses, subsidies, other grants to individuals, grants to non-profit agencies, structures, plant and equipment.

When one looks at the increase for the Welfare Department including salaries and national insurance there is only a 1.5% increase on that Head. If you take out the salaries and the national insurance and the wages all that department has received is a .46% increase.

One would have thought, Sir, that a government that got over \$252 million surplus funds from VAT that a department like the Welfare Department which is supposed to look after the poor and the old that this Department would have been at least been granted a 50% increase like some other departments within this same Ministry.

I will not accept anything from the Government when they come in here and tell me that they now have to look after the old people in this community. I cannot accept it and I will tell you why. This vote will never have logic. You have a situation in this country where the Transport Board is bragging that they have taken on additional routes which means that more old people will be travelling and that under subprogram 427 that grants and subsidies automatically would have to increase and I want to know, Sir, who is the accounting officer who prepared these estimates because if you are going to tell me that more old people will be travelling you should have prepared an estimate to reflect that. So I will not accept these estimates to be true and I would expect you to come to this Assembly and make the necessary adjustment.

I am also saying that I have called on the Prime Minister to give the old age pensioners an additional 4 weeks because as I said yesterday they have a right to get their pensions weekly so that they can budget better and I do not understand paying old age pensioners bi-weekly. I disagree with that. I have called on him to divide the bi-weekly by 2 and give them a weekly pay and in the same way give an increase of 4 weeks. I do not see that being reflected in these Estimates and I expect a supplementary to be coming shortly for that.

Those people who are living on welfare and who have been promised that they would get their electricity,

telephone and water bills paid, a 1.5% increase cannot get them what they want.
6,10p.m.

You are going to have a situation where Ministers on that Side come in here and say how they are going to be paying water bills and telephone bills for old people. Old people go to them to be told yes we are going to pay your bill and for two months, Sir, the bills are paid. Then they are going to have to come and beg other people. I am saying that the old people in this country worked hard in the fields and they are entitled to a better allocation than this.

The same way that somebody can put a project and get \$35 million for that project alone it is disgraceful that a vote for welfare cannot even reach \$25 million and one man with any project can get over \$35 million. We need to go back to history when we are dealing with this Head. I am saying that most of the old people worked in the canefields of this country and they supported many people and many projects in this country and they deserve more than this particular vote, so I need the Minister to come and tell me what he is doing.

I support the Honourable Member for St. Joseph when he talks about how old people are being treated now in the canefields. He has my total support and I would say to him anytime you have a problem with them come and tell me and I would help you, because I know you have many problems with them and I will ask you to declare your policy.

Mr. Chairman, we also have another problem. One or two years ago this Government on a public relations programme came to this Assembly and talked a lot about how much they care about returning nationals. For two years before they brought that bill or resolution or whatever you want to call it before this Assembly, I have been telling them it is unfair to encourage people to leave this country, go overseas, send back money to help build this country and when they come back to this country they cannot get one cent, even if they call it old age pension.

I am saying it is disgraceful to give people the impression you are on their side and then do not give them something as an old age pension. I am calling on this Government out of the surplus VAT funds to give the returning nationals at least something for old age pension and if you want to call it national insurance, to give them something. They are not begging for it. They have worked hard and they have sent back the funds to help build this country and they deserve it.

Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, there is no need for the Honourable

Member to rant and rage, but it is very needful that he does not mislead the House. He is grossly misinformed in respect of returning nationals. They are not returning for Barbadian pensions. Returning nationals are not aliens. They are Barbadians who come back here bringing skills, capital and a whole host of other things with them but they also bring their pensions. It is very wrong to premise any statement that you are making on the basis that they are coming back here for pensions.

This is part of the terrible propaganda being put out that returning nationals are coming back here to take something from Barbadians. Returning nationals have given to Barbados. But they do not come back here looking for pensions. They bring their pensions when they come here. We have a reciprocal arrangement with the United Kingdom in that respect, in particular.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman it is clear that the Honourable Member is not fortunate to have returning nationals in her constituency because I can tell you, if it is one thing that is worrying returning nationals is that they were asked by the Government to go overseas and work. They have been sending their money back and they have been participating in the economy just like anybody who remains, and now that they are back here they are being treated like outside children. I am not talking about the back bench. I am talking about the children coming back.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is not true. Those people have not paid their taxes here and they have no such expectations. This is giving rise to a terrible rumour mill out there to suggest that returning nationals are coming to take anything off Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You are saying it.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: He is not saying the opposite.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman I am speaking to you and I know you can understand logic easily. I am saying that returning nationals when they come back here they feel within themselves that they have done the country a favour and I agree with them. They feel that they should be able to participate in the goodness of the economy, and the goodies of the economy and that they should be entitled to an old age pension or a national insurance pension. I would go for the old age because they might not have contributed to the national insurance. What is so wrong about that?

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that we must understand...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please, order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman we have another serious problem. The Community Development Department is a Department that should be respected for what it does in this country. I am saying that nothing should be done in this country to undermine the Community Development Department. I am saying that the Youth Commissioners should be sub officers to the Community Development Department, that they should be taking instructions from the community development officers because they are the people who have been in the community studying the people, and they are the ones who should be implementing the policy so that the youth commissioners can function. But you get a situation where the community development officers have been out there tabulating the information and doing all the necessary work and people are now given jobs to go and deal with people. Some of them are not capable of dealing with the community. Let me give you an example, Sir. I heard a suggestion today that the fellows on the block...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please, order. Carry on.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I heard today, Sir, that the Youth Commissioners should be sent on the block to deal with the young people and to explain certain things to the young people. Let me tell you something. Any politician who is suggesting that they get information over to young people by sending the Youth Commissioners, Sir, they are fooling themselves.

It tells me that a particular politician is not on the ground doing his or her job, for the simple reason, if you go on the block, Sir, most of the Youth Commissioners pass through a particular training and the fellows say they are not dealing with him. It is a fact but they would not tell you the same thing about the Community Development Officers because they see them in a different light. I am not saying that the way the youngsters think is correct, but if we need to solve a particular problem we must understand how people are thinking, and send the right people to deal with the people,

I am saying, Sir, that if you send the Community Development Officers to deal with those youngsters, those youngsters are prepared to listen to the Community

Development Officers because they see them as their friends; but the people who might also be their friends they do not see them as their friends.

What we need is to put some power back into the Community Development Officers hands so that they can go into the community, organise programmes, and they would bring the youngsters from under the tree doing the necessary things they do. Anybody who feels that they can send Youth Commissioners and that word "commissioner" have the youth frightened. That is a fact. Do not laugh it is a serious point. As soon as they hear "commissioner" they think of one thing, but when you hear of "community development officers" development means something different to them and they are prepared to listen. What we need, Sir, is to send...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So what you need, Sir, is a programme where you put back the power in the Community Development Department. Mr. Chairman, do you know another thing, Sir? We have a lot of officers and it is structured in such a way that sometimes when the Community Development Officers should be in the field the most of their time is spent in the offices and they do not like it, Sir. The Community Development Officers would like to spend more time in the communities doing the work they are trained to do. We need to get another policy going to community development and they are some of the best officers you can find and they are not political, Sir. Wherever they see a good and a logical project, Sir, they support it. I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, when I spoke earlier I said I would return in this debate to raise a couple of concerns and I think that I ended on the point relating to the consultancy which the Government had undertaken for the rationalisation of the social services. I think it is a great pity that consultancy having been completed, the fund being paid the \$100 000 for work which as I said, civil servants had already undertaken many years ago.

In fact, we were even at the stage at one point where there were suggestions about renaming the Welfare Department to the Social Services Department, rationalising the various entities which provided psychology services like the Child Care Board, the Ministry of Education and those other entities. All of those things were looked at. This Government came along and the only files that it wants to open are files that it can use to attack Members on this

side instead of opening the files to see the welter of work that has been done by social workers in Barbados and by public officers, and takes up \$100 000 in taxpayers money, and had a consultancy written for the rationalisation of social services. The Minister delivers a speech in these Estimates and does not have a single word to say, Mr. Chairman, about whether he agrees with the recommendations in the study, whether he will implement any of the recommendations, whether the study has been useful or whether this House should have the benefit of some of the suggestions which that study had made. Then the Minister said that it was the previous Government that was sleeping and not this Government. The Minister needs to shake himself up and understand what his responsibilities are to this Parliament. 6.20 p.m.

For a long time, Mr. Chairman, I have been blaming him for inaction, but the Prime Minister's contribution yesterday highlights the extent to which the Honourable Member should not be blamed. You cannot blame the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. It is clear from the things the Honourable Member for St. Peter has done or has failed to do that he does not have a lot of confidence in his own Minister.

Imagine, Sir, a poverty alleviation programme, \$10 million to go on the road, and the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, does not have sufficient confidence in his own Minister of Community Development, his own Ministry of Social Services, to design the poverty alleviation programme. What he does is to set up a whole new tier of administration in which the Director of Finance, who has other responsibilities, has to sit in a committee at Government Headquarters, far away from the Minister of Community Development, far away from the Social Services Minister, and impose another tier of bureaucracy to determine how that \$10 million is supposed to be spent. If I was Minister...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Once you have a Prime Minister who believes he is the expert on poverty and can look in the face of his Ministers and let them know that because he does not assess them as having been born in poverty, that they cannot speak to issues of poverty and wants to attract to himself the impression of being the only man in this country who understands how to undertake poverty alleviation, I am not surprised at that outcome. It is part of the image boosting. That is why the Prime Minister could say in this Chamber yesterday that a previous Government suffered from institutional paralysis when the National Assistance Board did not meet for a whole year under the present Minister. If that is not institutional paralysis, or institutional negligence, I do not know what is, Mr. Chairman. How could an accusation be

made against a previous administration which had an active Board under the Chairmanship of Dr. Farley Brathwaite working on programmes, the Senior Citizens¹ Retirement Centre in Fitts Village, the Sargeant's Village one, a whole range of other programmes which were being worked on, extended and refined and in 1997 the National Assistance Board was not meeting for a whole year and the accusation could be made that there was institutional paralysis. The Honourable Member would have to be looking into a mirror, total inaction.

The Minister took no action but again I do not blame the Minister because he said yesterday that he does not boast and if people ask who the Minister was who put down the astroturf he supposed they would say it was him. Until he said so I had not remembered, and the people in St. Philip North at the Post Office this morning had to ask me what it was that their representative had done. Why would the Prime Minister not trust him with \$10 million to undertake a poverty alleviation programme? They asked me and I said: "You cannot ask me."

They would have to ask me, why it is that the Prime Minister would take a junior Senator, almost half the age of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, and put him to negotiate - He is a Senator, not even an elected Member of Parliament - a protocol on prices and incomes and leave the Honourable Minister to stand around at the meetings to take notes and make marginal inputs from time to time. A senior Minister with responsibility for Labour, with responsibility for negotiating disputes, with responsibilities under the Industrial legislation of Barbados and he was totally sidetracked, slapped down.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North was stoutly defended by his leader, but his leader has done everything conceivable to embarrass the people of St. Philip North, and I happen to be one of them, that our MP is not trusted to carry out any major tasks in the operation of Government. I feel very sorry for the Honourable Member because he is doing more seat warming than my good friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who should be a seat warmer at this stage in his life. There is justification. That is the kind of Government we have today, a Minister who cannot even articulate a programme for poverty alleviation. He talks about giving somebody a weed whacker and I am very grateful that that one person got a weed whacker.

He talks about setting up the Disability Unit but has he conceived what it is that the Disability Unit is to deliver in terms of empowering the citizens of this country? I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that we can have a serious debate in here on community development with a Minister who is being so significantly undermined in the execution of his duty in the way in which my parliamentary representative is constantly being undermined.

While he is talking about poverty alleviation, people's water is being cut off, meters are being installed, of course they would have started in St. John, so that people run up bills and have their water cut off, people who cannot meet their housing rents because of poverty. I am not talking about worthlessness, I am talking about poverty. These people are being put out of their units and there is a whole range of other concerns and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North comes under the defence of the Honourable Member for St. Peter who says there was institutional paralysis and budgetary severity.

Now that the money is flowing, according to his Government, some of those same problems magnified 100 times, are affecting the poor and the marginalised in Barbados and we have a big debate about giving out a weed whacker. Well, if that is so, give me 10 weed whackers. Give each MP because we know some people who need that kind of assistance. The debate cannot be trivialised in that way. If so, it means we have to send for the Honourable Member for St. Peter because he is the only person who seems to know what is going on in that particular Ministry.

We have a country in which several of our community centres are completely empty; in which community aides, youth commissioners and some of our other community workers have been so emasculated and themselves do not understand what they are supposed to be doing in the community, that communities are suffering from neglect from the efforts of those community workers. I do not blame the community workers because I know there are structural problems in the way in which welfare and community services are delivered in Barbados such as to give them problems.

Mr. Chairman, I am not impatient with them. I understand that they function with little flexibility. There are institutional territorial battles still between our welfare agencies. What is the Minister going to do about that? The structure of our civil service affects the ability of those people to get out into the community and deliver programmes. I want to say this that even though sometimes we do justifiably criticise the police, the police in Barbados in rural areas do a lot of the basic social work and bring to the attention of Members of Parliament and social services agencies some of the critical problems that are faced. Yet they are treated at the lowest rung of the ladder in the public service in terms of benefits which they receive. A policeman at District "C" who goes out all hours at night to assist people, the policeman in the north of Barbados, in the stations like Crab Hill and those places who have to do active community work matched only by the work which Members of Parliament do in their communities. 6.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I want to hear a bit more from the Minister. I am going to end by saying that I do not let the jive by the Honourable Member for St. Peter upset me. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West said that he had some resources available and he assisted the Madam Hill Day Nursery. I had some available and I looked at the many options available to me and I believed that it was necessary to promote the concept of "Families First". I did not take my money and go and buy a box at Kensington Oval.

I got bitter criticism from Members over there because I opted and because there are other people in this country who opted to take their resources to try and assist in focussing in the needs of people. I could have taken that money and done a whole set of other things with it. I heard Members on that Side saying that you could have carried it in the constituency and handed it out. As I said, I could have bought a box at Kensington Oval for that and entertain all of my friends over the cricket period. That is a concept that Members on that Side have and enjoyed.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was not low when you were criticising us. It is very important. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central talk about that question of abuse of children.

I believe that we need to build discipline, respect and love in our children and families. I believe that we need to bring back common sense values. I believe that we need...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am putting it into the records so that you will understand what it is about so that you will read it, not me.

I believe that we need to keep children away from the despair and degradation of drugs. That we need to protect women and children from domestic violence, incest and abuse. That we need to provide dignity for grandparents and the elderly. To improve education, skills, building and preparation for good jobs. To offer assistance to entrepreneurs, the self-employed and small businesses that are working to provide new jobs for families. To provide adults to be better role models for children. To help parents improve their parenting skills and to fight for housing for Barbadian families.

That is what in my view, a carefully crafted social programme in Barbados should be all about. It is to those issues that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North should be talking about today. He has a lot of explaining to do. We are in here until 10 O'clock tonight and then it is until 7 o'clock tomorrow. If we do not get the

explanation, I warn the Honourable Members that we are not in any hurry to get to any other Head until we feel satisfied that the \$64 million or so which have been given to this Minister to spend is going to be spent properly without being undermined by his colleagues in the execution of his duties.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to use this opportunity to respond to a number of things that have been mentioned that also affect the Head which we are debating before this House because it also affects my Ministry.

Sir, I really want us to focus on what it is we are in here trying to do. Because at the end of the day, we have a commitment towards the people of this country to deliver a programme for young people among other things that is based on the preservation of a number of values, which I do not need to read from a piece of paper because I would like to think that there are values which are innate in all of us, who are in this Honourable Chamber.

Equally, Sir, a programme that is designed to build on what they receive in the educational system and where they have not received in the educational system to be able to take them and to harness their potential so that they may become productive citizens of their country, cognisant of their responsibilities to self, to their family, to their community and to their country.

Sir, one of the things that motivated this Government in the establishment of the Division of Youth Affairs was the idea to be able to deal with the delivery of social services in a holistic manner. The Leader of the Opposition made much noise about \$64 million was being spent and that a programme on social services should be able to deliver a programme that stop young people from getting into drugs, stop young people from being the subject of abuse, stop young people from being the subject of bad parenting and a host of other things.

I really want to use this opportunity, Sir, not only to speak to the programme in the Division of Youth Affairs but also to speak to those things which this Government as a whole is doing. Because if he for one minute instead of seeking to make *ad hominem* attacks against the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, would sit and read his Estimates he would realise....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, having spoken more than once in this debate, I resent the statement by the Honourable Member that we have been making *ad hominem* attacks. Furthermore, that is an attack on Your Honour. No one is permitted to make *ad hominem* attacks in here. The Honourable Member should withdraw that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, it is my opinion that the Leader of the Opposition has centred his speech on the basis of *ad hominem* attacks against the Honourable Member for St. Philip North without realising that the programmes in these Estimates clearly reflect a detailed and comprehensive social services programme to address the needs of people in a holistic manner and not to perpetuate a syndrome of dependency. But one which is entitled, one which is going to enable them to move from the assistance which they receive to a capacity to provide for themselves.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, on the whole issue of providing for them to operate in a culture that stops them from being involved in drugs. Sir, we have a multi-faceted approach that deals with the question of trying to prevent...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This Government. For those who are unable to comprehend the Estimates. The National Council for Substance Abuse, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture and the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports, have all worked together to devise programmes both in the forms of public announcements, in the form of training, even the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West can speak to the training programmes there at the Deacons Community Centre, operated by the National Council for Substance Abuse and the one at Gall Hill, the one at Trents, all designed, Sir, and all working with community development officers as well as youth commissioners to get that message out.

It does not stop there. All of the youth commissioners, Mr. Chairman, Sir, underwent a programme of training from the National Advisory Committee on Aids to be able to sensitise young people as to the dangers of the contracting of HIV AIDS. Because we recognise that a disease such as this, has the capacity to undermine the very fabric of this society. In addition, Sir, we have also recognised that the process of producing good parents is in ensuring that parents can receive proper information and proper sensitising as to those things which will help them in the job of being a parent. Sir, I am not a parent but I have been around sufficiently long to know that parenting is perhaps the hardest job that most individuals would ever have to face in their lives. 6.40 p.m.

Indeed, Sir, the Ministry of Education, for the very first time in the history of Government, allocated money for the provision of training for parents across this country. The first time it happened was 2 years ago with the assistance of UNESCO where we put over \$100 000 to train over 1 100 parents across this country and we have continued this programme of training for parents. This is

not rhetoric to go on television for some 30 second advertisement called "Families First". This is Government implementing programming to ensure that those who can benefit and who need to benefit because at the end of the day a Government cannot direct how a child is brought up. It is the parents who have the greatest influence. A Government can only facilitate an environment within which the children, the parents, the school, the church and other community organisations can function sufficiently to be able to provide the values and the range of knowledge and the confidence and the love to allow that child to flourish in the society.

But, Sir, it does not stop there. The Leader of the Opposition spoke also, Sir, about creating entrepreneurial climate and he also spoke, Sir, about the youth in business programme which they left on the ground. Now, Mr. Chairman, Sir, anybody who is familiar with Government would know that the youth in business programme which the Democratic Labour Party left in Government did two things. It held an exhibition in November, 1993 and it held an exhibition in November, 1992. And that was the limit of it. It took existing entrepreneurs and highlighted the work of those existing entrepreneurs. It never added to the stock of creating new entrepreneurs. It never added to the stock of providing technical assistance for those existing entrepreneurs. It never added to the stock of creating financial assistance to those entrepreneurs and I want to suggest to this Committee, Mr. Chairman, that it is dishonest, a word I heard yesterday, that it is dishonest for any Member to get in here and to read out programmes calling for entrepreneurial activity without recognising that these very Estimates not only have provision for a youth entrepreneurial scheme but it has provision also for a whole host of other agencies to provide assistance for the creation of a climate for the fostering of entrepreneurs in this country.

I want, Sir, to speak very quickly to some of the progress made by the three elements of the agencies in the Youth Affairs Division. I said very clearly that the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme which we now have in existence, Mr. Chairman provides technical assistance in the form of advice on accounting, advice on marketing, advice on business planning, for all of the entrepreneurs. We have trained in excess of 150 people in entrepreneurial training in what was originally two five-month sessions a year and we have now extended that to being two comprehensive seven-month sessions as well as recognise that there is a category of entrepreneur who does not necessarily want to go through the prolonged period of training but who still wants access to some form of training. Therefore we have devised three two-month business basics modules and six fifteen-hour modules on various areas of business activities and planning and that last one, the 15-hour module was for delivery at the community level.

We had a successful pilot, Mr. Chairman, held in the New Orleans in the City of Bridgetown where youngsters got the opportunity to come and be exposed to areas of business so as to be able to help them in their activities. There were those there who were making hats, there were those there who were doing carvings out of mahogany. There were those there who were hairdressers, a whole range of activities were to be found in that class that was conducted at New Orleans.

Sir, in addition to that, there is a saying that you must always put your money where your mouth is. This Government is the first Government, Sir, that has put money for young people to borrow to be able to do the businesses that they want to be able to do and, Sir, we have put in place every year since 1994 the provision of \$250 000 each year to the youth business trust on which we have two directors so that they may on-lend to young people who can borrow up to a maximum of \$25 000 over a period of 5 years or \$20 000 in one shot so that they can get their businesses off the ground.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: However many they are they are young people who are still in business who have employed people and who have continued to employ people, not in a way that any other Government has done before in terms of a formal youth entrepreneurial scheme. The important thing about that is that their businesses must be able to continue to succeed. If young people enter business and they fail, Mr. Chairman, then the confidence is not there for them to continue and that is one of the fundamental features that must attach itself to any youth entrepreneurial programme.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Sir, we also have a healthy membership programme where leading businessmen in this country have agreed to be mentors to these young people so that they can guide them in between training sessions, in between the accounting and marketing services that are available to them. I believe, Sir, that this entire programme would be enhanced by another programme that we would launch during the course of this financial year, a programme called YES Juniors for primary schools, which would be the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme developing a module to introduce into primary schools because for too long we as a race, Sir, have had to deal with the accusations that we cannot survive as businessmen. That black people know nothing about business and we believe that our people must be exposed as early as possible in the rudiments of business and must be able to carry it on successfully.

But it does not end there, Sir, because I heard also the Honourable Member for St. Lucy talking about the Youth Commissioners, Sir. You know it is a strange and funny

thing, Sir, because youth commissioners have been able to coordinate the most extensive training programme that this country has seen where we have trained over 3 000 young people in each of the last two years in Sports and cultural training modules. Three thousand young people in two separate modules of 1 500 each. Sir, all of that had stopped when we came into Government and the whole concept behind this training, Mr. Chairman, which is a 12-week training programme that would determine, Sir, that they have a basic introduction to some element of knowledge of sports and cultural training while at the same time, Sir, for those who are more proficient to know whether they can go on to more advanced training since the Government, Sir, has also introduced more advanced training programmes particularly in the area of cultural activity through an associate degree in performing arts at the Community College.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up now. One minute.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. For those who do not go on, Sir, they have the ability to be able to stop and become knowledgeable so that they can become an audience in what we can hope, Sir, to have as the professionalisation of business. But, Sir, I am going to come back because the Youth Service now has restructured counselling. There is now a self-sufficient agricultural programme. They now have an educational training programme where persons can go and sit CXC and have been doing so and getting an opportunity to move on in life. They now have workshops in ceramics and furniture making and arts and crafts for the first time and there is a whole host of other activities that they have benefitted from.

The simple point is this, Mr. Chairman that if this programme in the course of the last 3 years was unsuccessful the Government of Barbados would not have had a number of requests including from Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago to come here, learn about our three-pronged youth programme and ask us to come and help them set it up in their respective countries in a way that they have never come and asked us to set up a Mount Stinkeroo as left by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. 6.50 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, when the National Democratic Party two years ago published that historic document on the eradication of poverty in Barbados, we recognised at that time that it is not only a question of input into poor communities and what we have spent in the past year and over discussing is what input of money and other resources should go toward the poor in this country.

However, it is equally important that we considered what constitutes major losses to the poor communities in this country and what should be done about it. Now in that document two years ago, we identified usurious interest rates under hire purchase arrangements which constituted a major drain on poor people in this country. Now what happens to the poor person is that they need a particular item and they go into one of these stores in town and they take out an item on hire purchase. They end up paying two or three times as much for that particular item under the very high interest rates charged under the hire purchase arrangements.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Oh yes. Very high interest rates charged under those arrangements. It is not only at the level of interest rates. Because very often upfront these people know pretty well that the kind of repayments which they are calling on poor people to make that they will not be able to meet them over time. Then they go into arrears. Then the bailiff is called in and then those people have to turn to other poor people in the community, often their grandparents, their brothers and their sisters in order to try to satisfy a debt that has been substantially enhanced by usurious payments.

Over and above that there is always the ultimate threat of jail for debt. So that many people, and those who have been representing constituencies for a long enough time, would know that this is one of the demands that MP's have to make from time to time to rescue poor people either from having essential things taken up by the bailiff or the alternate saving them from jail. Because even among members of their family they cannot raise the arrears and so on. So this is something that has to be looked at, not only what we can put in from the public purse, but what policies we can put in place to make sure that poor people are not exploited in this country and something has to be done about it.

I would think that there needs to be a serious control of interest rates on hire purchase items commonly bought by the poor in this country and in addition to that we need to get away once and for all from this question of imprisonment for debt. Because if they did not have that ultimate sanction against poor people in this country, they will be more conscious in their lending. They know that because few people may go up there for debt, they know that the person who is faced with that possibility that somebody from among that poor family or a group of people from that poor family, or ultimately their MP or somebody else will have to find the money to pay. This is the way the system works and that is why we have to do everything, if we are going to help poor people not only to look at what happens or what goes in a community but how you can block losses from a community.

Sir, we are talking about putting \$60 million into communities via these Estimates. I can guarantee you that at least \$15 million of that money is going to come out of those poor communities by way of gambling. We have moved from the stage where people used to gamble under a flambeau light at night or play a little poker at home or this kind of thing. Now you have poor people exposed on a daily basis to highly organised gambling. From morning to night, all the advertisements on radio and television. And when a poor man is faced with having \$5 to pay a bill of \$200 and he is being offered the opportunity all day long to win these vast amounts of money, you can guarantee the temptation is going to be great to go around the corner and spend that \$5 which they will lose.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Including old aged pensioners. Yes. Now some years ago when this first arose in relation to the one-arm bandit, you may recall that a regime was put in place of taxation which did not stop people from playing the one-arm bandit, but at least it made it uneconomic for them to be in the shops in the villages where young children could have easy access to playing the one-arm bandit. So those who wanted to gamble can go and gamble in the arcades and do whatever they like. But they could not just walk into a shop and continue to gamble because it was uneconomic after those tax measures to keep the one-arm bandit in the shops in Barbados.

Nowadays shop keepers will tell you that they cannot make a dollar unless they have some gambling outlet inside their shops. Check it out. I am quite sure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will be able to tell us about this.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It has reached that stage. If the man next door has an outlet, the next man has to have an outlet in order to compete with that particular person. So we have a choice and we have to determine whether or not we know deep within us that at least \$15 million of this money is going to flow back out of those poor communities while gambling and whether we are going to do something about it or not.

The problem is, Sir, it is not the rich people who can afford it who does the gambling, it is the very poorest in our society and those are the people whom you see lining up at the shops at 7.00 in the morning, lining up in the shops at 4.00 p.m. particularly on a Friday. I will guarantee you now that in every shop throughout this country, people who got paid between 4.00 and 6.00 this evening their first stop is to go and trance away some of the money in those machines. That is something we have to think about, because I see it. You can see big queues outside these

machines. So that you can be guaranteed that of the \$60 million we put in there, you can decide that \$15 million is going to go into the coffers of those of organised gambling in Barbados.

The other point I want to make quickly is somehow we talk about disability, we talk about poverty and we do not often make the connection between the terrible impact that disability has on poverty. I want to give you two examples, Sir.

I know a man who was doing extremely well 10-15 years ago, he became a diabetic, pretty severe diabetic. A few years later he was blind and could not work. A couple of years later he lost both his legs as a result of the diabetes and a few months ago I was called by someone in my constituency who said, "could you come over here and see what you could do for this man?" Do you know what happened to him? He was discharged from the QEH blind, after two amputations, the skin on one incompletely healed and dumped on his door step. Could you believe that? 7.00 p.m.

I have another case because I wrote a release to the Press on two occasions with this story and they would not publish it. They figure it is too ghastly to publish but I will tell you about it in here now so you will understand what we are dealing with.

I went to see an elderly constituent one afternoon about 6 months and this was the situation. The police had been called in on about 2 or 3 occasions because the neighbour was concerned that in his state of blindness he might catch his house with fire then her house would be burned down.

After 3 attempts the police's attitude was that if he would not stop trying to light the stove then the best thing to do was put him out of the house. He lived by himself.

When I went into that home I just could not believe what I was seeing. When I made further investigation, here was a blind, elderly man around 80 years old. He could not see properly and yet he was lighting a gas stove to cook on. He cooked 2 or 3 days a week. Remember he is blind. He put the food on the table and between him and the rats and the cockroaches they were sharing that food.

When you talk about poverty and hardship there are people who just do not understand what we are talking about. They just do not believe it and they still think that it is indecent and in some way anti-social to talk about these things that happen to poor people in this country. It must be addressed.

Another thing too. This same particular person was someone who was being robbed by a relative as well. I have been working on that because the only way I could see was to get that person into a district hospital and I will continue to try.

Another area where we need to focus on is what happens to poor fire victims in Barbados. We need to know what is happening to these people. In the year 1996/97, my constituency office was completely out of action as far as doing political work. It was occupied entirely by fire victims one after another. The problem is that there is no coordinated programme created to bring effective help to fire victims.

I have suggested before that what we need to do is probably to have mobile homes where you can take one of these large 40-foot containers and take it to the site so that people with families can remain together and will have access to toilet facilities and access to water in that kind of situation.

Even though a house is burnt down people want to stay around and see if they could find a few valuable possessions - a ring, a marriage certificate. They spend a little time in the area trying to go through the remains to see if they can find something. It is part of the process of grieving that we must respond to and we need to find some means of keeping them on that site.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has just got one minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The problem as far as clothes are concerned is that they get a voucher to go to Cave Shepherd or the hardware for about \$120 or \$130. That is a big joke. What are they going to buy with that? Basically, there is a major problem faced by poor people when they have to confront loss by fire and we have to be able to bring the Welfare and the National Assistance Board and other agencies to respond positively and humanely to these situations.

I am telling you no matter what anybody says I was not going to have a situation where I have an office in the constituency where people have access to a toilet, where they can sleep and have some shelter and I open it as an office and my constituents are sleeping under a tree. I am not going to do it. That is what people are facing.

I can tell you several horror stories about people, having to go and live in certain circumstances, particularly females, following a fire and that has had disastrous effects on their lives because of what happened in other people's homes and so on, separation from children. It is a serious matter. No one has even thought of giving these people some psychological assistance.

Do you know what it is to lose everything? It is a terrible thing. These people need counselling and nobody gives them any professional aid. They are not treated like human beings in that situation. You do not understand what I am saying?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Honourable Member to tell his stories after dinner.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to speak on your behalf and on my behalf.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: After dinner. I would be glad if you speak after dinner.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 8.00 o'clock in the evening.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 7.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is now resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply. To that, it should now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to give my full support to the work done by the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports over the last few years and to commend them on the programme that is in place for the work for the next financial year. Perhaps in all honesty the Minister has been a bit modest in outlining the programme because there has been a number of programmes that will be executed in the coming financial year.

Firstly, you note that this Ministry is going to be spending over some \$61 million in the coming financial year, a significant increase on the years when the

Democratic Labour Party was in Government, when in fact the social services of Barbados were savaged by the Democratic Labour Party.

I just want to outline a few of the programmes that to my understanding will be implemented by this Ministry. If you look at Community Development, Mr. Chairman, you see that there is a plan to service some one hundred groups and organisations by providing guidance, leadership and training for their programmes by the Ministry of Community Development. The plan is also to ensure the formation of eighteen new community groups. This is eighteen groups more than are currently in existence that this Ministry will ensure will come into existence.

Assistance is to be provided to some twelve community independence committees. Mention was made about who has been recognising independence but the fact is that the Democratic Labour Party, although they boast that they are responsible for independence they used to sit every year and let independence pass without any significant recognition at all. With this Government that came and instituted this programme of Community Independence Celebrations, which brings together a large number of people in the spirit of community mindedness, and fully gives significance to the event that we call independence. We are not paying lipservice to it. This Ministry is ensuring that it is given its due recognition across Barbados.

Also, the plan is to refurbish and maintain thirteen community centres and construct an additional two new facilities at Haynesville and at St. Martins. I would have liked to see some mention made of the one in the Cave Hill area but I recognise that everything cannot be done at the same time or in the same financial year. That is another programme that has to be done. Also, some sixteen community organisations and groups are going to be given direct financial assistance and technical assistance will be given to fifty-two groups and agencies. All of this is the work of the Minister of Community Development. I have to sing his praises for him because I said he is a bit reserved to do it. This is the work he is doing and he has plans for this country.

The Transport Board subsidies for travel by senior citizens and persons with disabilities will continue during the course of the coming financial year. Provision will be made for welfare grants and assistance-in-kind to families and individuals. This is a lot of work that is going to be done by this Ministry. These are my notes on what will be done by the Ministry of Community Development.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member should be reading from the Estimates and not the notes because he is

misleading the House. Under Subsidies the approved Estimates for 1997-1998 was \$1 400 000 and for 1998-1999 is \$1 400 000.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman I said it is going to continue. That is what I said. Subsidies will continue for the Transport Board. Co-operation will also continue with other agencies to provide in-door toilet facilities for the elderly and the disabled and that of course will go hand in hand with the poverty alleviation fund approach to urban and rural development to ensure that what I classify to be the worst form of human degradation, the pit toilet, to ensure that that becomes a thing of the past.

Twenty houses at the very least every month, are going to be repaired over the next financial year. There is going to be an expansion of in-service training for staff directly involved in the home-help programme. These are some of the things that are going to be done over the next year for the poor, the needy, the aged *etc.* in this society. These are commendable and laudable programmes. If you want to judge a Government to see how caring it is you should seek to use as your barometer the extent to which it gets involved in the provision of social services. When you are satisfied that a Government is really seriously involved and committed to the provision of social services you know that it is a caring and a competent Government. That is what this Government is.

The Disability Unit - I am particularly pleased that this Government and that this Minister back in 1996 decided to set up a Disability Unit for the disabled in this country because for too long mere lipservice is being paid to the issue of the disabled in this country. It was clear that the disabled themselves were feeling that they were merely seen as a strain on the Government financial resources. They were getting that feeling because nobody was doing anything for them. When tourists visited Barbados they themselves were commenting on the lack of facilities for the disabled of Barbados. This Ministry now has \$649 000 to deal with the disabled of Barbados. I think that is doubled the amount when it was first set up in 1996.

Every year the Government is going about ensuring that all of the disadvantaged groups in Barbados, whether it be economically disadvantaged, socially disadvantaged, or disadvantaged in terms of physical disability, ensuring that they all, as far as the Government's finances would allow, have an improvement in their lot. That is the work of the Minister of Labour and Community Development and his office. These are all commendable objectives. I do not see why those on the other side, particularly given their dismal record in the area of the provision of social services, would seek to detract from the performance of the Minister, this Party or the Government in any way in terms of the provision of social services.

There is only one concern and this is a situation which the Minister himself would have inherited. There is still a bit of confusion in the minds of the public sometimes as to which Department you need to go to get your particular problem solved. That is a fact. There is some duplicity or overlap.

For example, I think the Honourable Member said this sometime back. You may have a situation where the Welfare Department is responsible for referring patients to the geriatric hospital but yet at the practical level it is really the home-helper who goes around and who first identifies who are those who should be referred to the geriatric hospital but they themselves have no power to do it. They will have to go back and refer it to the Welfare Department who then has to refer it back to the geriatric hospital. These are some of the problems, I agree.

The Welfare Department is responsible for counseling families but if a child is involved then it becomes the Child Care Board. I do get the complaint, I would say, from some constituents that they tend not to be clear in their minds which is the proper department they need to approach to have some of their problems dealt with and that really and truly is my only concern. That is a situation which the Minister inherited and would need to have sorted out and ironed out. 8.15 p.m.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that all in all this Government and the Minister have a lot to feel proud about. We have seen a systematic increase every year in the vote allocated for the provision of social services across the country and I am sure that some of the complaints made on the Other Side, those that are valid, are being addressed by the Minister.

Once again I would like to give my full support to the measures outlined by the Minister and wish him well in the execution of the programme over the next year.

Thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the development of the social services in Barbados is of extreme importance to the country. I believe it is true to say that over the years because of the recognition by consecutive Governments that Barbados has no natural resources and, therefore, we must invest in our people. Over time a system of social welfarism on one hand, social development, investment in human resources in the form of investment in health, investment of education has resulted in a level of social development that has identified Barbados as one of the leading developing countries in the world.

I believe that the programme as outlined by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North when seen in relation to what it is his Ministry intends to do over the course of this coming financial year, and taken in conjunction with the initiatives by other Ministries, helps to provide for Barbados a safe social net. This serves not only to continue the development of Barbadians at the social level but particularly targets those vulnerable groups which are dispossessed, which are, for whatever reason, unable to fight for their own interest and for whom Government must provide if, in fact, we are to have a just and equitable society. Which means that not only those at the top are doing well, but we ensure that those among us who are disadvantaged have a net into which they can fall, a support system where the society does not let them down. I am encouraged, therefore, to see the amount of money that has gone toward the development of a unit for persons with disabilities in Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North has made the point only minutes ago that this is a group that has traditionally been ignored but yet they are an important part of our society. Many families feel a sense of social stigmatisation and tend to shut them away from the wider society or, in fact, over time there have not been sufficient support systems for them to become integrated and involved in the activities of those who are not physically or mentally challenged.

This Unit, the establishment of which seeks to place that disadvantaged group into the mainstream of society to ensure that they have the right to go to school like all other children in Barbados, to ensure the right that they have an opportunity to move from unemployment and social ostracism to social participation and upward social mobilisation. And mobility is a very important initiative in terms of helping the sectors of our community who, prior to now, have been disadvantaged and did not appear to have a voice or appear to be properly supported by Government systems or Government structures such as they existed.

Sir, in my view this is an important initiative which is to be commended, as is too the initiative in relation to the provision of hostels for fire victims and battered women. I believe that all Members of Parliament on both sides know what it is like to be called from your bed at midnight, or to be called from your business, whatever that business is, during the course of a day to be told that there is a fire in your constituency and to rush to the scene of that fire, heart in hand, knowing that invariably the house is uninsured, and that all of the possessions in the house are lost because invariably there are chattel houses that are adversely affected by these fires, and that members of the household that night often have to scatter and go to various friends and relatives with nothing in their pockets because some people also have all their savings in

the house and often cannot get them out before the place is completely engulfed.

Therefore, the provision of a shelter or hostel where persons who are the victims of such catastrophic events can go and get respite and receive shelter and succour is an important initiative in the society that sees itself as providing for those among us who are underprivileged or who because of the intervention of circumstances over which they have no control lose an opportunity in life, or the place where they have struggled to be at, that is, by the purchase or construction of a house.

It is important too in relation to the shelter for battered women. Very often there are women not only who are physically battered but who are psychologically abused by men and cannot get out of the house they are in because they have their children. They have nowhere to carry the children. There is nobody else to whom they can go because the individual who might take them in as a one person is certainly not going to take in two or three children. Often families are forced to stay in situations where members of the household, particularly the female spouses, are being physically and psychologically abused but because they have nowhere to go are forced to live in that cycle of abuse and cannot get out of it. Therefore the provision of a shelter for that sector of society who again in circumstances where they are unable to help themselves is again an important initiative in the provision of the social safety net to which I referred in my earlier comments.

I commend the Minister for keeping the locations of these facilities private. I have had to keep the Elroy Philips Centre where there is a hostel private for the very same reason because you do not want gawkers and persons who might go to make fun, or the very people from whom these people are running to be able to access them and cause them further trouble.

I think it is important and commendable too that the Minister has sought to include those social and national organisations which have a reputation for working in the society among persons who are disadvantage^ I understand, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Salvation Army will be operating the hostel for fire victims and the Business and Professional Women's Club will be operating that for battered women. 8.25 p.m.

I want, Mr. Chairman, in the time allotted to me on this occasion, because I will come back to speak about two other issues, to focus on two more points.

The first that I want to speak on relates to women. All of us, on both sides of the House, when we go to our constituency office every week and I hope that the majority of us go each week, are faced by large numbers of women

coming and asking for jobs. They all want to work at the hospital, at School Meals or as Beach Rangers. Invariably, they say they have no skills. You have to explain to them that the hospital is an institution which is 30 or more years old and that everybody in every constituency of Barbados cannot be employed there. You have to say to them that there is a limit to the number of beach rangers that can be accommodated, that there is a limit to the number of persons who can work at School Meals.

The reality is that 67% of our households are still headed by women. To the extent that is true, we have to continue to provide support systems for our women who are the child bearers and who still remain the majority of child rearers in this society. I think that it is important for us to develop new mechanisms to cater to that core of women between 16 and 45 who have children or are the head of households but who are not working and who have limited skills and therefore will not find it easy in a Barbados and in an economy that is becoming more serviced oriented to get into the world of work because they do not have a skill that is marketable.

That is why, I wish to commend the initiative in training which has been undertaken by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North East. I am of the view that more need to be done if in fact we are to give realistic opportunity to that vast core of women out there. I say this with all due respect to the men. That even though the unemployment figures are coming down substantially, the reality is that it has always been true that the largest component of the unemployed has always been women.

Therefore, we know for a fact that when men are working, it does not mean that women are being supported or that their children are being supported. And we have to give support to that core of persons who know that they have their children to support and therefore hold on to jobs for dear life when they get them. To make sure that we imbue them with the skills that will allow them to operate in today's economy and today's Barbados in a way that they can raise their children and give dignity to themselves and to their households.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to turn to the last component of the underprivileged and the dispossessed in our community, having identified women, having identified the disabled, I will come back and talk about the elderly. I want to turn to that core of persons, who throughout Barbados as we move towards the 21st century are still living with toilets in the yard. It is families, it is old people, it is people who are poor, who want to lift themselves up out of poverty, who want to live with some degree of dignity, who want to enjoy what many of us have come to accept and a standard feature of a modern house. That is a toilet with indoor

plumbing. That is a fact This is what we now have to struggle to do, if in fact we want to shape a Barbados of which we can be proud in the 21st century.

There is, I understand, in St. Thomas, I do not have the figures for all of Barbados, some 400 people without water toilets. That is the figure that was given to me. I know for a fact that in the South Coast Sewerage Project area which is between Dunlow Lane and Oistins, where we are connecting some 3 000 properties that 10% of the people in the project area, do not have water toilets. There are 300 people between Dunlow Lane and Oistins, who do not have water toilets.

The Barbados Labour Party Manifesto commits us, Mr. Chairman, to providing homes for battered women and fire victims. We have done that. It also commits us to ensuring that everybody in Barbados, who does not today have the right to a water toilet should have one. That is now perhaps one of the last examples of poverty that we must attack and ensure that we defeat.

In order to do that, Mr. Chairman, within the South Coast Project area, all of those persons who do not have water toilets will be provided with water toilets as a matter of course and will be connected up to the South Coast Project when it resumes in June. I have identified those as 300 persons. Those persons in households where the household income is under \$3 000, there will be no cost for the construction of the water toilets and its addition to the house and there will be no cost for the attachment to the project itself.

If your household income is \$3 000 a month, the benefit of the project and the water toilet comes to you completely free. If the household income is between \$3 000 and \$5 000, then you will be required to pay 50% of the cost For those persons whose income is over \$5 000 a month, you will have to pay the full price of connection. Commercial entities will have to pay the full cost of connection. Well, at \$5 000, you will hardly have a toilet which is not connected to the house.

Again, this is going to be implemented in a way that does not cause hardship to those persons who are going to in fact, have to bear some part of the cost. For those persons who have to pay 50% or 100% of the connection cost, or 50% of having the toilet fitted as well as the connection, the Government will embark with every property owner within the project area on a payments schedule, which they perceive they can afford. You will pay at a rate and over a time period which is comfortable for you and which does not cause hardship.

I am of the view, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the convergence of these initiatives, the \$6 million which has

been put into the Poverty Alleviation Fund, the \$10 million which has been put into the Urban Development Commission and the component enterprises for training and the establishment of business, and the \$6 million which has been put into the Rural Development Commission, when taken together with the increases in the vote to the social services under the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and when taken with the money put in for the new disability unit and the provision for the hostels for the homeless and fire victims, that we are in fact helping to provide that grid work of support for those persons, who prior to now have been dispossessed and underprivileged but whose needs have not been adequately met.

I therefore am happy, Sir, to give support to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North but would wish to give the Chair notice that I intend to come back under this Head.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I continue to have difficulty in locating Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme. On page 32 of the Estimates, which is under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, there is a provision of \$6 million for the Alleviation Programme. On page 110 of the Estimates under the Minister of Labour Community Development and Sports there is a provision under the subprogramme - 314. I will now read from that subprogramme as follows.

Now yesterday there was all kind of debate as to where the alleviation of poverty programme is located, whether or not it is under the Ministry of Finance, whether it is under the Ministry of Community Development and we were carried around the world. Still when you look at it the allocation is for \$15 million in the coming fiscal year. The sub-program 314 reads:

"Provision is made as part of Government's poverty alleviation programme for the payment of welfare (cash) grants and assistance-in-kind, payment of electricity bills, water bills, food vouchers, rents to National Housing Corporation and private landlords, spectacles, dentures, prostheses, wheel chairs." 8.35 p.m.

Now, one is therefore left to wonder what truly the poverty alleviation is about. I wish therefore to ask the question. Is it the case that people in the constituency of St. Michael North West would be entitled to a cash grant or some assistance-in-kind or payments of electricity, water bills and the like under the poverty alleviation programme? If so do these individuals have to go to the Ministry of Finance as part of the \$6 million allocation or do they have to go to the Ministry of Welfare?

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, No. I am asking a very pertinent question. Is the poverty alleviation programme located under sub-program 314 of the Welfare Department as stated in the Estimates or is the poverty alleviation programme under sub-program 147 as stated in the Estimates under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs?

Sir, this is a very pertinent question. I do not see why I am being pilloried from the other side when I am making a very pertinent point. The question is asked and I repeat, under sub-program 314 we hear that Government's poverty alleviation programme allows for cash payments, assistance-in-kind and the payment of all these various bills. It goes further to talk about rents to National Housing Corporation. So the question remains, do I approach the Minister of Community Development, Labour and Sports, or do I approach the Ministry of Finance in doing so?

Now, it is confusing because it really does not state the extent of the alleviation programme. We do not really know what is the full budget for poverty alleviation in Barbados. It is a laudable idea. It has its place. It must be pursued but how has it been truly conceptualised? And it is in that context yesterday that I said, and I repeat, that at this stage in our history and our development it is perhaps necessary for the Government to separate Community Development from Labour and Sports. I am saying that as we encounter the structural adjustment and the impact it would have had on the entire economy and the fall out for some people, as we encounter the deviant behaviour of the youth, the drugs, as we encounter the need to provide more for housing and welfare on the whole, do we not think that this particular department, Community Development, has now become so important in light of what is being pursued by the Government of Barbados that there is perhaps need to take the Ministry and make Community Development a separate ministry because of the several challenges which we have to encounter? That is a very reasonable question to ask.

What I do wish to address is this. I represent a constituency that has the Farm Housing Area, Fernihurst, Rosemont and some such housing areas. You have Haynesville in St. James South, you have the Pine in St. Michael South East. Have you really looked at how these communities have evolved in terms of the social problems that now confront some of these communities outside of the housing areas, that is, outside the ones which already have a stigma attached to them? In West Terrace which was developed some time. Oxnards, West Terrace, Wotton, those were developed around the late sixties, early 1970s. By now you have a situation where a lot of the offspring of these households are now within their teenage range. Yet still when these particular communities were conceptualised there was no provision of sporting facilities, no community development in the West Terrace area, the Husbands or Oxnards areas.

It does not matter who conceptualised it. The thing about it is that we seem to think that the social problems which attend the youth reside only in those areas of the Farm, the Pine, Haynesville and the like. In fact if you were to examine the problems across Barbados, even if you look at the schools you would see that these communities now are encountering the same kinds of problems which attend the communities of Deacons Farm and the Pine which we normally associate with most of the social problems in Barbados. So I am asking really for the Community Development Department to treat these areas as areas that require immediate attention in terms of not only providing certain social services but also perhaps in establishing the same kinds of programmes that are being thought of in areas like Haynesville and Deacons Farm because the problems are not low income nor low strata problems they are problems of the wider society.

The other thing is that we have had situations in Barbados where there was in fact resettlement of projects across Barbados. I can think in terms of White Hill, St. Andrew where there is the intention to resettle. We have however no attempt on the part of the community development to look at programmes designed to assist these communities in resettling. We have had examples as in Emmerton where the Sewerage Project was conceptualised and people were moved to Clapham. At that time community development went into the area and offered the people some form of assistance in terms of allowing them to resettle and relocate in the most effective and efficient means possible.

Now, I hope that when we consider resettlements of persons in other areas of Barbados that we will also give an expression to that requirement to provide a team from the Community Development Department to assist in allowing these individuals to move and settle comfortably in their new habitat.

Now, there is no doubt at all about it that drugs represent a significant problem in Barbados. Yet still in a strange way the community development department does not really look into this aspect of the social problems in Barbados. In fact what we have is an arm of the UNDCP which is part really of the Attorney General's office. I am familiar because it has assisted in conceptualising and running the project in the Deacons Farm area. Yesterday again I said that all the social problems which attend Barbados should be attended to under a separate ministry. And I repeat the call because I cannot understand why a programme as espoused by UNDCP should now be conducted from the office of the Attorney General. I understand the foreign links or whatever on Home Affairs, but I am saying that it seems to me to better place that institution of that Department under the control of perhaps the Minister of Community Development. 8.45 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: But that is more a social problem because you are looking at the causes of the drugs, and not of the solutions. So you first need to understand the causes and there are in fact social reasons why we have had the proliferation of drugs in Barbados.

Again I am saying that this particular aspect of our social problem should be attended to also as part of the overall and total problem matrix of Barbados under a separate ministry called community development or whatever you may wish to call it.

In a very strange way we have identified that the drug problem is a problem associated with the youth and yet still, we have not had any real attempt, major attempt on the part of the Ministry of Youth Affairs to attend to this drug problem which we have in Barbados. Again there is need for cooperation between the two.

Now there is no doubt about it at all that sports is perhaps the major way in which we can address several of the social problems in Barbados. Sports is an avenue that permits us to tackle some of the major problems. As a teenager I well recall participating in several sporting activities held by the Community Development Department where we played various sports against Grazettes, against Belfield, against the Orleans. And at this point in time as we look at community development as it is now comprised, we see no such structure in place where I well remember participating at the Stadium in athletics held at the community level. So that we competed against Maple, we competed against the Grazettes Club and a whole set of clubs from across St Philip and Christ Church at a day of activities at die National Stadium.

But I wish not only to mention that sports can be used. Cricket in itself, because of the amount of time that it consumes, can be used very effectively to control the youth and such other sports. So we need to focus on this whole question of Sports.

Now on that score, I wish to ask the Minister of Sports, why it is that when this Administration came to power in 1994 that this Administration took the bold step of removing duties on sporting equipment. Now that the VAT has been introduced, this Administration has not seen it fit to take the same principle position and take the VAT off sporting equipment in Barbados. Yet in 1994 when VAT attracted Consumption Taxes, Stamp Duties and the like, there was a principled position on the part of this administration to remove VAT and all taxes on sporting equipment. But no lobby was made at all after the introduction of VAT to give sportsmen in Barbados the same kind of tax relief that was given under the old tax system.

I am saying that if the Government is serious about the position it took in 1994, then consideration should be given to once again removing VAT on sporting equipment in Barbados. Because there is no reason why you could have removed consumption taxes, stamp duties, all intended to reduce the cost of sporting equipment to young Barbadians and now that you have introduced a VAT, not maintain the same principle.

This is the time for the Minister of Sports to further lobby on behalf of the sporting community.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, I am taking the tune from an Honourable Member who spoke and who understood that there was a connection between the youth and community development. I would want to make a few points about the youth.

Sir, we know that the youth are very impressionable and therefore, we as adults must ensure that instead of just passing laws that we give them the right images. Sir, I just want to take a minute or so to look at image and how it impacts on the behaviour of the youth. It is quite easy to complain about the youth, about the involvement in drugs, gangs and all of those things, but I think it is about time, Sir, that the older generation takes a look at itself to see how it can assist through the message that it is sending to the younger generation.

We have heard a lot, Sir, about images. We have heard about the famous mirror image speech where the mirror image is how we see ourselves. But I wish, Sir, to look at the current image, the current image being the one that others see of us and perhaps we can look at the wish image, the image that we want others to really see. Sir, this matter of image is very very important and I want to point out, Sir, that an image is created through the messages that we send and while all of us understand that we send messages through written communication and spoken communication, as a matter of fact, our speaking in here is a method of communicating.

But Sir, I want to put it to you that we send our messages primarily by our actions and it is therefore instructive to note that actions by the Government and its key players will therefore send messages not only to the wider community but particularly to the youth on whom we are concentrating. So we have to look at our actions.

Sir, we also have to understand the barriers to communications that exist and we need to understand that coming out of the plantation society we need to know that looking at the background in which most of these youths have grown up in a state of impoverishment, especially in those traditional communities where they see certain conditions and where some of them are disposed to certain behaviour, Sir, and we have to ask ourselves what we can do to show them the right way.

Sir, in 1988, Brian "Bumba" Payne sang a song "They want to know". I consider this to be the best song in terms of relevance to the present situation ever written in calypso. That song was relevant in 1988 and it is still or perhaps even more so relevant ten years down the road in 1998. There is a particular section of that song which I think I remember. It said something like: They want to know how under the last Government Independence will come and go and you hear no mention of Errol Walton Barrow. 8.55 p.m.

It is perhaps interesting that Independence festivals are now taking on the form that they are and I am just wondering whether the name of Errol Walton Barrow will be reflected in these celebrations as "Bumba" was asking for in 1998.

Even more significant is another section of the song that said:

"They want to know How you smoking
like a chimney, Smoking away your lungs
and money And you say tobacco is not
like weed."

Sweet words. I like that song.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. I bring your attention to the Standing Order 28(2):

"A Member must confine his speech to the subject under discussion, and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto."

The Honourable Member is not referring to anything which we are discussing.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, you have been in here all day and I believe you are a bit tired but I do not believe you are so tired that you would not have remembered the process and the kinds of discussions that took place. You would not have forgotten the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East neither would you fail to understand that youth has an important relationship to community development. And I know, Sir, that you would not appreciate the lack of respect manifested by the Honourable Member even though he is prone so to do, especially with certain people if he feels that they cannot buy boxes in certain places.

I will continue to say what I have to say. Sir, that song spoke about smoking away your lungs. In this day and age, Sir we are bothered about youngsters smoking weed but there is a connection between the two. Both of them are habit forming and I therefore find it a bit strange

that in an era when we are trying to curtail these activities that the National Cultural Foundation would find it very easy to accept sponsorship from a tobacco company. I understand the need for sponsorship. I know how hard it is to find sponsorship but I believe that in these cases a far greater effort should be made before one can entertain that kind of sponsorship which sends a message. We are talking about action. We are talking about images and I am saying that it sends the wrong image.

There is a catch phrase now which says we are interested in the bottom line. I read the newspapers - I think it was yesterday's - and in both newspapers I saw references to the bottom line being the most significant thing. The bottom line was the most important thing in Culture and in Tourism.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is the Honourable Member still dealing with Head 39?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, we are talking about the youth. Sir, I will continue my speech. It is unfortunate that certain members will not stay in here.

I am therefore asking if this bottom line theory is gaining such prevalence that it sends a message to the youth out there or to the people in the community that the bottom line is the thing so you will do anything once it covers the bottom line.

Am I not being logical? If a fellow wants something he goes and gets it however he could. So we have no boundaries. We have no borders and therefore anything goes once it takes care of the bottom line. Sir, this is a serious philosophical position to take because it has implications for community development. If we are looking at developing communities we have to be very careful as to the message we send. We have to be very careful about public images in that regard.

I have spoken in this debate already on the issue of sovereignty and what message we are sending so I will not detain the House with that. We have to approach community development with much more seriousness than we are doing. There is a linkage. It is not something that stands by itself. It is linked with all the other things - sports, culture, education and we therefore need to send the right message to our people.

I therefore become very wary when I read some of these things that I am reading in the newspapers and I think that we are going to have to put a policy in place to deal with these social issues. It is not just about the economics of giving somebody \$350 or repairing a house. It is not just about that. It is about socio-psychological development of the communities and these are the issues prevalent during the days of slavery. These are the issues

that were present in the 1930s. If you do not understand the socio-psychological importance of these issues then we are missing the boat. Then we have missed all of the issues that created problems for us before.

So I am saying that while the bottom line is important and I am not denying that we have to balance the understanding that the bottom line is important with an understanding that socio-psychological inputs into community development are critical.

We have to look at the total matrix of what we are doing and not just look at the money. Some people think that poverty alleviation is just about giving a few dollars to fix a house but those who would study poverty alleviation would see that it would include matters related to education. When somebody is going to stand up and tell me that we have not been looking at poverty alleviation they do not understand the importance of education. They do not understand the importance of health in poverty alleviation. They do not understand the importance of empowerment in poverty alleviation. These are issues that we have to be looking at as we approach the new millennium as we are hearing about. Instead of dealing just with catch phrases, we have to get to the heart of these issues. 9.05 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You will recall, Mr. Chairman, some long time ago when I last spoke I was finishing off the concept of the elderly and how they should be perceived. I wanted to finish that point before going on to the next one.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I think that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is suffering from the delusion that that Head is going to come up but I assure you, you are going to be on the guillotine. I want to make the point that it is time in Barbados that we recognise that telephone and electricity are not luxuries and that we should not now be regarding the giving of telephones and electricity payments as part of the provision by the welfare services to the elderly and the indigent as luxuries. It seems to me that it ought to be easy to recognise why. But so that I am not accused of trying to suggest something above and beyond the ordinary, let me just point out that where an elderly person is living in his or her own house and that elderly person is provided with electricity as opposed to having a kerosene lamp what we are in fact doing is ensuring that we do not have the dangers connected with the unfortunate fires, too many of which we have had in our society. We have had too many fires in our society where the elderly have been victims and I believe that the provision of

electricity for indigent elderly persons will go a long way toward eliminating the unreasonably high level of house fires which we have in Barbados.

On the question of the telephone apart from the fact that we should send a very urgent signal to the telephone company that there should be no change in the system of billing of telephones in Barbados because the system which we have provided is part of the cradling structure for our society. We should, as a community, understand that the elderly require a telephone on two counts (1) it provides them with a certain amount of solace where they are able to speak to their friends, however few those friends may be, and secondly in the case of an emergency which is more likely with the elderly than it is with the physically active, there will be a means of communicating not only with the authorities but with someone who can come and assist them. One is not here discussing providing overseas calls and other such, datamax or any of those things for the elderly. We are talking about a basic capacity to communicate. I think we cannot discuss poverty alleviation without paying attention to that kind of basic requirement.

I think therefore that the Minister should be able to tell us whether the allocation which appears in these Estimates will be able to fulfill the requirement to pay the telephone and/or electricity rates for those who are identified in the rubric which turns up at three or four different places in these Estimates.

The other point I want to make is that in the context of community development it is impossible to have in a country the size of Barbados to have what I choose to call sectoral community development. It has been a source of utter amazement for me to see how it is possible for there to be community development all around the constituency of St. Michael West. You take the independence celebrations. Somehow with all of the great arrangements which they have they have managed to exclude the people of St. Michael West in any arrangements for independence celebrations. I have wondered if the concept of shame does not exist anymore. As a human being, as a citizen of Barbados I would be ashamed if I was responsible for a programme...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is asking me if I put up a programme. You believe that because you go and put out some propaganda saying you have programmes and ask me if I put up a programme. Am I here to put up programmes for independence when we have this Community Development that is turning up in these Estimates? Is it a requirement that I am to conceive and put up community programmes? Is that my role? I am saying that with the money we are passing in here that the Minister has a responsibility to

see that the programmes permeate the entire sections of the community and I will not have it. They have a group of people that have been hand-picked to work on these committees. I do not talk about the one up in your constituency. Your constituency is the bell-wether for propaganda for this rubbish which is designed for political purposes. St. Michael North, and in particular St. Michael North East are in fact the models for Barbados Labour Party political propaganda and 'yardfowlism'¹. That is what you are - clear, clear and uncut. I have no doubt that you will be happy. The St. Michael South Development, it came from the grass-roots up and yet no funding from the Government. I am very serious. You check the public. The Minister responsible for this had the temerity to send me the published results and the published information as if the people of St. Michael West do not exist. The person who is appointed to chair the Independence Committee did not even know where he could find the offices of the representative.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: I believe if the Honourable Member for Christ Church South after having created...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He said that I said I did not want anything to do with it? I may have said I do not want anything to do with him because I am not going to get involved with the kind of 'yard fowls' that you all picked and put them out as models for the people.

I do not even know who you pick, but I am not quarrelling, Sir. I am giving information to this committee and I am saying that he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword and if you nurture as systems in which people who live across the street can look across and see certain people getting the goodies and the only sin they have committed is that they live in a constituency that is represented by somebody other than a Barbados Labour Party representative, I am saying to you that you are creating a nexus for criminal activity. But you would not even know that because you believe that you are doing the right thing.

You believe you are creating a cradle for the development of the Barbados Labour Party over the next 15 years. I say to you that the people of Barbados have been educated beyond that, and they will not be taken in by foolishness. So if you wish to continue having these programmes which ostensibly are for St. Michael and if you believe that St. Michael like the Euphrates Valley was to be civilisation is to be found St. Michael North, then you can continue to feel that is St. Michael. If you feel that St. Michael is St. Michael North and North East, then you can continue to feel that way but the rest of us that live in

the western part of St. Michael just because they are represented by the Democratic Labour Party and by the Honourable Member suffers as a result - the Honourable Member representing St. Michael West Central. 9.15 p.m.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am not suffering from anything, Sir.

Secondly, Sir, I want to say that I know of the situation where just a few weeks ago a road was put in the constituency at Bridge Gap in the area that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West represents. Two are proposed now for the North West, Carters's Gap 1 and 2. I know that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, the Honourable Member says he suffers from want of nothing and I agree because I am here discussing community development, I am discussing Independence celebrations and his understanding of that is a road that goes from Bridge Gap up into Goodland. I agree with the Honourable Member. He lacks nothing. Eric Williams said that 1 from 10 leaves nothing and I say nothing from nothing leaves nothing. I have no problems.

I am addressing the Minister through you, Sir. I am not discussing roads. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew has a more equitable understanding of what ought to be done in these matters and if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew recognises that the roads that are used in Bridge Gap, and I hope you fix the whole of Bridge Gap and ignore any utterances from over on the other side, but the road that is used in Bridge Gap, and that road is going to join Bridge Gap to Goodland, is used by more people from outside of Bridge Gap and Goodland than from people in Bridge Gap and Goodland. The people in Bridge Gap and Goodland walk, and we are accustomed stumping our toe, but it is the minibuses and the ZR vans and the Honourable Member for St. James North who spends a lot of time in Bridge Gap...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ... Weekes Land, to be specific. The Honourable Member knows that we do not need anything. But I am not going to be diverted by the insertion of the odd road here and there, and I want to make that point.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Use your time well. You have two minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am very serious about this question of the distribution of largesse as it relates to Independence. There is a programme which the Barbados Labour Party has, which the Attorney General has

articulated in his capacity as Chairman of the Barbados Labour Party, to honour the Barbados Labour Party's heroes. I believe there is a big programme that will be centred around that. I hope, however that the Honourable Member will remember that we are discussing all of the people all of the time and what goes around must come around. No one finds me loitering on the steps of the social services begging for anything. In my constituency we do not beg nobody for nothing.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, it is a triple negative because I want you to understand that we do not beg nobody for nothing. We demand that we be treated as citizens of Barbados. You cannot come telling us that you are supporting St. Michael and you are shifting St. Michael to mean up toward the north and we down in the west are suffering.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Community Independence Celebrations throughout St. Michael were throughout the entire St. Michael. If the Honourable Member chooses not to become involved in the Celebrations that is his right and his choice but to suggest that the Barbados Labour Party Government chose to celebrate Independence Celebrations only in constituencies held by the Barbados Labour Party is utter and total nonsense and misleading. If they wanted to celebrate Independence, which they have now remembered about it, they should have done it between 1986 and 1994.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would now ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am going to ignore the Minister of Education because she is the last person in this House who is able to say anything about cooperation with her in the Barbados Labour Party. When the Minister of Education wishes to implement a programme at St. Leonard's School, when the Minister of Education wishes to discuss community cooperation at St. Leonard's School, she knows how to turn to the representative because she needs the representative at that time and the Honourable Member has the unmitigated gall...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. If we want to discuss matters of education and consulting with the representative, I will do that but what the Honourable Member was raising was whether this Government allowed activities to take place in non Barbados Labour Party constituencies. Even the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West participated in Community Independence Celebrations and the Honourable Member for St. John had his too.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We are discussing St. Michael and I am saying categorically beyond the slightest shadow of contradiction that there was clear, unmitigated bias on the part of those who are responsible for the distribution of the funding in celebration of Independence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up now. Well said.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I always enjoy the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. He is just practising for next year's programme on Laff-it-Off, Sir. He is really getting into form now. I do not know how many of you saw Laff-it-Off, Sir, but I thought the Honourable Member was an excellent actor and tonight he has demonstrated those talents. At the end of his speech you will remember him for how he shouted but not for what he said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable and gallant Member should try and stay within the parameters of his new dispensation. First of all, I acknowledge he accepts that the performance of Laff-it-Off was exquisite but I think Your Honour should not allow him to impute improper motives when he says that I am acting. I think Your Honour should, if necessary, seek guidance from the Clerks, but to suggest that an Honourable Member who makes a statement in representation of his constituents is acting is among, in my view, Sir, the highest form of imputing improper motives.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I was enjoying one of his skills as a parliamentarian, his oratorical skills, and he knows that.

Sir, I really wanted to say just a couple of things because I have spoken already in the debate and I think we can prolong this debate not only because it is a very pertinent subject, and obviously the social developmental problems of Barbados are important, or should be important to each one of us in this House. I think the fact that the Government has, in this year in particular, increased the vote so substantially for the social services is obviously evidence of how seriously the Cabinet and the Government and the Labour Party are taking the social development programme. The fact that almost every Member has spoken under this Head is also of some significance because obviously Members are deeply conscious of the fact that the Government is performing well in the economy, the economy is thriving and there are much more demands coming to us now for dealing with some of the social problems in society. 9.25 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South, I think, raised some issues relating to pensions. Perhaps, Sir,

still being the Chairman of the National Insurance Board, I should seek to put some of the facts before the Committee.

There are, Sir, as you know, two forms of pensions. There is a contributory pension and a non-contributory pension. Non-contributory are now supposed under the legislation to go to persons who have not during their lifetime contributed weekly by way of National Insurance contributions.

I said earlier that last year \$175.7 million was paid out of the National Insurance fund for pensions. Of this sum \$53.4 million was paid for non-contributory pension. There were 33 858 pensions in payment. Those are the facts, Sir. In due course, the report of the National Insurance Board will be before the House.

It is a fact that if you have lived outside of Barbados and returned to Barbados, you have to show that since you have reached age 40, you have lived in Barbados for 12 years to qualify for a non-contributory pension. That has been on the statute books and the regulations for quite some time.

The National Insurance has been looking at this regulation to see what changes can be made to the Board but there are some persons who fall into the category of people who are unable to adequately look after themselves. When they come to the attention of the National Insurance Board, since we cannot pay them under the existing legislation, we refer them to the National Assistance Board.

It should be made clear, however, that non-contributory pensioners receive their funds from those of us who are working and this has been so now since 1981. The Actuarial Report of 1993 and now the recent actuarial report has not yet come to the House but I give my word on the Floor of the House that as soon as the Board has considered it, we will make copies available to the whole House but particularly to the Leaders of both Opposition parties. I believe that this is an area of great concern for all of us and we want to make sure that the social security remains what it is. It is a security for people when they get to pensionable age.

One of the suggestions that we are looking at....

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order. From the vantage point of the position that you hold, I wonder if the Honourable Member would clarify what is the position in respect of a person drawing non-contributory old age pension and getting a pension from some other source in the country, whether they can get two pensions because a lot of the senior citizens believe that they are entitled and that while some are getting others are not getting. Could you please clarify the position.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: The Honourable Member is quite correct. This is a very old problem that has caused a great deal of problems. Because if you are drawing a contributory pension whether from domestic sources or from overseas sources, you really do not on existing legislation, qualify for a non-contributory pension. If it is a hard luck case and we have had those cases particularly with the devaluation of the Guyanese dollar or the Jamaican dollar or the Trinidad dollar or when the Pound Sterling for instance fell against our dollar, we have had cases in which people's pensions have fallen below what we would call the poverty line. In those cases we have had to refer them back to the National Assistance Board.

We are looking at that legislation now. There is a very broad based local committee advising the Board on legislation and we will advise the Government and hopefully bring it to the House. What has happened is that the scheme began as a very generous scheme in 1967.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. As he is giving this information, could he also help on one issue. A person who is receiving a survivor's pension which is lower than the old age pension and the person reaches age 65, my understanding is that the person should automatically get the old age pension. The department has, in one case that I know, continue to say that there are not entitled.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I am sorry to hear that. In that case they have an entitlement. I must say that the staff of the department try their best to answer these queries. I am on leave at the moment from the Board, but I have said to any Member to bring it to the attention of the Acting Chairman or the Director or the person who deals with these cases in particular the Deputy Director who looks at these cases. There are some cases that Members have written about and we try to answer each one of them. I have had correspondence from Members on both sides of the House and we have tried to deal with those cases. The Honourable Member is correct. They should get the higher pension in those cases.

Sir, I want to say this. The scheme began as a very generous scheme. You can after 10 years qualify for the highest pension by getting your three best years and taking up to 60% of that contribution in the three best years. Our scheme is over-generous as compared with schemes of very developed countries. The House at some stage is going to have to look at this because what we are really doing is we are really giving to people who should make a greater contribution than probably those who are marginalised and falling through the cracks.

The other problem that we have as well, Sir, is that we are becoming an aged population and obviously as we age so many more of us are living longer and we are

finding that the stresses on the scheme are really very tremendous. I think that the three political parties seriously are going to have to look at the problem. It does not matter which one of us is in the Government at a time but we are going to have to face up to the problem as to how to maintain the integrity of the social security fund to pay the maximum benefits and not yet undermine its integrity.

I thought I would respond to that and I have said to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and to all Honourable Members that if there are any of these cases that they know, the Board wishes to know about them as urgently as possible as the Board is pretty broad based. I heard in this House suggestions from the Leader of the Opposition when we last debated this matter and from the Leader of the NDP, which have been extremely helpful in the House as a whole and we are trying to bring the subject of social security to the stage that there can be a non-partisan and national approach on these issues. I have not interpreted any Member as doing otherwise in debate.

I want Members to be assured that we are now in receipt of the Actuarial Report for the end of the period as at December 31, 1996. It is currently before the board. The Board is looking at it, it may not accept all of the actuary recommendations but we will make our suggestions to the Minister and hopefully even before it reaches Members in the House, we will make copies available to those Leaders of the Opposition.

Sir, having dealt with that, I want to deal with my own problem in my own constituency. I have a very small constituency in physical space but very large in numbers and I am deeply conscious of the necessity for community development in these crowded areas. The crowded areas really are St. Michael in particular and Christ Church and now St. James. We have very little land space and people are crowding up and particularly the young people want recreational facilities.

In my own constituency we have answered the problem largely by providing several basketball courts. There are still areas that there are no courts. I am very pleased, therefore, to see in the Estimates year an increase in provision for basketball courts. Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know, you and the Sports Council have visited with us at Bennetts and in the Bonnetts area, both Bonnetts, Christ Church and Bonnetts, St. Michael. The Member for St. Michael South, some of his constituency and the Member for St. Michael South Central will profit from this. I am assured that a court will be built there to help cover and cater for the people from Reece Road, Grants Avenue, Villa Road and Fordes Road those areas.

I believe that we cannot have playing fields in every area. In my own constituency, I do not know where I would find the land for a playing field. 9.35 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that we should place more emphasis on home help. Many of the old people prefer to live at their homes. They really do not want to go to the geriatric hospital unless they are immobile because of disability and I believe that that vote ought to be increased.

I am prepared to support the Minister of Finance if they move in some money here because I believe that home help should be 7 days a week. I really appeal very strongly on this issue, Sir. I believe it is better that you have somebody who is coming in and giving you the care to assist you in your home so we would not hear the type of cases of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke and each one of us could speak of some of those cases.

I believe that we should provide, since we have more revenue available than we have had for a long time. I believe we should go to the 7 day week. We should improve that service, both in terms of quantity and quality especially quality so that people could benefit tremendously.

Let me say one last word, Sir. I completely support some of the statements made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in relation to the effect which gambling is having on the ability of old people to survive. We are very anxious to help our own people particularly the poor in the community. Sometimes we have to help them with advice. In the National Insurance Board we are seeing too many of the pensioners' cheques being cashed at gambling houses. I rather suspect, Sir, that what is happening is that those cheques are being discounted, cashed in early for less than their full value and that therefore that is adding to the problem of poverty in our society.

I believe that the Government has, as a matter of policy, to study again the forms of gambling in which they are coming. There are those who objected to gambling in any guise but the gambling that we have accepted even in the level of the church is now turning out to be so strong and pervasive that it can very well undermine social stability and cohesiveness. Not that I am against gambling in some forms, Sir, but I believe there should be checks and balances.

I also notice that the Government's revenue is \$20 million. I reckon that \$120 million minimum is paid out of people for gambling. If the Government is getting \$20 million they say 50% of it is going to pay back then the people who are operating this are making \$40 million a year and we really have to look at it as England has looked at it to see whether the time may not come, if people want to use these forms of gambling for us to use it more for improving the state as a national lottery rather

than operating in the forms that it is going and not necessarily enriching some people and undermining the social stability of the country.

I want to say I am not opposed to gambling in some of its forms as a form of recreation. There are born again Christians who are opposed to all forms of gambling. I am a bit but at the same time I am deeply conscious of the ill effects which we can have as we are having at the moment particularly on some of the old people who need to be protected in these ways.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I want to react, Mr. Chairman, to the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. John and the first thing I want to say, Mr. Chairman, is that attacks have been launched in this Honourable Chamber on me by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West as well. I must say that even though they were attacks they were done in a very statesmanlike fashion. I must say that I was the subject of a broadside attack almost reaching to a personal attack by the Honourable Member for St. John and he asked a certain number of questions. He referred to the issue of the National Assistance Board not meeting for a year. It is the same way in which he began his speech last year about the National Assistance Board not meeting for a year.

I remember last year having to inform the Honourable Member that even though the Board did not meet for a year, and I brought figures to prove the point, that more work was done in that year than was done at any time under the last administration. I thought that I had put that matter to rest but it has surfaced again.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to say that in a very quaint way the Honourable Member sought to question my representation of a constituency that was once theirs and is now mine and will be mine for a very long time. 9.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, he was saying that he went to the Post Office in St. Philip and heard people asking what I did and I am not saying whether I believe he went to the Post Office or not. But if he was in here a bit earlier today he would have heard that I am planning to give the people...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is disturbing me by his constant putting his hands in his pocket.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The Honourable Member would have heard that the Clarkes Hill Football Team will be the beneficiaries of a playing field this year. I am

wondering, Mr. Chairman why he did not take the same Members or the same group of Postmen or whoever are asking him, to Church Village and why he did not show them the hard court that I put there, a hard court that they were calling for, for years. And that hard court will have lights installed on it this year. Why didn't he tell them this? They asked him what I did? Why didn't he take them down to Brereton and show them the pavilion, a brand new pavilion. Why didn't he, Mr. Chairman, take them down to Edgcombe Road and Carrington Road which, I believe he knows very well, which was one of the bumpiest and rockiest roads in the constituency and it is now a bus route. The buses are running through that old rough rocky road. He should have taken them there.

I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, why he did not take them to Thicketts Road, another rough, rocky road which was barber green right through. I am wondering why he did not take them to Eastbourne Road. The people of Eastbourne are extremely pleased and extremely happy. I am also wondering, why he did not take them to Request Road all of these are tenantry roads that were done and I am wondering why he did not do it.

Mr. Chairman; he could have taken them over to Church Village again and shown them the St. Philip Primary School which was recently repaired after the people had been calling for repairs to that school for ten years. I am wondering why he did not tell them that I organised from the moment I was the representative, a cricket competition and he has copied it and has organised one as well.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, why he did not tell them about the "Cappy" Greenidge Dominoes Competition, the only one of its kind in this country. I do not know, Mr. Chairman why he did not tell them that buses are running through Vineyard and they never went in Vineyard before.

Why he did not tell them, Mr. Chairman, that buses are going through Duncans and they never went through Duncans before. That buses are going up in Church Village Housing Complex and they never went into Church Village Housing Complex before. And Mr. Chairman, the other thing, if he had taken them down to Three Houses Park, he would have seen some beautiful lights up there now. The Park never had lights before and at 6.00 p.m. they had to close down, but the Park has lights now.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Honourable Member knows quite well that at Skeete's Bay and Consett Bay those two projects are on the way, and these are things that he could have said. He could have told them all this.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that I am older and wiser and more matured than the Honourable Member for St. John and I want to say that as Minister responsible for Youth Affairs I speak in this capacity now and I want to say, Sir, that I am in full support of any woman who wants to become Barbados' first female Prime Minister.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am in full support of each and every woman in my constituency, and any woman who wants to become a political leader of any Party in this country, I fully support that woman.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, anyone listening to the present administration mouthing about their contribution to community development and the Barbadian society would get the impression off the cuffs that everything in the streets of Barbados after a four-year sojourn by the Barbados Labour Party that all is very well in the society.

It is amazing, Sir, that the Members of this administration believe that they can come into these Chambers, make a few comments about what is their programme for the society and believe that what they have done so far, has provided all of the answers and that we have a society out there that everything is fine and dandy. The reality is that if we have to accept what the Government is saying, they have carried out an operation which was successful, but the patient has died.

Anyone listening to them would believe that they have done the most wonderful thing for the Barbadian society yet we have a situation in Barbados today that 90 or 95 percent of the households in this country are suffering, in debt and to some extent in despair. It is amazing and an enormous amount of pressure in the entire society at all levels.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not know who is spending any money in any gambling. But listening to the Members of the Government you would believe that you all have provided all of the answers to all the ills out there in the society, but the society out there is in distress. 9.55 p.m.

This present Government, in 1994, adopted a campaign and said that they were on a campaign of jobs, jobs, jobs. We argued at the time that it was an unrealistic call and I wonder how the Government on the one hand could have been talking about jobs, jobs, jobs. Only to realise that 4 years after, the same jobs that they were creating for people the people had to be paying for.

So all of a sudden 4 years after they are now saying that people cannot get jobs because when they come to their constituency offices and they ask them for jobs they tell them that they cannot get jobs, that they need to be trained. They promised people jobs, jobs, jobs. To do what? What kind of jobs did you all create? Where did they create them? Where are the figures? Just tell me the business houses. Tell me the institutions where the people are working, what you trained them to do and what they are doing.

You were talking about a building boom in this society but yet you are saying you do not have any people trained to perform in the building boom and yet you created jobs that people are not trained for as yet. You are the most confused group of people that I have ever met in my life.

Mr. Chairman, the Members on that Side have to be the most confused group of people in Barbados. Can you imagine that they came to this country and promised that they would provide all of the answers by way of jobs, jobs, jobs and they say they have provided all these jobs and the unemployment figures are down to 8.5% or 9%. It is the most ridiculous position that is taken in this country. You came in here today - I listened to you patiently. I was not feeling well and the Deputy Prime Minister made me feel better again. She gave me two tablets and straightened me out.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order. I gave him two tablets for his stomach but they clearly have gone to his head.

The Honourable Member well knows that the unemployment rate is hovering at 12% having moved from 27% in 1994. And we are hoping that in due course it will in fact get to single figures. He is into large and extravagant incredible statements and I am appealing for reason to prevail. Try your best, if not I will give you another kind of tablet.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the reality that we are confronted with in Barbados is that the Members on that Side do not seriously believe that they are providing jobs because they are saying on the one hand that they have to train people for growth within the society in the building boom but there are a number of people who are untrained. We knew that in 1994. We knew that before 1994 and we were involved in a heavy retraining programme which saw over 800 people retrained in an 18-month period.

It came to a head because a number of workers who were retrenched from the Government service were people who had absolutely no skills and were employed in

casual capacity and they were employed without any skills. We realised that it was a critical problem because if we were to effect growth in the society there were a lot of emerging sectors where we would have to do specific training and some 32 different disciplines were identified and training programmes were put in place for them at the National Training Board.

In addition to that, as I said earlier in my first presentation, we had to go beyond that stage and develop the TVET programme which was to enhance the National Training Board's efforts which were supposed to identify new areas of training that would be necessary for growth in the economy. We understood that at the time but for political expedience out of the blue because it sounded good the Barbados Labour Party in a totally unrelated exercise just decided that jobs, jobs, jobs sounded catchy. So without any base they decided that that was a slogan that would capture the imagination of people.

Today, 4 years after, you have come to the realisation that it was a wild promise and that you now have to train people as we understood since 1994.

The Minister himself made certain boasts and he came in here today and said that he has done this and that. There are so many things that people do that they do not have to talk about. When you have to talk about something, if you are doing something, people notice it. If you are good-looking, people recognise you. So if you do something and you have to talk about it something is wrong because nobody is noticing. Yes. If you are good-looking, people look at you. If you are ugly, well, people look at you too.

So the mere fact that you have to talk about achievements you are trying to convince somebody that you are doing something so I can understand that. But in 1995 you came into this House of Assembly and you said that you were going to break all of the records regarding the farm labour programme where you were going to be creating all these new jobs. You spoke about the New Brunswick. Do you want me to refresh your memory? I have a good memory. You said that you were moving the programme to a new height. You spoke about the programme that you were going to develop in Nova Scotia and that you were going to develop the farm labour programme.

To be quite honest with you, and let us talk straight because this is the Honourable House of Assembly. The Ministry and the programme is almost in total chaos. There was a meeting of the farm workers sometime either late last year or early this year where the meeting almost broke up in total disarray because of the discontent of the people involved in the programme. I do not know what the

problem was. I do not know what the people are suffering but it was a meeting where the tempers were flaring. You can explain it away but I will give you more information if you want me to provide it.

You came into this House of Assembly and said you were going to create all of these records in these jobs and yet we have not seen them. The projections within the Ministry were that you would provide some 400 or 500 new positions across the Canadian map. We had shut down the U.S. programme and when I left office we had started to branch into Montreal and to some of the other areas of Canada and that has come to an abrupt halt.

I am just asking questions based on the promises that were made and we have not really seen any of the results of those programmes.

So, Mr. Chairman, I really have to wonder how this Government can seriously think in terms of patting itself on the back when we have situations in our own communities that are beyond the tolerable level. I am speaking very seriously. It is silly to talk about unemployment figures when all of us know that in our respective constituencies there are too many people unemployed.

You have funding where you are creating an impression that you are going to put in all these septic tanks connecting all the taps *etc.* 10.05 p.m.

So far the Urban Development Commission has only been able to assist two people out of 10 000 in my constituency, one in Licorish Village and one in Haggatt Hall, but you would create an impression with the resources that you have at your disposal that you are doing a massive turn around of the social infrastructure in Barbados. So the people out there would say all of a sudden that you have done a wonderful job with a piecemeal approach to the whole problem of social decay in this country. We are going to talk hard facts because I am never going to let you get away in this House of Assembly by coming in here with a few impression-like... but in reality it is just a piecemeal operation that really does not address the problem.

I have a vision of Barbados where we can achieve a totally developed social environment, where we can have proper health, everybody can be working, good housing, good roads, I believe Barbados is slowly getting there. It will take time but we must not try to put every move we make in a political context just to make sure that you are the next Government. Is it really important who forms the Government or is it not important how the people of Barbados are developed? It is totally irrelevant sometimes when we try to play games with the minds of the people

when in reality we have not done what we set out to achieve and try to create the impression that we have.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, this is a serious debate and I believe that we are going to spend all of tomorrow as well on the particular Head, but the Minister must understand. And I do not think that the Honourable Minister is an unreasonable person but you must avoid patting yourself on the back because if we had to do a similar exercise of getting in here and talking about the roads that we have done and the buildings we have put up and so forth, we would talk all night. It makes no sense you speaking for two and a half minutes about what you have done when we can speak for an hour and a half about what we have done. It does not achieve anything as far as that is concerned. In reality, we must say to the people of Barbados these are the facts. That is why I have the greatest respect for the former Prime Minister of Barbados because when Barbados was confronted with a developmental problem we faced it head on and explained to the people what was necessary for future development. That was totally distorted by the Barbados Labour Party for cheap political gain and today you are confronted with the reality that you have a difficult situation to grapple with. If you walk away believing that all of the ideas started from 1994 you are making a sad mistake.

The people in Barbados are extremely depressed and upset. These Estimates are disappointing because they do not point the way forward. They say to us that we are just maintaining the status quo and we are going to give a few titbits here and there to create the impression that we are a good Government.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think you should give way at this time.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The reality is, that Barbados is still in a state of crisis and we are talking about the Ministry of Labour which should be the driving force behind real growth and new job opportunities, but to be honest with you I really wish you would level with the people, tell them exactly where these jobs that you created, are. I do not believe that they have been created. There are some casual workers who probably remain untrained, who you all are including as part of the statistics, say so. You cannot be arguing on one hand that you now have to train people *etc.* and on the other hand saying that you have provided jobs and when they come to you saying that you cannot give them a job yet, because you have to be trained. Undo your confusion, if that is possible.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am now levelling with you, I think your time is up.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am sorry I did not hear you just now, Sir. Let us have a honest debate as to where we stand in our lives.

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

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to continue where I left off because after I spoke one other Honourable Member over there left the impression that I was somehow trying to influence this committee by information that might be at the lowest inaccurate, indeed at the highest inaccurate. I took the liberty of sending for the backup files so I could confirm the position which I took and I now have, Sir the Activities of Parish Independence Committees, Community Independence Celebrations 1997 and I am going to go through this because it is a matter that is of grave importance to the people in the constituencies. I am satisfied beyond any shadow of doubt that the Barbados Labour Party Government...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that under the rules of the House we have to debate the Head that is before us and Community Independence Celebrations come under Prime Ministers office. That does not give leverage for him to get into this in any detailed discussion at this time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is free to be as confused about the Estimates as she wishes to be. I do not have any problem with that. If she wishes to be confused about them she can be. As she said that is her understanding and we know where that is, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are doing Head 39 and I hope you angle into Head 39.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We are discussing community development and community development is a wide thing that embraces what you suspect. If the Prime Minister chooses to take a little of everybody's minutes and put it under his wings that is his problem. And if he has no confidence in the Minister and he chooses to bring something under his wing, that is his problem, but in this House, the Prime Minister cannot dictate for us least of all the Honourable Member for St. James South cannot dictate what we will speak about. I am so happy that in the Chair there resides a brain that understands these Estimates better than the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I was saying I am going to call the date and the proposed activity

October 18 - Motorcade - Eastmond's Corner to Bank Hall - did not happen.

October 19 - Football tournament begins - Eden Lodge.

October 26 - Religious festival, Solidarity House did not happen.

October 31 - Domino tournament - Cave Hill.

November 1 - Cave Hill Juniors Football, Cave Hill.

November 1 - Basketball tournament - Eden Lodge.

November 2 - Cave Hill Seniors Football - Cave Hill.

November 3 - Cave Hill Table Tennis tournament Cave Hill.

Novembers - Talent Show - Black Rock Cultural Centre - did not happen.

November 9 - Award Ceremony and Cultural Show - Combermere. I do not think that happened, Sir.

November 15 - Song Festival - Eden Lodge Community Centre.

November 18 - Draughts - Cave Hill.

Do you want to hear what we got, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: November 29 - Clean-up Day Bank Hall. That is the sum total of what we got, Sir, and the Bank Hall spill into St. Michael West and they had seven people with rakes walking up and down and that was clean-up. This is the point that I want to make. This is the crucial aspect that the Minister must pay attention to.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can ask me and I can tell you the answer to any question you ask me, it is nothing. I want to make the point that the Barbados Labour Party has

machinery in place to use the funds of the taxpayers for political activity.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House and he should really put this issue in its proper perspective. When these Community Independence Celebration committees are formed, they are formed by a democratic process where the committee members are voted for. That is the first thing. A meeting takes place and the committee members are voted for. Secondly, in terms of deciding where what happens, notices are published in the newspapers inviting the residents of various communities, in this case, St. Michael, to inform them that a meeting is going to be held in say, Grazettes Community Centre or wherever and please come forward and set out what it is you would like to be done in your constituency. 10.15 p.m.

A lot of mention was made of Eden Lodge and Cave Hill but Grazettes also falls within the constituency of St. Michael North and there was none in Grazettes either, although it falls in St. Michael North because when the meeting was held in Grazettes, funny enough, the residents of Grazettes did not come out and say that they wanted anything. So if the residents of the Member's constituency did not come out in the various communities and say they want anything they would not have gotten anything so he must set it in the right perspective.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will not be moved, Sir. I am certain as night followeth day that there is a programme directed by a Minister who has responsibility for information, *et cetera*, and that plan includes a programme for the mobilisation of support across the board, especially as it relates to the St. Michael area. I know that for a fact. It will not succeed.

The Labour Party has set St. Michael as a goal but the reason it will not succeed is because the people of St. Michael cannot be easily bought.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know, Sir, he has had a lot of failures in his life. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew says he is responsible for getting out of the House. I would be just one other major failure in his life. No problem. He and I understand each other, Sir.

The reason why the Honourable Member for St. Michael North can get up and speak with authority on this whole question is that his Personal Aide is the chief cook and bottle washer throughout the whole programme.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: On a point of order, Sir. Just to set the record straight. He is no chief cook and bottle washer. He was voted for by the residents of the areas around Cave Hill, Eden Lodge, Grazettes and the people who came out and voted for the committee. He was voted as the President of northern St. Michael, not St. Michael North, of the Community Independence Celebration Committee.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I never said, Sir, how he was elected or selected. I have never addressed the issue of his election or selection. I have alluded to the fact that he was chief cook and bottle washer and if the Honourable Member is able to challenge me on either the cook part or the bottle washer part I will concede. The Honourable Member knows what I am talking about.

What I am concerned about is that community development funds - You see, Sir, when you look into these Estimates, Sir, you have to look with an eagle's eye but some of the things are so blatant you can see them with the naked eye.

Now you take page 110. There is a section 314 which says: "Other Grants to Individuals"

"Provision is made as part of Government's Poverty Alleviation programme for the payment of welfare, cash grants and assistance-in-kind, payment of electricity bills, water bills, food vouchers, rents to National Housing Corporation and private landlords, spectacles, dentures, prostheses, wheel-chairs."

You hear that? That is a conglomeration. That is \$15 million. You know how much is \$15 million let loose in St. Michael? This is not a laughing matter. Community development is the potpourri. Community development is the area where if it is to be hidden it can be easily hidden because this conglomeration of purposes for which this money can be spent is not unfamiliar to those of us who have been around for a long time.

The Prime Minister mentioned last night the Oliver Jackman Report and the Oliver Jackman Report makes a comment about a Barbados Labour Party Administration between 1984 and 1986. The Democratic Labour Party was not in office. I challenge any Honourable Member over there - the Prime Minister does this all the time. He comes in on a wind-up speech and he quotes and leaves the impression that he is discussing something heinous that happened with the Democratic Labour Party, but it was the Barbados Labour Party regime - my time does not permit me to read that report, but that report was an indictment of the use of these kinds of funds by that kind of Government.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Slow down? You are not going to get an opportunity to speak for the rest of these Estimates unless you get up and defend your colleague who is the Minister responsible for Community Development and I know you are not going to do that. You are not going to defend like the Minister but I am going to defend him. I am defending him from the rest of the Barbados Labour Party. He might think I am attacking him but I am giving him fair warning that when they put this \$15 million in this particular portfolio and they encase it with all of these things that you can do with it, and then you have the rubric of poverty alleviation, bearing in mind...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is contradicting himself. Earlier in the debate he stated in no uncertain terms that the Minister of Finance had no confidence in the Minister and that he kept the poverty alleviation fund in his own Ministry and now he is saying that he is placing a poverty alleviation vote under this Head. He is definitely contradicting himself.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I am not contradicting myself. This \$15 million is only part. The rest is with the Prime Minister's Office. The point I am making is that there is a Minister responsible for public information who has responsibility for mobilisation. That is what it is, mobilisation. That is the programme that will carry you over the top, and St. Michael is the Promised Land as far as you are concerned. You wish to be taken to the brink in St. Michael and I am the defender of the faith in St. Michael and that is why I will spot these things before others, perhaps.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can make me Governor-General and I will accept it too. It is an honourable position but not yet. Let me deal with you first. Do not make me Governor-General yet. I want you to let me deal with you in this because you can bring your hoards but we will hurl you back in St. Michael. That is the point, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I know you understand these matters but you stay where you are. Do not let them pull you in down there because it is going to be tough. This \$15 million will not carry you anywhere and your friend from St. Michael North will need at least two more chief cooks and bottle washer in order to keep himself above water. 10.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am very concerned that when I ask questions and the Minister gets up to respond, he does not respond to the questions that I ask. He spends time dealing with all other matters. I want the Minister to give us chapter and verse on how he proposes to spend this \$15 million. Because \$15 million is not a small sum of money in the context of Barbadian politics.

The \$350 which they have posted out to persons in the society was supposed to be a one-off-shot but they have gone out and they have said to people, if you are working or if you did not have any work at all, write And I am writing. I am putting it in records. I am writing the Chief Welfare Officer about at least one person because she was told by one of the messengers to write, so I am writing for her to say that she had a job during the year and she did not do too well and she did not get as much money and she was left off the list so send her a little berry. So she will get the \$350. That is my understanding of how it is going to work this time around.

The Minister will get a chance to get up and explain that but I wish him to tell me exactly how he intends to deal with this item at 314. The cash grants were supposed to be a one-off. So why are we having \$15 million with cash grants in this year. I am sure that you will be able to explain that.

I want to ask another question about Item 315. This provides for a subvention to non-profit organisations. There is a feature of this Estimates which colleagues might not have recognised. Once upon a time when you got the Estimates you had to have some specifics in them. Now, it is open sesame. All this says is that it provides for a subvention to non-profit organisations. Now, nobody in Christendom knows who the non-profit organisations are, what they are, where they are, when they came or whence they came. All we see here in the Estimates is subvention for non-profit organisations. It is 315 on page 111. If you look at 315 and then you look over at the left side at 110, you will see grants to non-profit agencies. When you look across at the Explanatory Note, it says, provides for subventions to non-profit organisations.

I know that the Ministry of Labour is not overburdened with work. I know that. The Ministry of Labour is one of the few Ministries of which it can be said with impunity that they are not overburdened with work. That is no fault of the Minister. It is simply because we do not have a lot of labour disputes. We have such a nice situation in Barbados that you are not called upon like some countries where almost around the corner, every week, there is some dispute and you have to be dispatching experts to get involved in solving problems.

As a matter of fact the Chief Labour Officer is so deprived of serious activity that he is now creating areas for intellectual exercise. I notice that the Minister is saying that the Chief Labour Officer will do something and that he approves of it. Well, I think that is wonderful.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I think you are right. You should get the Prime Minister out of the business of labour. The

Chief Labour Officer knows what he is doing, get the Prime Minister out. Because if the Prime Minister could handle the situation, the offshore company would have either recognised the union or gone. What the Prime Minister has done is put you in a bind because you cannot exercise your authority as I know you would.

I know if the Minister had been left by himself he would have dealt with this matter one time. But the Prime Minister is interfering as he does.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The trouble with the Prime Minister is that he does not have anything to do either. That is the problem with the Prime Minister. He does not have anything to do so he goes around looking for something to do and interfering in everybody's Ministry as soon as he hears there is a little trouble.

I have never seen anything like this. Little inky dinky things...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Prime Minister in his absence is accused of interfering in another person's Ministry. The Honourable Member should be asked to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, let me put it another way...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up. Wait until tomorrow and put it another way. Do not do it tonight.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, when one considers all that the Ministry for which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has responsibility for and has to do, when one considers that this Ministry, which for purposes of the Estimates is classified as Head 39, has to develop community development programmes, is responsible for skills training, is responsible for the facilitation of sports activities, is responsible for programmes to alleviate the plight and condition of women, is responsible for welfare grants to the indigent, has to do things for those who are homeless, has to address concerns such as child abuse, has to deal with matters such as disabilities, must administer the home help programme, must look at all the activities of the National Assistance Board including assistance-in-kind and the home help service, then one must realise, Mr. Chairman, that it is a daunting task confronting anyone who has responsibility for this particular portfolio.

A while ago, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West wondered aloud what NGOs are beneficiaries from the grants that are given under Head 39.1 want to inform this Honourable House, Mr. Chairman, that among the

non-governmental organisations and the non-profit organisations that benefit from assistance and subventions granted by the Minister of Labour are, the Barbados Association for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, the Barbados Empire Service League, the Family Welfare League, the Dorcas League...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is reading from some document which is not available to this House. I raised the question that the Item 315 does not show in the copies which we have who or what or where the item is going. Now the Honourable Member is getting up and reading information and telling us.

I am making the point that these are the Estimates and that we have a right to know. There should be some explanation in the Estimates. You cannot come with it under your armpit and get up and give us because you feel that you know. We have a right to know.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: When one considers the hour of the night and the years tenure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West have had on this earth, one must say that it is strange that at this hour, he is suffering from the kind of nocturnal restlessness which he would be advised to take elsewhere at the end of the proceedings.

His question craved a reply. His question inviting us to specify exactly which non-profit organisations benefitted from grants from this...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order Sir. The Honourable Member has made it clear that he does not intend to respond to anything to do with agriculture. Certainly, I would not expect if I ask for a reply on the matter dealing with Community Development that the Minister of Agriculture is going to get up and purport to give me that information. How can I trust it, Sir. The Minister of Agriculture is not known for his capacity to retain specific information beyond a certain time.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member does, he sought to associate me with a fundamental characteristic that he has, namely, a short attention span, which has now manifested itself in the restlessness that one can identify with students who are known for not doing well, are known to have, by way of poor attention span.

The Honourable Member must be honest enough to admit that he was asking what non-profit agencies meant. He must admit that. 10.35 p.m.

The first thing I must say, Mr. Chairman, is that when a line Ministry is giving a grant or a subvention to a

particular agency it is given by way, as the Honourable Member knows, of a block vote. He knows that. Nonetheless if he wants information in relation to the particular agencies which are beneficiaries from the grants that are given by this Ministry they are as follows: the Barbados Association in aid of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, an association that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West might aspire to join but which he is not yet eligible to join. Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Empire Service League, the Dorcas League, the Council for the Disabled, the Old People's Home, the National Council on Aging, the Samaritans, the British Aids Society, senior citizens homes. But, Mr. Chairman it would be remiss of me not to mention that the Salvation Army at Reed Street is also a principal beneficiary.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, if the Honourable Member would give way, Sir. Now that the Honourable Member has listed 7 or 8 or 9, I have to say that it is really intolerable because the amount for the entire year is only \$36 000. Do you mean that the Salvation Army and that whole crowd that he is calling out will get between them \$36 000 for the whole year? It would have been better that you did not tell us.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is guilty of looking at one line item under Head 39 and not looking at the entirety of Head 39. I was saying, Mr. Chairman, before he so rudely interrupted me that in 1990-91 the Salvation Army got \$56 000 from Government. In 1991-92 the Salvation Army got \$56 000. This figure continued down to 1995-96 at \$56 000. Tonight, Mr. Chairman, this side of this Honourable House can report that the Salvation Army for the year 1998-99 will be getting the highest ever at \$110 000. And yet you would hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, posing as Shadow Prime Minister for St. Michael and asking all types of questions that he feels that we out here are unable to answer.

What is commendable about the effort by the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports is that it is prepared to work with non-profit organisations in the interest of assisting these organisations to meet the particular goals and objectives that they have set for themselves.

The Salvation Army at Reed Street as I said is going to benefit from an increased allocation in the amount of \$110 000 for the feeding programme which has been doing an important...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading this House, Sir. Item 315 - Grants to Non-Profit Agencies, 1998-99 is \$36 000 down from \$45 000. Now, how can the

Honourable Member get up and say the Salvation Army is going to get \$110 000? How can he get \$110 000 out of \$36 000? The Honourable Member surely must be misleading the House and he should let the substantive Minister who understands these things speak.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is confusing the House. He is confused himself. He is confusing the House. It says here 315. That is what I have. Who are these non-profit agencies. He purports to give the answer and he is confusing the issue.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has taken great pride in his own debating skills. As I indicated earlier one thing that is obvious to me is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has been concentrating his attention solely on one-line item which I rather suspect he does not understand and secondly he has failed and/or refused and/or neglected to look at the total block vote that is being given to non-profit agencies.

It was the same Honourable Member who mentioned the figure of \$15 027 000 as a grant.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The way these Estimates are laid out is a simple way and they have managed to bring it down to the lowest common denominator where the simplest person would understand what they mean. If there is a line it has a number next to it. That number says 315 for example on page 11.0. Maybe some of the others in the back can help the Honourable Member. If it says 315 and next to 315 it says Grant to non-profit agencies. It then has the figure of \$36 000 and the revised figure was \$45 000. The Honourable Member cannot now be heard to be saying that the system is so perverted that even though this line says \$36 000 that the non-profit agency that he adumbrated as part of this will now draw from the \$15 million which appears in another line. This is different and speaks to an entirely different set. I know he knows what a set is and therefore the Honourable Member must not confuse the House. He should admit error, say I got into some difficulty. It is not my portfolio and move on.

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, two things are obvious. The first thing that is obvious is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is not going to accept any explanation from me in the same way we know that in the past he has turned down good advice.

The second thing that is most obvious is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is experiencing an unusually high energy level tonight and is exploiting it in here but there is an opportunity for the Honourable Member to put that energy to use when this House closes its debate tonight. I wish that whatever particular function he is going to discharge tonight that he does it with vigour, energy and enthusiasm.

The Honourable Member is saying *sotto voce* that to expect the discharge of competence in any sphere by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is to expect the impossible and to require him to perform at a level that he has never been known to reach.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member wind up?

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that notwithstanding the very feckless attacks on the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, if one considers the entire gamut of the responsibility that falls to him under his portfolio he is doing the utmost that can be done in the circumstances in a situation where, unlike a previous administration, he is proceeding without any noticeable budgetary cuts. In fact there have been increases under a number of heads and I would want to commend, Mr. Chairman, the effort of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. It is true that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has said that if he could get his hands on the \$15 027 000 to let loose in St. Michael he would be more pleased with that coming his way in his capacity of shadow Prime Minister for St. Michael. He says that St. Michael is his and he takes particular delight in leading us along a route where we all enjoy his histrionics. We see him as a character, as an exciting person. Someone said last week that he is a consummate actor. He has put his skills to work with a group of people led by a man called Smith and I think they deal with something called "laff it off". He is a man who will laugh and given a chance to ridicule Honourable Members who happen to be his opponents he will seek to deal with them but such is the nature of the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate in this democracy.

Mr. Chairman, if this debate continues I will have to come back. Thank you very much. 10.45 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I just want for the record of this House to note that Honourable Members on that Side are refusing to cooperate in the debate of other Heads. It has been said in the past that we have to debate certain Heads. They were absent in here when certain Heads were passed. They walked out of the House while other Heads were being debated and we want to get on with this debate.

I certainly would like to get on with the debate with Public Works and Housing and it would appear as though the Honourable Members are blocking further debate on this Head, on the Prime Minister's Head, and on Heads of International Transport. I just want that for the record.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I object to those nonsensical remarks which have come from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. We have a lot to say and we will continue and we do not take any dictation from any Member on that Side about the issues that we debate or the length of time that we take to debate them, except by the rules. So tomorrow morning it will not be business on the basis of what the Government wants, this debate is a debate that we intend to fully participate in and I have a lot more to say about the stewardship of the Honourable Member of St. Philip North tomorrow morning.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that you will report progress to His Honour the Speaker and beg for leave to sit again.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chairman reports progress and ask for leave to meet again.

SUSPENSION

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

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 10.50 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER. This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the item Notices be recommitted.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay the following documents:

1. The Insurance (CGI Consumers Guarantee Company Ltd.) (Extension) Order, 1998.

2. The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Tourism Authority for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Resolution to grant the sum of \$11 597 624.00 from the Consolidated Fund to be placed at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1997-1998 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 17 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House reverted to Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 39 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS (resumed)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Community Development allocation during these Estimates will have to find a way to redirect some funding to satisfy an area affecting community. I am speaking specifically about the Community Development in regard to environmental health. There are a number of communities that are emerging in Barbados that are affected in a significant manner where the environment within which these communities are being developed is very badly affected. I am submitting, Mr. Chairman, that the development of Barbados has developed on such an ad hoc basis, that many communities are living in the threat of serious environmental hazards, when in fact we need not develop on that basis.

I want to refer specifically to a problem that is extremely worrying in a new community that has raised up in my constituency and certainly there are areas around Barbados that are similarly affected, even in your constituency, Sir, where a number of farms, some chicken farms, some sheep farms, some pig farms have sprung up in districts where housing developments have been taking place and the impact, the distress that is being suffered by various communities ought to be looked at when we examine these Estimates.

I believe that it must be the responsibility of the Urban Development Commission to not only look at assisting in housing needs and so forth but there are many districts at present where you cannot open your doors

on mornings, you cannot open your doors on evenings, you cannot open your doors at anytime because of the stench that is coming from these respective farms.

I am not seeking to lay any blame on the present Administration because as I said earlier, our development and housing programme has, to some extent developed on an *ad hoc* basis. There are several anomalies in the system. Clearly if I can give an example, at Hothersal Turning in St. Michael East, which was once part of the Belle/Waterford Estate permission was given for a chicken farm to be erected on a two-acre lot east of a housing development that has now been approved and large sums of money have been spent by householders in developing a housing community.

That, Mr. Chairman, has resulted in an extremely untenable situation where we have, and it is our business to build communities that are healthy, that are free of these kinds of pollutants and something must be fundamentally wrong when so much money can be spent in a particular area and then you have monies voted in Parliament, we have a large sum of money allocated to the South Coast Sewerage Project and where they will be doing hookups to provide septic tanks and water bowl facilities to the system, not that it was the idea of the present Barbados Labour Party.

The whole concept of that sewerage project was put on the table many years ago by the technocrats who when looking at the planning of Barbados, recognised that both a South Coast Sewerage Project and a West Coast Sewerage Project and maybe in the years to come an East Coast Project, where people would have to be connected to a sewerage system to protect the marine environment *et cetera*, but large sums of money are presently allocated, and many of those funds have been wasted too. We are trying to protect the marine environment and in our own established community we have a scenario where our people cannot come out of their homes because of the scent from chicken farms, from pig farms, from people burning garbage *et cetera*.

It must be the responsibility of this Ministry to just gently move from beyond having a community event which in many cases is not properly funded. Many of the events that we try to develop are not properly funded because there simply is not enough money to allocate to all of the sporting groups, all of the cultural groups, all of the various activities. It is almost an impossible task. If we are allocating funds through the Ministry or it is necessary for us to correct several wrongs that are in the society.

There is a major problem out there where the farmers are, but we cannot ignore it. Before we even start to talk about activities the basic social requirements in any social programme must be that the environmental health must be

sound. I will not discuss at this time the difficulty that the residents in another district where the South Coast Sewerage Project was in progress but which came to an abrupt halt because of the mismanagement or due to the unfortunate mishandling of the entire contract in some of its stages.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is suggesting that the project came to an end because of mismanagement or mishandling of the contract. In fact, the Honourable Member himself called for the termination of the contract because of the way in which the company was performing.

The Government terminated the contract when advised by its engineers and attorneys, that we had good grounds in both law in sufficient breaches of the contract and from an engineering perspective that the contract could be terminated but we were in an international agreement with the company and could not just walk out of it. You cannot say that the project came to an end because of mismanagement or mishandling of the contract because that is misrepresentation of what took place and therefore it is misleading to the Chamber.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, in response I would indicate that my comments must start at the beginning. The Minister knows full well that I came to Parliament and warned the Government that the project was in serious trouble. They said to me at the time that I did not know what I was talking about.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir, again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is on record in the newspapers as having both said that the people were playing the fool, and then that the Government was unfailing them. He just switches his mouth wherever he happens to be and whatever happens to be convenient. Mr. Chairman, Sir...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please sit, one person at a time on the Floor. The Honourable Member please sit.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Under the rules of the Chamber as I understand it, we must speak to the Head that is under debate. The South Coast Sewerage Project comes under Head 36. It was mentioned yesterday only in the context of the social development and putting toilets in communities. We cannot under this Head, Sir, get into a large discussion of the South Coast Sewerage Project. Please Mr. Chairman, do not allow it.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, my understanding of under a social programme is that we deal with education, culture, sports, health, community health

care, acute care services, care for the elderly, mental health, the drug service, environmental health, social security, personal and social services, the elderly, the physically handicapped, the mentally handicapped, children, women, the youth, all of these are under social programmes so how do you mean that I cannot speak when these matters were raised? You do not understand what is involved in a social programme? A social programme is broad so do not tell me I cannot speak under this Head. This is a broad Head and I can speak on any of these issues.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You came in here and you raised it. You spoke about the South Coast Sewerage Project but the Honourable Member does not want me to say that I warned the Government that the project was in difficulty. When I said that they were doing bad work the Government told me no.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member cannot continue to speak until we rule on this matter.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: What kind of foolishness is that at all?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member stick to the subject matter? If you mention the Project, it is all right but you cannot go on into details talking about the sewerage project and the South Coast. It is all in the community. You can mention it but please do not speak at length on the Sewerage Project. Stick to the subject matter, Head 39.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR. Mr. Chairman, I am just astounded that the Honourable Minister of Health was allowed such latitude when she spoke about the project. I am just making the point, Mr. Chairman, that since such a large sum of money is to be spent even though these Estimates probably do not reflect the true picture of the extent of the expenditure that will have to take place... I was making it to make that point that a significant amount of money has to be spent during this financial year to correct all of the problems associated with the South Coast Sewerage Project.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. If in fact this is his allegation he has to produce the evidence but I believe that the Chair has already ruled that he is not entitled to discuss it under this Head, please, you have to control the man.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am submitting based on information available to me and based on public information as stated by the contractors who were assigned

to the project, they said publicly that they are owed millions of dollars in claims which were not settled by the Government or for any work to restart.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The contractors, despite their public mouthing are owed no money by the Government of Barbados. The Government has paid in accordance with the terms of the contract all of the bills which have been certified by the engineers on the contract. They can put in claims for anything they choose but those claims have to be certified by the engineers in order to be paid. Those are the terms of the contract and we have paid everything certified by the engineers so we do not owe them any money.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, please, I am just asking the Honourable Member to stick to Head 39.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I understand that but the Honourable Member...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, I am asking the Honourable Member to stick to Head 39. You cannot debate the Sewerage Project. Please do not.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honorable Minister made certain comments that affect my integrity. She said that on one hand I said one thing and on the other hand I said another. In seeking to clarify the matter I said to this House of Assembly that a significant number of claims have been submitted to Government which were in dispute as a result of the engineer involving himself on behalf of the Government and that several claims remain unpaid. There is a dispute that may have to go to arbitration.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Head 39, please.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not know if they are legitimate or not. I am making the point...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The company said ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would appreciate it very much if you stop the cross-talking.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR. You are not even letting me explain my point. You do not even want me to speak. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, and I have to explain myself because I am making a point in relation to the community environmental health and to get there I have to clear up this point. That is all I am trying to say.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Have you cleared it now?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No, I have not cleared it because the Minister knows full well that the company indicated that a large sum of money is owed to them - millions of dollars was owed to them.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Precisely, and it is in that context that I am speaking.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I want to inform that the Honourable Member has one minute to go.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I have been interrupted.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I took that into consideration and I put on an extra two minutes.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: If they would let me just finish make my point. Please, just let me make my point. A large amount of money, whether *bonafide* or not, has to be paid out during this financial year before you can resume the South Coast Sewerage Project. 10.25 a.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. That information is totally inaccurate and incorrect.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, whether the money is paid out before or after, a large amount of money has to be spent on the South Coast Sewerage Project to have it completed.

I am saying that a priority in Barbados must be for... If you have a Rural Development Commission or an Urban Development Commission and we are dealing with community development, one of the priorities must be that we have to protect the environment on which existing communities presently live under.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up, you can come back later.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Some money must be allocated to alleviating those kinds of problems. In other words, like re-siting the farms or putting them in a specific area that they are not affecting communities.

I will come back, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not be very long but there are a couple of points made yesterday that I wanted to respond to.

I think that what the Government needs to do in relation to its social programmes in Barbados is to very clearly define and demarcate the responsibilities of the respective departments and Ministries, which are involved in those social programmes. Right now what we have is a situation in which Ministries and departments are tripping over each other to do exactly the same thing. The Urban Development Commission puts in street lights and MTW puts in some street lights and the Rural Development Commission puts in some street lights. So who is responsible for street lights?

When you look at the need of people in extreme poverty, the Welfare Department is responsible in some cases, the National Assistance Board is responsible in some cases, depending on their age and the Poverty Alleviation Committee is also responsible.

I think what we need from the Minister is an idea of the channels of communication and the demarcation of the responsibility. I do not think that it makes for efficient Government. I do not think that it is helpful to those persons who are going out there and identifying the needs of people in rural or in urban Barbados who need assistance, not to be sure which entity, which Ministry, which department, which Commission is going to be responsible for delivering the service to the people.

You cannot have efficiency where Government departments are tripping over each other saying that they are delivering those services and at the end of the day, nobody is delivering any service at all.

I need to ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip North a question because the Colleton Day Nursery burnt down about a year and a half ago, I think it was. He and I spoke about it and I want to know that the assurance that he gave me is reflected in these Estimates and that in fact funds are being provided for the restoration of Colleton Day Nursery.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, On a point of order. I have said already in this House, I said it two days ago that we have money in the Estimates for the restoration of Colleton. I said that the reason why it was not done before was because it was taking us a long time to negotiate with the insurers for the amount of money which we would have received because of the fire. I said so on the Floor of this House, when I introduced the Head. I said that they were over in the Community Centre on the other side of the road and we are hoping that this year, we will be able to put them back where they really belong. I said so on the Floor of this House.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, I am grateful to hear that. I regret that when the Honourable Member spoke, I was not here and I look forward to the

restoration of the nursery. That nursery was extended about four or five years ago and provides a very necessary service. I always felt myself that the Polyclinic at the Glebe, that apart from providing the services as a Polyclinic that the second floor, since the Government was saying that it was too large for my constituency, that the second floor could be put to other kinds of uses including the extension of day nursery facilities in the St. John constituency.

The fact that that Day Nursery is now located back in one of the Government units, the one in Colleton, that is, means that that unit which has been refurbished to be a community centre is now not available. The absence of that kind of activity in the Colleton, Coach Hill, Haynes Hill area, in my view, means that the community has lost its zeal to sustain the community groups, the football clubs, the basketball clubs and the range of other sporting and community activities which took place there before. I have seen a breakdown in the community spirit.

Only yesterday I went to a funeral as a result of an altercation in that area and I have seen a breakdown in the community spirit in Coach Hill. There is an urgent need for the provision of a hard court there, an area was identified for it which belongs to National Housing Corporation and which is available for that kind of activity. I believe that urgent emphasis needs to be placed on restoring the Colleton Day Nursery.

Mr. Chairman, the pavilion at Gall Hill. Again, these are projects owned by Government but once it comes to St. John, it seems as though the Government cease all of its responsibilities to the community. I have 13 gallons of paint in my constituency office now for which we have to go and paint that pavilion ourselves because nobody paints it, nobody does any remedial work on that site.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We do not mind doing it but there are only limited resources available. I know that I have to do it. We have a small group of persons. That is why this year we are going to have what is called the St. John's Home Coming. I hope the Honourable Member for Christ Church South as a St. John man, will be coming to the St. John's Home Coming with all of the thousands of other people who have roots in St. John and making a contribution to the restoration of certain key community sites and programmes to inspire young people.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I want you there. That gives balance to the equation.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member spoke about the Brereton pavilion. I am very glad for Brereton.

When I first came into this House, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North may not remember that because it was too long ago and he is a recent Member of the Chamber, Brereton was in my constituency. The very land on which the Honourable Member is building the pavilion, if he goes and check the records, he will discover who the Member of Parliament was, who put in the effort to secure that piece of land as a playing field and to carry out some works on the one in Ebenezer because there were problems when cricket and football was played on that other playing field, not to mention the provision of the Sunbury Road which was as a result of my efforts when that part of the constituency was on to St. John and for which my successor did an excellent job in undertaking those projects to their conclusions.

Many of the domino players in that area started to play dominoes, not as a result of any competition which the Honourable Member started. There was a competition long time before that. The young lady who is the champion was involved in organising dominoes competitions on her own without the intervention of politicians many years ago. I salute those kinds of people for the work which they do in communities throughout Barbados.

Government, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter likes to say, is a continuum and many of the projects which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has identified, are projects which have been there for execution for a long time and which simply would have been delayed as a result of lack of resources. The community centre in Kendal which the community itself took a public bath and converted it, is another of those examples of community action and people working hard together. The Honourable Member had the great fortune of opening that community centre within weeks of becoming Minister of Community Development. That was a project which the community and I had worked on from way back in 1992/1993. Likewise, the pavilion at Sussex which is now 60 years old and one of the oldest BCL cricket teams, that pavilion that is there was moved from St. Mark's and the community itself got a truck owned by one of the constituents, put the building on the back of it, dismantled it and put it back, added toilet facilities and steps, put in a bar and put in a whole range of other facilities and improved it themselves. They do not call on Government for anything.

There are many communities in Barbados in which nobody calls on Government for anything. Not the slightest assistance.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, they do call on us as Members of Parliament and that is our job. Government still need to go into those communities and identify

and document the work which those communities are doing throughout Barbados. My constituency is one of those examples. I believe that the area of Kendal - the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, would remember that in the last election campaign, they took a picture of the old lodge building, a dilapidated building that once belonged to a fraternity and put it on television and said that it was the pavilion and that I had allowed it to run into rat and ruin.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was St. Clair Pollard, he passed away many years ago.

That building, of course, is no longer there and I thought that the Government was so interested in projecting that as a place that required a pavilion that efforts would have been made to put in a pavilion. The playing field cannot even be played on now because the surface is destroyed by cars trying to make it into the back and into the tenantry. These are areas where young people who were once interested in being involved in community activities are totally frustrated by the lack of attention which is being paid to their effort. The Kendal cricket team, another 50 or 60-year old BCL cricket team has now gone into abeyance and that saddens me. 10.35 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is only so much that Members of Parliament can do. It is necessary for Government to rationalise those community services. Right now the Ministry of Youth Affairs has twice as many field officers as the Ministry of Community Development. So where is the community work coming from and what are the lines of demarcation? The Honourable Member, I regret only has about 19 or so persons who can go into the field. The Ministry of Youth Affairs has about 32. But community development needs to be supplemented with older, more experienced and qualified counsellors and social workers and we would give any support to any call by the Minister in here for that quality of community officer to be recruited by Government and sent out into the communities of Barbados to help.

When you reflect on the work of people like Sir Clyde Gollop and Mr. Gordon Walters, Ms. Marva Alleyne, and I speak of them very positively because they were people who, with little resources, went out into the community. They were functioning where they were most capable, that is working among people and encouraging them and giving them strength to build their community. This is very important because of the levels of crime and violent crime, youth upon youth taking place in Barbados. We need very urgently to focus our attention on building communities, building families, protecting our most

vulnerable and even our children. Any country in which you have an environment where children are playing cricket in some rural village on a road or a track and around them people are gambling and pushing drugs or involved in all kinds of criminal activities and their parents are not home to give them the kind of guidance they need, they would assume that their family reside on the streets rather than at home.

I compliment the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. I do not mind all the things he said yesterday. In the 1994 campaign he said there should be a commission of inquiry into the sale of Hey woods Hotel and implications were left in St. Philip that I was involved in some impropriety but when I put a few lashes on him in this debate he wilts and comes back and draws all the fire that he has inside him.

I have never said that before. I never responded to any of the personal criticisms that he levelled at me. I am asking him to account for his Ministry which is what his job is in this debate. So please do not upset me.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that we should have vigorous debate and I hold nothing personal against the Honourable Member. I believe that the Community Development department and the Ministry which he holds can be the most powerful force in transforming Barbados. I call on the Prime Minister to give him the resources. I call on him to draw to his bosom the people who can give him the best advice and to really make an effort to transform communities throughout Barbados. If I only had a fraction of the resources which the Honourable Member has, a fraction of the sporting talent that he has and a fraction of the connections which he has to a strong network of friends down through the years, a little more energy and drive...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, he has a lot of friends. I would be the greatest community development minister that Barbados has ever had.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, at this point I think that you should wind up.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I call on the Honourable Member to draw on his skills and draw on his abilities and stop sitting back and allowing others to push and pull him in the wrong direction and to devise a community development programme that can transform this country. That is what I am looking forward to from my parliamentary representative and I hope it will be forthcoming.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to use this opportunity to address a number of

matters pertaining to community development particularly in my constituency because I believe that there are a number of things that each of us in our own right can try to further the cause of community development in this country without necessarily having to rely on Government for everything.

Indeed, Sir, the community within Bush Hall which I have the distinct honour to represent, one of the things that has long dogged that community has been the absence of day care facilities for in excess of some 3000 people living in really what is less than one square mile. As a result we have had the fortune within my branch of meeting with members of the community and in particular the Bush Hall Planning Committee which is in fact broad based and non-partisan in its composition and reflecting the widest possible range of persons and ideas within that community. It is hoped that with the assistance of other persons but primarily those within the community, we can seek to develop a model day care centre for children and senior citizens that does not call on Government for the continued financial support or assistance that others have called on it for and that is not run as a private sector fund raising profit making entity but that is run as a facility truly for the benefit of the community in every sense of the word.

I have had the honour of representing their interest and writing off to the Ministry of Housing only very recently for the long-term lease at a peppercorn rent of the strip of land between the community centre and the old mill. It is a long, narrow strip now that only has about 7 or 8 Pride of Barbados trees planted on it. Other than that it is empty and we would hope to be able to lease this land at a peppercorn rent, a long-term lease for 99 years to allow us to be able to build a facility.

We have already started to receive assistance from the various interested and charitable entities in this country. Indeed we have done a counter proposal for the new foundation that has been established that is supporting ventures such as this across urban Barbados. The foundation, I believe is the Lyndengrove Foundation, and they have already pledged to support this project with some \$15 000 for materials in the first instance which will allow us to be able to get off the ground. We have also had the generous donation of architectural services and other construction related services in terms of the professional services, quantity surveying, engineering, so as to give us advice as to how best this building can be built. It is hoped that the members of the community will in fact provide the labour as well as also assist in some of the fund raising ventures that will have to be brought about. 10.45 a.m.

Now that is only stage one of the project, Mr. Chairman, because once that is completed, then comes the

very mammoth task of running the Day Care Centre. We have determined, jointly that we can establish a system which allows those persons who may be unemployed or who may be indigent, but who still have the need to conduct business of their own and therefore the need for someone to help take care of the child and allow them to be able to do so, but they do not have the money in their pocket and they may not be able to get assistance from welfare or wherever else. And what we have done, Sir, is to come up with a plan that will allow us to include those persons within the programme, if you are not working and you will wish to be able to send your children there for care then you can donate some of your time. The one area which we will be drawing on the Government upon to assist us will not in fact be for financial resources for salaries, but in fact would be for training for the persons who will be working at this day care facility.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that if we can provide that level of training from Government which is really minimal in terms of the whole outlay of the construction of the entity and the operation of the entity, when combined then with those persons who are in fact working, who therefore may not have the time to donate, but who can afford to pay the \$40 or \$50 dollars a week in order to have their children taken care of that we would have developed a home-grown solution within the Bush Hall area to be able to meet the needs initially of children, but hopefully within a very short period thereafter as well for senior citizens who need day care facilities during the day, who need someone to be able to provide for them during the day, separate and apart from the home help services that they receive in their household.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that this type of community driven project, where the community not only seeks to build but it seeks to operate the entity and they have their own committee of management, they direct their own affairs and essentially all they are calling on the Government for, is the long lease of the land at a peppercorn rent. The land is there doing nothing now and the training that is necessary to ensure that those persons who do in fact donate their time at the Day Care Centre are exposed to a level of training that is commensurate with what would be required of them in respect of taking care of children and senior citizens.

I sincerely hope that we can interest the Community Development Department, Mr. Chairman, in following this type of project and writing it up as we move along because I believe that if it is successful, it can in fact, serve as a model for other communities across Barbados and indeed the Caribbean. It will give us the opportunity also, once we start to document it, to see where perhaps we can improve on it when next we come to implement a programme like this in communities.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is no stronger basis for encouraging growth than a community setting its own values as to what it expects from the community providing for itself and facilitating the individual development of those who live within the community. Because very often where a family structure has broken down but there is a strong community, those children still have the opportunity to benefit from the value, from the guidance as they go through the process of maturation. Indeed, Sir, we have therefore to ensure that as far as possible we can ensure the underpinning of these communities is as strong as possible, but they are given opportunities to participate in ventures which will make the community feel good about itself.

The other idea, Sir, that we want to look at, and this may take a little longer and this will relate to the Hothersal Turning community, is the concept of something known as a time bank. A time bank, very simply is a concept where we can identify the skills, both in terms of professional skills or hobbies of a large number of people within a community, determine how much time they are prepared to give to a community a year, whether it is 50 hours or 100, 50 hours may be in counselling or reading to old people for example. Another 50 hours where a fellow may have some electrical skills and he may pledge it in that area. And you have a committee then to which people can say that look, I really need to access, particularly those who are indigent or who are pensioners or who are disabled in some form, I need to access this type of service, I need help with this and they can look and see who within the time bank is capable of supplying that type of service or that type of skill and link the two together. Those who are not indigent or who are not pensioners or who are not disabled should be required to put back in once you draw.

It really operates on the same basis that a normal bank would, in terms of deposits of money, interest accruing, but instead of money, you are dealing with a concept of time and you are dealing with the skills that are capable of being delivered by a person and those skills may be multifaceted. A person should be able to draw interest and develop interest once they have put in a certain amount of time in the community.

These are two projects, Sir, that I hope that within the next year I can have fully off the ground in my constituency. I believe that they are the types of things that do not require large sums of money from the Government. The most they may require is Government's facilitating an environment within which it can occur, but I believe, however, that from the perspective of expanding the range of possibilities for communities across Barbados, the Community Development Department should come and work along to be able to document these types of projects and see how best we can improve it.

Just because I have articulated it in this manner does not mean, Sir, that this is the best possible way for implementing it and we probably will learn a whole lot as we go through in trying to do it.

The same thing, Sir, that we would like to do then, would be more on a community enterprise basis and I am hoping, Sir, to complete writing up a project for the Rio Grande in Jackson which is an old abandoned building just there on Jackson Main Road. I believe that if we can tie the rehabilitation of that building just as is happening in Gall Hill with also a major gully that runs from Cane Wood Hill, it actually runs across by the highway and down behind Mahaica, Lewis Gap, Storey Gap, but at least the part between Cane Wood Hill and the highway, that it provides an opportunity for a community enterprise organisation to run some type of ecotourism project, using the skills of the youngsters in the area. If they can achieve the assistance of persons who can help them perhaps with the marketing of what they are trying to do, then it is capable of providing a living and providing opportunities for them. You can tie back the souvenir shop as well as other community-based entities to the Rio Grande which is less than a half mile away in terms of distance. Therefore persons can come to the Rio Grande first, book in for the tours, go off and come back and have lunch there.

The point is that it gives the tourists and Barbadians for that matter, a different experience while at the same time allowing opportunity for those persons within that part of the community who would not otherwise have an opportunity to make something. We want to start this as a community enterprise function.

So that there are three projects which I have outlined which are slightly different in their character. But I truly believe, Mr. Chairman, that these are the types of projects which each and every one of us within our constituency can implement and can ensure that those living within the constituencies have the opportunity to benefit without necessarily having to rely extensively on Government resources but, indeed, more on the abundance of creativity that lies within the constituencies which, perhaps with a little guidance and a little assistance... 10.55 a.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Honourable Member to wind up at this time.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I will come back because there is one other project that I would wish to talk about.

Can I wrap up? I will just speak very briefly because the Youth Social Intervention Project that I would wish to speak on is sponsored by the Government of Barbados

and the Organisation of American States and is being executed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Essentially, Sir, it would allow us to build dormitory-like facilities for about 50 persons and it is primarily geared towards persons who have had a major emotional or physical problem in their households, who are teenagers of 14, 15 or 16 and who have nowhere to go. There is nowhere they can be removed to give them the time to cool down in order to give them an opportunity to work through their problems and we believe that if we can provide this type of dormitory-like facility plus counselling that we have the opportunity to remove them from the heat of the problem. At the same time, Sir, we recognise that the anomalies that now exist in the Child Care Board where persons who are over 18 have to leave the Child Care Board's homes that there is also a need for them to have access to some type of studio-like facilities where they can get themselves together as they study or get into a job before they are in a position to acquire or rent their own homes.

This Youth Social Intervention Project, Mr. Chairman, therefore gives us the opportunity in a very limited way to meet these needs that are now not currently being met in this country. We believe, Sir, that it will augur well for the benefit of those young people who can therefore have an opportunity to provide for themselves and to do so in an environment that is not hostile and in an environment that allows them to find their feet first in the instance of those who have come to the age limit at the homes of the Child Care Board.

I sincerely hope that we can get a chance to speak about it. The dormitory-like facilities that we are looking to establish would in fact be at the Barbados Youth Service separate from the dormitory facilities that are now there for Youth Service recruits. This is a separate block and I hope that before the end of September that these facilities will be up to allow us to accommodate these persons. Clearly, public information will be made available, particularly for those children who are having trouble in their homes and for whom the situation is so hostile and so difficult that they really need to be relocated out of the households in order to solve their difficulties.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, at this point and if necessary I will come back.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be very long. I do not believe that I can add too much to what has already been said in this debate. I listened all yesterday to discussion in this House on the subject of community development and that discussion left me convinced that the concept of community development in Barbados is in a state of philosophical crisis.

I say that because whenever the term community development has been used it has been tainted with a certain amount of class snobbery, a certain amount of class bias. It has tended to limit itself to the people who live in the villages in Barbados and in the housing areas of Barbados and the picture has emerged of people living in these areas who, if they are young, are in search of community centres or playing fields, if they are old, they are in search of home help or in search of dentures or some other hand-out from the State. In a word, that these people are sitting around with a begging bowl of some kind begging alms of the State but that in some other parts of Barbados a more sophisticated and highly civilised set of people live who do not need community development.

Now my experience in Barbados does not allow me to accept that kind of orthodox. The facts are to the contrary. The reality is that it is in the villages of Barbados and in the housing areas of Barbados that the highest or the deepest and the most intense sense of community exists. These are the people who know all of their neighbours on a first name basis. These are the people who look out for one another. These are the people who rejoice with their neighbours when they rejoice and weep with their neighbours when they weep. These are the people who go to church with their neighbours and support their neighbours in a wide range of activities and on a wide range of locations.

These are the people for whom the concept of community is natural. It is a natural emanation of their historical evolution in Barbados and what I say of Barbados is equally true of other parts of the Caribbean.

So I take offence and find fault with any concept of community development that targets the villages of Barbados and the housing areas of Barbados and that seeks to define them as the debungled and debauched of the society, as some pitiable underclass waiting to beg alms from the State or to ask favour of Government.

The truth is that in the Heights and Terraces so called in Barbados the criminal element in this society has by one of the most curious twists of history forced the concept of community in these areas. The Neighbourhood Watch is a result of the surge in crime in Barbados that forced people who had lived in the development areas of Barbados to get to know who their neighbours are. That is where the community development of Barbados needs to take place, not in the villages.

The people in villages are already closely knit communities. They live highly personalised and highly interactive lives. We are not discussing community development if we are talking about villages and housing areas in Barbados. What we are talking about is

an inequitable distribution of the country's resources. We are saying that there has been skewed allocation of the resources in the society and that the areas that really need to benefit from the growth that has taken place in Barbados have not benefited.

We are not correct if we try to suggest that community exists elsewhere but in the villages and in the housing areas of this country no community exists. That is simply not true.

I passed by my mother yesterday morning, Mr. Chairman, and she was alight with joy that a neighbour who could see her house from about 125 or 130 metres away walked from her house to come to see her to tell her that she had left on the yard lights and forgot to turn them off early in the morning. That is the kind of this sense of community, people looking out for one another, that takes place in the villages and the housing areas of Barbados. Marley Vale is the same thing, Marchfield, but in this debate when we have been discussing community development we have meant Scarborough. We have not meant Atlantic Shores. We have meant Haggatt Hall. We have not meant Fort George Heights. We have meant Carrington Village. We have not meant Pine Gardens. That is the twist which this debate has taken and unhinged the concept of community development from its philosophical reality. 11.05a.m.

As I said, what we are discussing is not community development at all. We are discussing a perverse allocation of the resources of the State over time. The question that faces policymakers is how best to effect a fairer allocation of the resources of the State to bring basic infrastructure and more secure housing and a greater variety of jobs to these areas which have been deprived because of the bias which has taken place in the development of Barbados.

In this debate the issue of how to get resources to the areas that need them most has surfaced and that has given rise to a debate or a discussion on local government. Local Government is nothing new in Barbados. From the 17th century there was a vestry system here in Barbados, substantially run by the Anglican Church, on a very limited franchise and it survived down to the 1950s in spite of the fact that it operated, not significantly in the interest of the masses of this country. It was controlled by the parish priest and church wardens and others manned it.

It looked after things like roads and other little emergencies but the roads and other little emergencies to which it addressed itself never really touched the poorer sections of the parishes. I believe it was in 1948 one Sir John Maude was asked by the British Government to look

at the vestry system in Barbados and he condemned it out of hand. He marvelled at the fact that so iniquitous a system could exist in a society laying claims to being civilised. That was the context in which it was abolished in favour of Local Government. The Local Government Acts all tended to enlarge the franchise and to make provision for a fairer distribution of the state's resources. It was also an open sesame for abuse and as a result again the people who were supposed to benefit from an effective transfer of the State's resources to villages and so on did not benefit. The Democratic Labour Party therefore abolished it without apology because it was abused by those who manned it. The issue has surfaced ever since then how best to get the State's resources generated by the very people who are denied their fruits, how best to get these resources transferred to these people.

There is a Haitian proverb that has particular relevance to Barbados. That proverb says that the donkey does the work and the horse gets promoted. The people who make the sacrifices and who generate the wealth in this society are not necessarily the people who benefit from its distribution. That is a fact of life in Barbados. It is a natural consequence of the colonial and slave experience through which this society has passed. Of course, what I say of Barbados is also true of the Anglophone and Francophone and Hispanic Caribbean as well. That is why developmental theorists have said that these islands are still in a developmental trap because the people who sacrifice, who generate wealth by their labour are the ones who are denied the fruits of that labour when the time comes. The donkey does the work and the horse gets promoted.

When the foreign exchange is created the people who help to create it do not spend it, but when it is time to tighten your belt they have to tighten their belts. That is the reality of politics and life in Barbados.

The State, since the abolition of local government has created a number of parastatal institutions in the hope that the desired transfer of wealth and facilities and amenities could reach the villages and the housing areas and so on in Barbados. The truth is that most of these parastatal organisations have become too formalistic, have become high bound, have become bureaucratic and some have become patently hostile to the extent that the very people whom they are designed to serve are now afraid to deal with them. That is the reality and that is what the debate in this House for the last day and a half has been about.

Institutions created to serve and to deliver services to the masses of Barbados, which have become so bureaucratic and so hostile and so high-bound that the masses are none the better off. If there is an old lady in Barbados who can call a call-in programme and say as I heard an old lady say, that she applied to the

National Housing Corporation in 1979 for a house and she has not gotten it yet. That is the only statement I need to make to make the point which I have made.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I am obliged to you, Sir. A response to this crisis has to be found. First of all, you have to know that the crisis exists and to that conclusion we came. I believe in our Manifesto of 1994 at page 38, this is already a document of the House, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party pledged itself to more fully involve communities in their development by establishing community councils in each community with the community council becoming the base unit of mobilisation and change. The Manifesto goes on to say the councils which will liaise with the redirected community development division and with the assistance of the community development workers will be responsible for identifying community problems, needs and issues and help develop and implement solutions.

There are other aspects of the Manifesto pledge that at least seeks to make some kind of contact with the problem which has bedeviled this debate, how to get the resources generated by the labour of the workers of Barbados transferred to serve their pressing interest. You are not talking community development in Barbados in circumstances where people in certain parts of Barbados now have to fear the rainy season because something as basic as getting from your home to a bus-stop will present problems to them. I know the people of Gemswick in St. Philip South, the people of Cave Land in St. Philip South do not look forward to the rainy season at all, also the people in Crane because it is a question of getting from home to the bus stop, because of the state of the road - basic infrastructure. Then of course the problem for land tenure, the problem of housing, the problem of jobs and the problem of the use of leisure - recreation. All of these areas have to be creatively targeted and ministered to with a sense of urgency.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: At this point I would ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Just one final sentence. It does not help anybody in this debate or anybody hearing the debate if a discussion takes place in Barbados that gives the impression that in the poorer areas of Barbados there is no sense of community, you have to move in there and carry institutions to develop a sense of community. The sense of community is more evident there than in the areas where it has had to be imposed and maintained by a police presence and people are known to say that they met people living in their development for the first time at the first neighbourhood watch meeting. We are talking two different

things. That is where community development, community in the highest sense of the term, has to take place, and that is what has led to the social contradictions in Barbados that has led to a lot of the unrest which the country has experienced in recent times. I may have to come back but I am obliged to you for the time being.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that my intervention would be long but I am drawn into this debate because of reference to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South with respect to the plight of persons applying to the National Housing Corporation for units and the difficulty that such persons face in accessing these units. When you listen to Honourable Members on that Side in particular, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, one would tend to believe if you are visiting these Chambers for the first time, that we on this Side have been in government from time immemorial and that we have failed to address the problems of which they speak.

I am a little surprised, Mr. Chairman, that Honourable Members on that Side are somewhat reluctant to move from the debate on community development and yet they seek every opportunity to make passing reference to other aspects in other Ministries, as they did with the Ministry of Health, as if to suggest that something is wrong with this Government in the implementation of a programme which existed 10, 15, 20 years ago.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that if one would go back to the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, it is fairly obvious that they have not been able to come up with any satisfactory explanation as to why during the eight years that they were in government why they could not have implemented the same programmes that they are talking about all of a sudden. One saw the disunity that characterised the events of 6th June 1994, being played out right there when one of their Members, the same Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was actively trying to change the policy of his Party on the Floor of the House. A member of a political party. When you have a political party and you have small numbers as they do it is fairly obvious that each of those individuals in that party are senior members of the Party. When a senior member of a political party who is supposed to be a spokesman of finance could suddenly feel rejuvenated to try to change the policy of his party on the Floor of the House, it is fairly obvious that they have not learnt from the events of 6th September 1994.

I believe that they are somewhat embarrassed by the programmes of this Administration. You would have noticed that very early in our Administration they singled

out particular individuals on this Front Bench to target. They started with the Minister of Tourism. That did not succeed. They went to the Minister of Health. It did not succeed. They went to the Minister of International Transport and it did not succeed, but now all of a sudden they are targeting the Ministry of Labour and Community Development so they do not want to move from this Head.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. It is entirely improper for the Honourable Member to be debating Head 39 in the manner he is attempting to do. I draw it to Your Honour's attention that there are specific rules of about how we are to debate.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was not here but I am saying that what the Honourable Member is doing would be much more appropriate in a second reading speech. If he wishes to do that, that is his business but he cannot detain this committee with his own fulminations, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West could get up now to say that I am doing a second reading speech and when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was speaking about local government he never got up. He waited until the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West sat down and delivered a broadside against that particular Member. Somehow or another I do not know how they managed it because we do not see any of that in the Press. They did their own management when they left here. I am surprised the Honourable Member is telling me about a second reading speech.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. What is your point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My point of order is my drawing to your attention the impropriety of the manner the Honourable Member is using. It does not preclude my giving him a broadside when he sits down.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, even if the Honourable Member is correct, my contribution has followed the pattern of the delivery of Honourable Members on that Side. Only this morning you saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael East trying to introduce matters relating to the South Coast Sewerage Project.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I was not trying to introduce anything. I introduced measures. I was not trying. I introduced it in a proper manner, as you are aware, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: They have slanted this debate in such a manner. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West knows that they were delivering second reading speeches.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have accepted your preamble since we started. Please get to the subject Head.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, you would recall that I just got to the Minister for Community Development

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is what I am saying. I accepted your preamble so get to the subject Head.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St. John ought to be ashamed when he attempted to attack the Honourable Minister of Labour and Community Development last night. I am very glad for the way the Honourable Minister handled the matter. 11.25a.m.

Mr. Chairman, what has happened is that this Honourable Member is the Minister of Labour who is specifically charged with the execution of Government's commitment after September 6, 1994 to ensure that the event prior to 1994 would be a thing of the past as it related to the 8% pay cut. He successfully executed that aspect of our Manifesto, and the Honourable Member has not been forgiven for making sure that we introduce in this House provisions whereby never again the salaries of public workers would be cut, so he has been targeted in this debate.

On the one hand they can come in here and walk out on the pretense that there are only a few members on the back bench. On the other hand they could criticize us for pushing through Heads when they were not in their seats but yet, as part of the contradiction, they continue to debate the Minister's Head, one of the most successful Ministers on this front bench, and yet we cannot get on to housing.

Dealing specifically, Mr. Chairman, with this Head, and this is why I say the Honourable Member for St. John should be ashamed of himself. As Minister of Community Development, between 1991 to 1994, we have seen the cuts in the same type of statutory boards that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke about. You had a situation whereby the National Assistance Board's vote was cut from \$7.7 million to \$3.4 million. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has been instrumental

this year in ensuring that the National Assistance Board gradually creeps back up to the status it had when the Honourable Member for St. John was Minister of Community Development.

Mr. Chairman, as I think of how the Honourable Member for St. Michael South talked about the Honourable Member for St. John, you know he amalgamated the Ministry of Community Development & Culture with the Ministry of Housing because the Honourable Member for St. John was not doing a good job so he cannot come in here and tell us that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has not been performing as a Minister.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South when he was Prime Minister of this country amalgamated that Ministry because of the non-performance of the Honourable Member for St. John. All of this talk about the inefficiencies of that particular Ministry and the inadequacies with respect to getting certain things done in their constituency, is just a deflection from the shortcomings of the period between 1986 to 1994. You would have noticed, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Minister has been endeavouring to ensure that the programme of Government has been implemented.

I alluded earlier in a previous intervention about the question with respect to the Poverty Alleviation Fund. It must be said often and often when it comes to the Poverty Alleviation Fund, that part of this vote is also within the Ministry of Community Development and this Ministry still has the responsibility as the agency for ensuring that the programme is implemented.

In our Manifesto, Mr. Chairman, we spoke to the question of providing hostel type accommodation for fire victims, battered women and other disadvantaged persons. The Honourable Minister ensured that that part of the provision of our Manifesto was implemented. I am proud to say that at the moment as I speak in St. Thomas the old St. Thomas Primary School has been converted into the type of facility we spoke to in the Manifesto. Another such facility, Mr. Chairman, is at Lancaster, the old house which was being used by the Ministry of Agriculture right above the School Meals building. This has been converted and will be handed over very shortly to the Ministry to be handed over to one of the non-governmental organisations which will be administering this type of accommodation.

Very shortly, Mr. Chairman, I will be bringing - as a matter of fact, it is already on the Order Paper as a result of the intervention of the Honourable Minister - a provision whereby the Salvation Army building would be

vested in the Salvation Army so that at long last they will have a permanent home which they could call their own.

Mr. Chairman, when the Honourable Member speaks to the National Housing Corporation not being able to satisfy the number of tenants, this is an indictment on the last Administration. They would try to have you believe that as a Government we have been doing nothing about it. Mr. Chairman, we will have the opportunity, I hope, to deal with this issue at length if and when we come to deal with housing.

I would just like to say, Mr. Chairman, that it is fairly obvious that if during the eight years they were in Government they could only get 50 units built, and we have a situation whereby every year there are about 500 applicants, it is fairly obvious that it would be extremely difficult for us in this very short period, seeing that they did not have any programme for housing, to be able to deal with the problems of persons who continually from day to day go to the National Housing Corporation seeking accommodation in the rental unit. It is a serious problem but it is an indictment on them that we have not been able to deal with this whole issue of tenants.

One would hope, notwithstanding the criticisms by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South with respect to the statutory boards, that not only with the assistance of the...

Mr. F. J. STUART: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I did not criticise the statutory boards because I said that somebody applied to NHC in 1979 for a house and has not got it yet? He must not take it personally. We are dealing with the bureaucratic problems in the public sector. That is what we are dealing with.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member wind up please?

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I would probably have to come back to this. I would just like to remind this House that the Honourable Member and Honourable Members on that Side stated in no uncertain terms that the good work which is being done by the Urban Development Commission will be a thing of the past if and when they win the next election. Now, we all know that will never happen, but if you are going to tell me that a commission like the Urban Development Commission that is doing such good work that is complementing the work of the National Housing Corporation will be disbanded, and I hope that the officers of the Urban Development Commission who have been at the forefront of dealing with the problems of people in urban Barbados will be telling the people as they go around that they are helping that the Democratic Labour Party plans to disband the Urban Development Commission.

If you plan to disband a statutory corporation and you are telling me that you do not have anything against that statutory board, well I do not know what else you would have to say. 11.35 a.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I rise on a point of order, Sir.

I wish to draw to your attention that while you were presiding over this Committee yesterday evening, I spoke on a matter relating to the Head that we are discussing and I made reference to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. It has been drawn to my attention that in the *Weekend Nation* of Friday, March 20, 1998, on page 7, that there is a report "Sandiford, I am fond of Owen".

Sir, irrespective of whom I am fond of, I wish to make it abundantly clear that I did not say those words and any report such as this one that conveys to the people of Barbados that I made such a comment is a gross distortion of the proceedings of this House. I wish to make it abundantly clear that these were not my words and it may convey the wrong impression, because I never said those words.

I am merely drawing to this House, that this is a gross distortion and inaccuracy of the proceedings of this House and we have a right to be accurately reported.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is indeed correct when he says that those who reported the proceedings of this Honourable House bear a duty to report them accurately. I was in my seat at the point when the Honourable Member made his statement about being fond and what is reported is indeed false.

However, I think procedurally, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South might have been wrong when he rose on a point of order. I think he should have risen on a point of privilege. I believe those who are responsible for writing the article should be brought before the Committee of Privileges in this Honourable House.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: I think, Sir, that the Honourable Member would recognise that had the Member wanted to make it a matter for the Committee of Privileges, he would have in fact drawn it to the attention of the Speaker and he was merely therefore drawing it for the attention of the Chair that the inaccuracy had distorted the proceedings while His Honour was in the Chair. I am now ready to begin my speech, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I will not respond to the weak and feeble protestations of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew because it will merely eat into my time but we give them the assurance that not long from now, if the Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports acquits himself in a manner befitting a Minister, finally, that we may get to his Head. In the meantime, we still have some questions for the Minister and we will proceed to give those question and comments.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. That statement is a reflection negatively on the Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports, when he states that if the Minister acquits himself in a manner befitting of a Minister. Those comments should be withdrawn.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It would be no different if I had said that when the Honourable Member is addressing legal matters I do not believe that he acquits himself in the manner I think a lawyer should acquits himself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I am aware of the fact that you have got a good command of the English language. Would you just re-phrase that sentence.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hope that the Minister will be able to satisfy me that he has reached the high standard which I have come to expect from Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will accept that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now Sir, yesterday evening when I last spoke to this Committee, I was discussing the matter of subprogramme 427, item 314. In the course of that there were some criticisms made about what I was saying and why I was saying it. I want to make two points but before I go on to make those two points, I want to expand on what I was saying.

I made the point that \$15 million in the hands of the Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports as the rubric attached to 315, is vaguely described. It is dangerous in the hands of the Barbados Labour Party on the eve of an election. I am fortified in that view, Sir, after I made reference to a document which the Prime Minister had introduced earlier in these Estimates to wit a report of the Commission of Enquiry into the activities of the National Assistance Board for the period April 1984 to September 1986. A period not unlike this period in relation to the next election. This was a Commission of Enquiry set up and chaired by the Honourable Oliver Jackman and this was his report, Sir.

I recommend this as urgent reading for all journalists in this country who are interested in these matters and for Honourable Members of this House, for the the Minister

of Labour, Community Development and Sports in particular and for the Minister responsible for Housing, if he can find the time to read.

At paragraph 95, this is what this Committee said. I am quoting, Sir.

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

It is difficult to escape the feeling that the National Assistance Board had been deliberately "softened up" by way of a comprehensive erosion of most of its public service accountability so that by election time, it was a ready made 'pork barrel'¹ into which Members of the ruling Party felt that they could dip freely and with impunity".

I read the next paragraph, Sir, paragraph 96 because when I raised this question last night, I was assailed by Honourable Members. I felt that I was being mauled by a sheep on one occasion. I therefore felt that I should put in the record the basis for my very deep concern, hence paragraph 96.

I know that the Honourable Member who is sitting with Oliver Jackman on another Commission knows that that is a man of impeccable integrity as far as the Barbados Labour Party is concerned. The Honourable Oliver Jackman is a man of impeccable integrity so far as they are concerned. I am quoting, Sir. "Given the anarchy (you hear those words, Sir) which prevailed at the administrative level at the Board, the total lack of independence of board members and the general free for all atmosphere which reigned in particular at the Bank Hall offices where the big spending housing welfare programme was located, it is not surprising that the committee has heard repeated assertions to the effect that persons at the lower levels of the administration also operated their own personal pork barrels". The language is alliterative. But that is not the reason why I rose on this occasion, Sir. 11.45 a.m.

Having myself, Sir, set the record straight as to why I was expressly concerned about the nature of the rubric next to item 315 I now go on to the substantive points which I wish to bring briefly to the attention of the Minister. I would say that the Honourable Member for

St. Philip South in making his presentation this morning and in putting the record straight in relation to the concept of how services are to be delivered to the people of this country, and on this question of "Local Government" I would merely add to that that part of the problem is that our welfare system is based on a philosophy of altruistic 'do-goodery'¹ and we are duty bound to cause a reform of the root thinking of what constitutes welfare. That is what we need to do but that is a debate that must come.

What I want to talk about here now, Sir, and you will forgive my doing it in this way, Sir, but ever since my late wife died in 1990 I have tried not to have any public discussion on the question of the Child Care Board. When she died in 1990 I know that she was in the process, as you will recall, Sir, she was Chairman of the Child Care Board, she was in the process of pursuing two issues which were dear to her heart and which I feel I am duty bound, I owe it to her, to pursue those issues when the opportunity presents itself. The first one has to do with the plight of those children who, on reaching the age of 18 under the Child Care Board had nothing prepared for them by the Government and no programme. I know that when she died she was in the process of putting a programme together. I know indeed that the fundamentals of that programme had been prepared and she was in the process of raising funds for a place where these people could go. She knowingly allowed the 18 year olds to continue in the homes even though the Child Care Board Act specifically suggested that the age of majority was the point at which they should depart from the homes.

It seems to me that I heard the present Chairman of the Child Care Board saying not long ago that they had corrected the issue of the 18 year olds and the 18 year olds have been removed from the Child Care Board. I did not hear him saying what has happened to them and what will happen to those who reach 18 in the meantime. I did not hear the Minister indicate what provision is being made for them and I would like when the Minister gets up that he would give some clear indication as to what is Government's thinking, what provision Government is making for those persons because although they have reached the age of 18 there is the whole question of the move from institutionalisation to a point where they become young adults who are going to participate in the community on their own. There has to be some kind of half way house. If there is not some kind of halfway house we may in fact be taking those children and literally throwing them into the deep without sufficient underpinning and sufficient undergirding to ensure their welfare over the medium and long term.

I therefore would wish to hear what is the programme. I was surprised that the present Chairman did not announce what had happened or he may have announced it but it was not reported and I am fiercely interested in this and I think that the community should

be fiercely interested in it and I would like to hear the Minister on that.

The second issue which I know my wife was pursuing at the time of her death and in which I have a more than passing interest is the whole question of child abuse in Barbados. I know of my own knowledge that she was in the process of prosecuting 3 people in this country and that a whole series of pressure was being brought to bear from all kinds of sources to preclude her from pursuing with the diligence which she as an officer of the Child Care Board was pursuing the 3 persons. Decency and fairness dictate that I do not identify those persons because they too have a right but I know for a fact that there were at least 3 persons who were being vigorously pursued with the not so enthusiastic assistance of the forces that are supposed to do these things.

I think that I would be failing in my duty to the memory of my late wife if I did not say that I have not seen enough evidence that there is pursuit of this very heinous practice which has been in Barbados from time immemorial. Child abuse in Barbados is one of the best kept secrets in this country. Child abuse is something which we hear about elsewhere or you see on CNN but in this country where little boys are assaulted on an almost daily basis by grown people, where little girls are assaulted on a daily basis by grown people in this country, there is a deafening silence except for the odd squeak from time to time. I know that that woman and some of her cohorts on the Board and some of her colleagues in the Board were pursuing this with some diligence.

I would like the Minister to indicate whether this forms a substantive part of the priorities of the Child Care Board at the moment and if there are any instances which have been reported to the Board and which are being pursued and to what extent the police department has been inveighed against this practice which goes on in Barbados. 11.55 a.m.

I want to go further, some time ago when I made a speech in this House when we were talking about reform of the Minor Offences Act, I expressed a view about decriminalising prostitution and it was distorted into a presentation on more than one occasion that I had said we should legalise prostitution.

But I want to say categorically that...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, but they are entitled to it. They are the only ones who are legitimately entitled to do that, the newspapers have a duty to report accurately what they hear in here, but MADD can do that because that is

called licence. They have licence, just like some politicians during the Sitting season take out licence.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But the truth is that in this country there is child prostitution. As we get this attitude which is suggesting to people who come here who may be rich and famous that any number can play you will find that there will be an increase in the debauchery or the tendency to debauchery in the minds of a very few by some of our citizens. I believe it is the duty, I think the Minister should understand this to be part of his responsibility to have those agencies under his control pursue, perhaps a little more diligently, some of these ills.

When we talk about the ills of this society, all I can hear coming from the "do gooders" is that we have to find better ways to punish children. We have to find better ways to punish people. It is always punish, punish, punish, but nobody seems willing to go to the root of the problem to examine the cause. Invariably when there are young offenders, if you could just remove the veil and go just behind the cause, you are going to find that there are adult perpetrators who are at the root cause of the problems with your perpetrators.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful that you indulge me to finish that point because it is very important. I would like the Minister when he is responding to advert to this issue, not in its entirety but with the two points I raised. I do not expect the Minister to respond to child prostitution that is a comment. If we were handling a debate, which would bring that up, I would expect you to come armed. But it would be unfair to throw this at you from the side and expect that you could come and give details on what you know. You may probably know no more than as a citizen, as I know as a citizen. But I was making the point that this whole question of the abuse of children has to come on the front burner. Because, based on what I knew in 1989 and 1990 when I used to have to talk and I knew what was going on I know that the problem has not disappeared. Therefore the urgency to tackle the problem has not dissipated and I look forward to some relatively firm word, since we are discussing these issues under this Head.

I am grateful to Your Honour.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to go into a new field which has not been much canvassed in the Committee, so far, but before I do so I really must reply to a statement made by the Honourable Member about the Oliver Jackman Commission which inquired into the National Assistance Board. I certainly have the greatest respect for the Honourable Oliver Jackman, but his report has not been without severe criticism and severe criticism indeed came from the then Government on this Side of

the House which was the Democratic Labour Party Government in the person of the then Minister of Transport and Works the Honourable Donald G. Blackman who dismissed the report as not being worth the paper that it was written on. He had very decided views on social affairs' ministries and in fact, I would recommend to the Honourable Member that he reads the other side of it and listen- to the case which the Honourable Donald G. Blackman made out at the time, a very strong case at the time of the Democratic Labour Party Government for...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. First of all I assure him that I have read the entire report often. Secondly, I did not raise this matter for any other reason than to explain my concern and therefore it was not necessary to put the Other Side because it was not germane to what I was talking about.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: It was very germane because one of the points that the Honourable Donald G. Blackman made and let me state that he remains one of my closest personal friends, but wherever I may disagree with him, one of the points he has made, one of the reasons why statutory boards have continued to being, particularly in the delivery of social services, is because of the bureaucratic regime which, more or less, time needed those services. Now obviously, I heard from the Honourable Member for St. John that we need to probably look again at our concepts about the delivery of social services. But if there is one thing that is agreed upon is that those of us who are in the firing line and in the field, when we get there with the fire victim, when we get to the person who is decrepit and living alone in the house, they expect instant action.

Part of the problem of why the Ministry of Labour and social community service are being bypassed in the sense about which the Honourable Member spoke about, is because it is felt that the Statutory Board is more geared to delivering quick services.

Now there are abuses that will occur and there are abuses that have occurred whether you are under the old social welfare system or whether you are under an urban development council or whether you are under a NAB Board. But, I think that what we have to stress is that first whatever system we have, there must be strict accountability for the use of Government funds. None of us can argue about that.

Secondly, there has to be a greater swiftness in the delivery of social services. We cannot emphasize that too strongly particularly when we come to Estimates time and the bureaucracies are here to listen and to understand the sort of concerns that are affecting the manner in which we try to reorient and restructure the administrative regime to deal with these problems.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for whom I always have the greatest respect, I listened to him very carefully. I always say he does not speak as often as I would like to hear him in this House on these matters, but he worked at the National Assistance Board and he was saying that you have to deliver quickly. A person who is hungry, a person who finds that he is sharing his food with rats, a person who has lost his or her house and possessions, is not going to wait until you go through everything and write up a note and come and do a complete investigation. Some of that calls for an instant reply and that is one of the points, I think that was completely missed by the report, although I have the greatest respect for the Honourable Oliver Jackman. Perhaps at some stage, we will get in Barbados an overall ministry of social affairs, when people understand that the beneficiaries are most anxious to get their concerns promptly met.

I want to get on to the Head of occupational health and safety and to say that I am deeply concerned about some trends occurring in this area in Barbados. I only have the figures for 1996 and 1997 before me, but in 1996 we received 50 045 sickness claims at the National Insurance Department. By 1997 it was 57 768 claims for sickness alone. This does not include maternity. We paid out in 1996, \$14.9 million and in 1997, \$17.4 million. This trend of rapid growth in the number of sickness claims coming to the Board has continued. 12.05 p.m.

When we look at employment injury, it is another worrying area. In 1996 - 5 803 claims. We paid out \$6.8 million and in 1997 - 7 501 claims and we paid out \$8.6 million. I think I have the figures for 1995. In 1995, we had 4 290 and that trend is continuing and it is sending us a message that particularly at the workplace there are an increasing number of accidents and employment injuries and sickness conditions that are affecting the health of people in the first case but even more important and as important is the productivity of the working force.

We cannot assume, Sir. We have gone through the claims and we would say that a large proportion of those have been allowed. For instance, of the 50 000 in 1996, 48 000 were approved as genuine. This is sickness claims and of the employment injury of the 5 803 received, 5 433 were approved. So it is obvious that we need to upgrade our legislation dealing with occupational health at the workplace. I am aware of the steps which the Minister and his department have been taking in this area. I know that last year 756 accidents at the workplace were reported, involving 503 men and 253 women, 273 of these occurred in factories, with 483 occurring in non-factory buildings. But it did not mean that there were not injuries in offices as well.

If you look at the NIS Reports during the past years - the last one I have to hand is 1995, although I think we have already laid the 1996 - you would see a breakdown of the types of injuries that are occurring and the workers who are affected, from service workers, production workers, skilled craftsmen, transport and communication workers - I am reading from the Report on page 27 - administrative and managerial personnel, professional, technical and related workers.

The position is becoming very serious in occupational health and safety. This is just my view. I have not got the expertise to give all of the reasons.

We are very good in Barbados at buying the newest products, air-conditioning, for instance, in our buildings is now becoming a standard requirement for working conditions at the factory and at the office. What we are not good at is maintaining the systems once we have spent the money. We have had a problem at what is referred to as the old National Insurance Building where public sector workers have come out from time to time.

I know that Government is doing everything to upgrade the working conditions but much more can be done if we lay down in the legislation and also police the legislation to ensure that there is proper maintenance, particularly of the air conditioning in the office space. A lot of the respiratory problems that we are getting in society are occurring because we are not taking care as we should.

Likewise, in factories, we sometimes find that even where the employers have provided equipment, information and notices that training does not continue in the use of the equipment to prevent accidents and what is more from time to time you will find that the employers themselves are not properly policing the conditions. People are losing fingers and hands and that sort of thing. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome has now become something that is talked about very often. We have a problem with this at the National Insurance Board so I can talk about it. We know the problem but we need guidance and help and counselling in this field and that is why the National Insurance Board was happy... Happy in a sense that we regret that it has occurred but we have drawn the conditions to the attention of the relevant Ministries, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, and we have been cooperating fully with them.

In fact, we have provided in our own budget some resources for bringing the medical and other personnel together in a series of seminars and discussions in order to help with the establishment of preventative measures to avoid this sort of situation. It can and is reaching, in my view, crisis point in Barbados because of the number of productivity hours and days lost in these circumstances. I

believe that in our report we do make some mention of the type of hours that are lost because of people being ill.

Last year, and you have to compliment the Minister's Ministry that the factory inspectors participated with the social partners, that is the employers, the Barbados Workers' Union, in particular, the National Union of Public Workers, who are very concerned and the National Insurance Board in the Occupational Safety and Health Week and various other lectures.

I believe the Minister himself, and he is very conscious of this, opened that week. We had a look at what is being done with the new legislation, the Health and Safety at Work Act. It is with the Attorney General's Chambers and I would hope to see in this House in the coming months the Act come with the regulations in place and the recommendations for increased staff for dealing with the question of policing the Act.

There is no point having the new legislation, and new regulations if we do not have any enforcement and if we do not have training in this regard so that we are not maiming our workers, not disabling them in any way and creating further need for disability units and that we are training people on the job how to be conscious of their own health and safety.

I made some reference to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome but the increase in respiratory illnesses is also a tremendous cause of concern and, as I said, a lot of it is probably related to the fact that we are not cleaning our environment properly in dealing with air-conditioning. In the tropics we use too many carpets as well, even in this House. We forget the beautiful wood that we have, particularly in neighbouring Guyana and elsewhere that is long lasting, well sanded - nice word, Sir - and can last for a long life. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South, we know how long lasting he is in this respect, long living.

We are not using the indigenous woods and indigenous conditions and we are taking every new development and technology without marketing our own technology that has been proven and the result is that it is affecting the health and the skills of our workers.

I am also conscious of the fact that there is other pressing legislation outside the occupational and health problems that have occurred which relate to conditions at the workplace. We have spoken in here about the Unfair Dismissal Act. I am again conscious of the fact and I understand that that has left the Ministry and is now with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for final polishing. It has become urgent in the context in which we have had in the interest of the country as a whole to look at

the Severance Payments Act and make some change in the quantum that is paid by way of severance payment.

There are still cases not only of wrongful dismissal, you may not get to the stage of wrongful dismissal but where we have had unfair dismissal occurring in the workforce. While we do not want to build in a system of labour relations in which there is no mobility of labour, particularly in times where the economy is booming and running hot and probably over extended in some fields and you want some mobility of labour, we also do not want to have a situation, particularly now we are going into the offshore sector, in the way in which we are going into the offshore sector, and it will be a main employer for the future.

We have to build in place the legal framework to deal rapidly with those employers who do not understand that they have to show good industrial relations and do not unfairly dismiss people, Sir. So I am looking forward to the position where the Minister will bring before this Parliament soon the legislation. I had a word with the Attorney General earlier and he tells me that the legislation is in an advanced stage and I think we ought to say to the department and to the departmental heads and people working on the legislation because as I say unless they work on it the Minister cannot bring it. I wish to say that the House, certainly this Member of the House, consider this to be very urgent legislation.

In the last minute allowed to me because the Minister wants to reply, I want to make one other point and one must give Jack his jacket. There has been some criticism in this Honourable House of the Minister but he has been a performing Minister. If anything, he is a little bit too silent. He is not like a former Member of the Other Side for whom I have the greatest respect who always used to say that he is not going to wait until he is dead to blow his own trumpet. This Minister should blow his own trumpet more often because during last year he had the guts to make an order under the Minimum Wages Act in relation to shop assistants in order to increase their average minimum wage.

I hope that he will continue to show that. I know that already in his department he is working on minimum wage legislation in a wider context. I know that he is also working on legislation to deal with the problem of recognition of trade unions and this Party, having been the Party that founded the trade union movement - Orantley Adams, Hugh Springer, Frank Walcott, pioneers in this field for the Barbados Labour Party back in the 1940s - are dedicated in this respect to making sure that workers' rights are properly protected. I know that the Minister has already seen and in his department he already has draft legislation which is being discussed with the social partners. I want his department members, particularly the staff, to

understand from the House that we consider this to be an urgent matter and they must help the Minister by pushing that legislation as soon as possible so that it can get to the House, Sir, and I am sure that all of us in this House will give our contributions even before the legislation reaches the House so that we can have a reformed structure of industrial relations.

Sir, if I may sum up, because that Minister is going to sum up. I heard the criticism which started out in this debate but as the debate has gone on I think we must all recognise that this Ministry during 1997 has certainly performed and despite the Minister may be a quiet and silent person and very respectful he has been a good Minister of Community Development and of Labour. He has a sound sense of where the country is going and I listened to his work in his own constituency and I think his defence in here convinced me that he has the fire in his guts. What he must do is fire away more often at the criticisms that are unfounded which have been levelled against him in this House.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this debate under this Head has really been very interesting and wide ranging and I think a large number of views on a variety of subjects have been debated but I would wish, Mr. Chairman, to make some final remarks under this Head before the Minister winds up after lunch.

I want to frame my comments in the context of community development generally. I would wish, therefore, to begin by thanking the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for 2 community facilities that will be constructed in St James South, in Haynesville, over the course of the coming financial year. One is virtually the re-development of the Haynesville Children's Home which is in poor repair at this time and the second is the construction of a community centre also to be sited at Haynesville in St James.

I am strongly of the view and I think I have heard other Members express this opinion on previous occasions though not today that the establishment of community centres in those communities which are heavily populated, which have no recreational facilities, where large numbers of people are unemployed and where there is very little opportunity for interfacing with one another and where, in fact, the availability of such facilities is critical because houses are so small and so many people tend to live in the same house that when you want space the only way you can get it is outside your home.

Hence, in those kinds of communities, particularly housing areas, one sees large numbers of people congregating on the block and therefore attempts at

putting community based facilities in housing areas are to be commended.

I am therefore very grateful for the opportunity of having the new community centre placed at Haynesville where the community of Haynesville and the sports and social organisations of that community can be used for community development.

Haynesville is a very large housing area, one of the largest communities in Barbados and we are carrying on a number of training programmes at the moment but part of the difficulty is that we do not have space to accommodate the numbers that want to participate in these training opportunities. These training programmes really equip the members of the community with skills that make them more marketable on the job market. Therefore we have had to cut back on the number of skills training programmes being offered because of lack of space to carry them out 12.25 p.m.

It is this community facility therefore, which as I understand it will be located close to the Melbourne Cricket Ground and right in the heart of the community, that will form a place where old ladies in the community can meet and gather and do craft and activities of that sort. It will form a place where young men can be taken off the block and can participate in sports or other activities, whether it is dominoes, whether it is simply to sit down and talk without being exposed to the elements. It will be an important place for skills training and other programmes to take place. I am deeply grateful for the establishment of that facility and I hope that when the new financial year starts that the Minister will ensure that construction starts with the break of the new financial year.

The redevelopment of the Haynesville Children's Home is also of great importance. It is not widely known that Haynesville does have a children's home, that there are several members or residents of the home who have physical and mental disabilities, that there are children there who have been abandoned by their parents. When we have to take care of people in these community-type facilities, it is important to ensure that the physical conditions in which they exist are not inferior.

The Haynesville Children's Home has gone into disrepair over time. It has a large number of residents and it really needs to be redeveloped. So I commend the Honourable Member for including in these Estimates the sum of money necessary to do the redevelopment.

I want Mr. Chairman, to focus on a number of initiatives which we have developed for the community of St. James South. I have spoken already to the fact that we

have started a number of skill training programmes. It has also been my experience, and I think the experience of the Honourable Members in this Chamber that there is a large number of young people out there some of whom have 'O' Levels who do not know how to present themselves in a job interview. We have had to establish a number of training classes so that these persons, even though they have the academic skills know how to deal with the job interview process, know how to present themselves to individuals and know how to sell the skills that they in fact do have. Very often people have skills which are marketable but when you ask them what can you do or what skills they have, they so much take it for granted that they do not recognise that they have a skill which they can sell and use to improve their quality of life. Therefore it is important to show them that they have a skill which makes them marketable.

Like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, we have identified a site which we are hoping to use to develop as a community-based centre where during the day we will do day care for people who have to go out to work. We will do day care for elderly persons who are mobile and not senile, and can in fact do craft, and where we will operate on some nights. Very often there are parents that have to work shift who cannot find people to keep their children at night even though they can carry them to government or private sector facilities during the day. That is often true of persons who have the responsibility of caring for old people where they might want to go out at night but because of the responsibility of caring for the elderly people in their home they are unable to leave and go out or unable to leave their disabled child at home. Very often a neighbour will help you with a child who is not physically or mentally challenged but once you have a child who is physically or mentally challenged, members of the community will not provide the same degree of assistance. We hope therefore to run, in addition to the day care facility, a night care facility catering to these specialist skills, not open every night but certainly on the one-off situation where people are working shift or where people are going out or want to have some kind of social activity, and needs somebody to look after the children or the child for that night.

We have got as well, or we are about to launch it formally, a membership programme for young people in our constituency. Very often youthful members of the community have no guidance. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke in terms of giving them a period to cool off, but sometimes, what they need is a person to guide them in their lives to stand in *loco parentis* and give them the kind of skills their parents should be giving to them. Therefore, if they can use that opportunity to develop a greater sense of self, to see that their present background, their present conditions do not have to be

their life-confining parameters, that they can move as one poet puts it and see that they are better than they claim and rise above the station or the stage where they are at, then they can make something of themselves.

It requires no more than time. It requires no more than opportunity it requires no more sometimes than a perception of themselves that they are worthwhile and that their lives can change for the better. So we have established a mentorship programme to identify some of the young people in the community whom we perceive to be at threat, and whom we perceive to need guidance and left them with an adult or senior person who can provide for them many of the opportunities that may not be found in their homes or in their communities.

While Members during the course of this debate, Sir, have spoken about community-based activities and the development of a sense of community, I think that one of the things that we need to do is to get back to the sense of communities that existed before we developed almost exclusively the mode of the nuclear family.

Throughout Barbados we lived and grew up in communities where people felt that they were their brother's keeper, where people felt that they had a duty to clean around where they lived, where people felt that they had a duty to look out for their neighbour's children or their friend's children. Today, that does not exist anymore. Very often, people want to have nothing to do with their neighbours or their friend's children.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: On a point of order, Sir. I cannot sit here and have the Honourable Member saying that does not exist anymore. In my constituency, in my neighbourhood it exists. I know what the Honourable Member wishes to say and I recognise there are certain limitations of language, but she must not make these wild statements, Sir, about my constituency.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to inform the Honourable Member that she has two minutes.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you. I make no statement about the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, wild, tame, or otherwise. I leave him and acknowledge him as the expert on St. Michael West. I stay far from it in St James South where I know, belong and am welcome. I was making the point that we need to get back to a sense of community where we are our brother's keeper, where you do not hear parents saying when you ask them who is your child's best friend and they tell you things like "he name hog he come from somewhere in Christ Church," but they do not know

who his parents are, they do not know his real name, they do not know anything about him.

We avoid disciplining the younger members of our community. We do not feel when we see children on the street that we can embrace them or take them in or give them guidance. In fact, no matter how much money we invest in community development, unless we move towards creating a sense of community where we see ourselves as being not only responsible for ourselves as individuals, and our households but for members of the wider community and those who live around us, and define the word in its broadest sense then in fact, a lot of the social dislocation which we are seeing evident today, is going to continue and escalate.

I believe, Mr. Chairman that my time will have expired and I would thank you for your indulgence. 12.35 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank all Honourable Members on this Side and on that Side who have contributed to the debate. I think that it was an extremely fruitful debate and certainly for me, a learning experience. I never really anticipated that there would have remained on this particular Head for such a long time. I must admit that even though occasionally there was the odd criticism, I think that by and large the other Side did compliment the performance of the Ministry.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. At no time did Members on this Side compliment him. In cricketing terms, there is usually a bowler who has rested for a long time and we on this Side recognise that the bowler is fresh and now has to come and do some work. He has not worked yet, so there is nothing to compliment him about. He cannot say that.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I want to move, Mr. Chairman that Head 39 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. G. W. PAYNE seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.00 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This House is resumed.

When the House suspended it was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD NO. 42 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS,
TRANSPORT AND HOUSING - \$156,832,023.00

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, this Head 42 includes components for Housing, Public Works and Transport. I hope to begin with that aspect of the Head that relates to Public Works. This was because of the fact that during this term of Parliament, the question of housing has been debated in Parliament for some time as we do the daily acquisitions from time to time.

There has been a number of acquisitions that have been done in this House for various reasons and on those occasions I believe that Members have had the opportunity to note the purpose of those acquisitions and to be informed accordingly.

I must, however, set the record straight when it can be stated that we do not have a policy in housing for which we can be proud when week after week we have been making attempts. It would appear as though we have been making attempts but we probably have not succeeded in convincing some Members of Parliament that we do have a policy. In order to accept that fact that we have been doing all that we could have done, one would have to look at what we found when we came into Government.

I sympathize with Honourable Members on that Side, certainly the Honourable Member for St. Michael South for

the position he was in which lead him to the measures of structural adjustment in 1991 which prevented the Government from doing a lot of things not only in housing but in other areas. Maybe that accounted for the fact that during that period, we did not find a housing programme. You might have an agreement to do something but it does not necessarily mean that that has been part of your programme. When you are looking at what we found in 1994, there was no programme in housing.

Mr. Chairman, we had to start from scratch. I am sorry that I have to address this matter but I must address it within the context of someone saying that we do not have a record that we could be proud of. I believe that this Administration, certainly the Ministry of Housing has a policy that it can be proud of.

Mr. Chairman, we just did not want to go willy-nilly or on an ad hoc basis and acquire just a spot of land as has been insinuated, just to put a house here and a house there or to do like what I understand has been done in the past whereby Members of Parliament are known to go on Government land and mark out a spot and tell one of their constituents that you could put a house here or a house there. That is not what we wanted to do.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry had to make sure that we have a programme to work with, not just for a year or two, not just for this term, not just for this Administration, but one that would last for a considerable length of time because we appreciated the fact that the question of housing was a problem.

In dealing with this matter, Mr. Chairman, the officers within the Ministry put their heads together and after a number of consultations with various players in the housing sector, I am not speaking just of the professional and the construction people, the bankers were also involved because those were the people who normally provided the finance. We had a number of meetings with these individuals putting out a White Paper on Housing, Mr. Chairman.

I am very proud of this paper. I am very proud not just for the work that was put in it by the officers with the Division of Housing but the input from people in both the private and public sector and the direction which I gave.

Mr. Chairman, this is a substantive document. It is a policy document and when you read this document, it is not just a document that is 49 pages and contains nothing. This dates the history of housing in Barbados, certain

characteristics of the housing stock, matters pertaining to housing costs, housing finance, the problems encountered in both public and private housing, all the housing issues involving the problems faced by the type of problems that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke to this morning which I understand and which, to a certain extent, I agree with. It tells of problems relating to housing standards, problems relating to insurance. And, Mr. Chairman, we did not forget persons who were physically challenged, the homeless, standards relating to those. 2.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the biggest problem centred around persons living in urban areas. We felt, after consultation with all of these individuals, that it was absolutely necessary, taking into consideration our commitment as set out in our Manifesto, to deal with the problem of urban housing to treat that separately and we also developed a programme for the people in the urban areas, an urban renewal programme which culminated in the setting up of an urban development commission.

I know what the Honourable Members on that Side think when they said that they would disband the Urban Development Commission if and when they came into office. I have no problems with that and I can understand why they are saying it. I know they would not do it. I know that those Members on that Side who have been thinking of the establishment of local government would see it also as some step towards local government or as some sort of alternative or rather an institution like the Urban Development Commission to deal with the problems which normally the central government would not be able to deal with. But that is not the point, Mr. Chairman, the fact remains that we in the Ministry did our best. In other words as a cricketer, Mr. Chairman, we put our best foot forward and we did our best.

I cannot think, Mr. Chairman, as Minister responsible for Housing, seeing the officers working day in and day out, visiting various housing developments and programmes as far as Turkey and Kenya, Latin America, Cuba, Mexico, getting certain inputs from the international lending agencies like the IDE because we appreciated the fact that if we came up with a programme that could not be financed out of the Consolidated Fund obviously we would have to go to the international agencies and, as you know, sometimes their requirements are very tight as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South could tell you. Every single thing that we thought was necessary was incorporated into this document.

When we finished, Mr. Chairman, we did not just put out a document with respect to what we found, certain recommendations were also made, and there were certain

implementation strategies which were set out in that document.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that sometimes when we speak the first thing that comes to our mouth we bring out without actually thinking of what we have to say and a lot of us, we speak without actually reading a lot of the material that is at our disposal. That is why it is better sometimes for some of us not to say anything when we are not sure what we are going to speak about because when we make certain comments obviously they reflect on other individuals and you cannot make a comment about a Government not knowing what it is talking about, about housing and is not serious about housing, when you take into consideration the energies that have been placed in Housing since September 6, 1994.

If we had come, Mr. Chairman, and we had found a plan in place, Mr. Chairman, well then it would be fair to make those comments. But those comments were harsh and those comments are not true and those comments, Mr. Chairman can be considered mischievous. I do not believe they are mischievous but they could be taken out of context and they could be considered mischievous and that is why we have to deal with them.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to state some of the recommendations which were mentioned in this White Paper and to look at what we have done and then look at the seriousness of these comments and this House would have to be the judge as to whether or not it could safely be said that we do not have a record that we can be proud of. As I said, one must understand that there was no programme in place for housing.

Chapter 6. This document is already a document of the House,

"Access to Land. Access to land is a strategic requirement for the provision of adequate shelter for all. It opens up avenues for self-help and allows households to break the vicious cycle of poverty. The inability to access land is invariably an underlying cause for squatting and the occupation of land which should otherwise not be used for housing. In this respect the occupation of land in the Zone 1 protection areas is a case in point.

In ensuring access to land the following strategies will be pursued:

- (i) increasing the supply of land for housing within the context of the total supply of land on the

island and its competing needs. In order to ensure this Government will:

- (a) review its current terrier of properties across the island and allocate suitable sites from among this group for residential purposes.¹¹

This is exactly what we have done. We have looked at the various sites of properties which we feel are suitable for housing. We have targeted, Mr. Chairman, lands on the borders of existing villages and within our own stock those areas of land like the areas of land which have already been acquired by Government that can be utilised for housing, like the areas in the Wanstead/Cave Hill area that have not been developed. We have already targeted those areas and as I speak a number of those areas are at a stage where we can actually complete the purchase to prospective purchasers. That is one aspect of it, embark on a programme of acquiring vacant lots across the island in order to establish a land bank.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is unfair to state that all we have been doing is coming to this House and acquiring just small tracks of land. This, Mr. Chairman, is far from the truth. We have acquired a lot of large tracks of land in order that we would be able to satisfy this recommendation with respect to the land bank. 2.20 p.m.

Dr. R. C HAYNES: On a point of order. In this House it is understood under parliamentary procedures that every Member is responsible for the veracity of his own statements. The Minister has indicated that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph told a terrible lie to this Chamber and I presume that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph would want to withdraw the statement now from what the Minister has said. He said it was completely untrue. Just for the record of the House, Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has told this House a lie, then he should withdraw it. If he has not, then he should get up and say he was telling the truth.

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

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, we have acquired 382 acres of land for housing purposes all over the island and it has been said that the amount of land that have been acquired just total about 32 000 square feet. Three hundred and eight-two acres of land that we have acquired in order to supplement our land bank. This is a recommendation in the White Paper on Housing. I do not know what else we could have done. It is hoped, Mr. Chairman, that with these acquisitions, we would be able

to have about 3 000 house spots available within the next five years for persons in particular, those low income individuals who would not be able to purchase land at the normal open market price of \$7 and \$10 per square foot.

This land will be made available to persons who have also been affected by the ravages of nature, persons like those individuals in the White Hill area whose lands have been affected by land slippage, persons who have been affected by hurricanes, persons who have been affected by flooding and persons who have been affected in those types of ways. Mr. Chairman, we also in this Manifesto stated, with respect to the recommendations that we would consider fiscal and other measures to promote the reuse of vacant residential land where the urban area for residential is full.

Parts of our acquisitions include tracks of land within existing villages. We have been endeavouring to make sure that we satisfy the recommendations in this document. It is hoped, Mr. Chairman that if we pursue the recommendations in this document, we will be able to pursue an active sites and services programme. It is my hope and the hope of this Administration, as I have said already, that every single Barbadian in this country will be able to purchase or rent a house spot.

Also, Mr. Chairman, it is our intention with this policy, to make sure that after the land has been made available that a person will be able, as well, to obtain a mortgage in the same way that you could walk into a furniture store and obtain a fridge or a television on credit, that you would be able to access a 100 percent mortgage as has been promoted by this Administration.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the claim that at least we should attempt to make about 300 houses available per year, we are already on track at the moment. During the next financial year, we should be in a position to have completed, 43 units at Pondsides, 20 units at Flat Rock, 28 at Deane Town Terrace, 26 at Hoytes Village, 50 at Water Hall, 14 at Bank Hall, 50 at Apes Hill together with the other units that we hope to complete in areas like Lower Burney and the work which is being done by the Urban Development Commission within the St. Michael area. So at the moment, we are on track for the 300 houses.

Mr. Chairman, it must not be assumed that when you speak to a policy of a land bank, putting down a certain number of houses in one year that this can be done without following certain set guidelines within our legislation. It is not easy to find a land surveyor in order to have a survey done in a particular area when a particular site has been

targeted for a subdivision. It is not that easy. There is a serious shortage of land surveyors in Barbados.

Now after you have actually identified the particular area and the survey has been completed, the matter still must go through the whole process of Town Planning. It can easily be said that it is a Government Department and the matter would be completed fairly speedily. But it does not always work that way. There are also problems which we are facing in recent times with respect to the availability of water. Even though an area might not be in the Zone 1 area, it is still necessary to have the input from the Barbados Water Authority, the problems related to drainage and these are matters that take time, as I have already indicated in this House. Also the matter related to road profiles, even after all of this work has been done, it must still be sorted out and then there is the question of preparing the specifications to go out to tender.

One must conceive that in the private sector, it is a lot more convenient to speedily access a development, simply because the tender process is one that does not inhibit the developer in the private sector. But we have to go out to tender. We have to go out to tender. Going out to tender at times could take as much as three months before everything is completed.

We, Mr. Chairman, within the Ministry have been working diligently to ensure that all lands which are being acquired will be developed as speedily as possible and it is hoped, Mr. Chairman, that we would be able to reach the targets as set out in our programme for the next ten years.

Mr. Chairman, it is hoped that we will be able, after we have completed the development of all of these areas that have been targeted, to obtain the necessary financing to ensure that our policy becomes a reality. With respect to the problems of financing, we have made a number of interventions in order to ensure that persons who previously had difficulty in getting the necessary finance for their homes are able to do so. 2.30 p.m.

The General Workers' Housing Loan Fund, Mr. Chairman. This Fund when we came into Government on September 6, 1994 stood at \$6 million and as a result of the relaxation of the guidelines under the General Workers' Housing Loan Fund we have now been able to ensure that a number of persons who previously were unable to access that fund are now able to do so.

Mr. Chairman, these matters pertaining to housing are matters which we have dealt with before and I thought I

would have set the record straight on the accusation with respect to Government not having a very clear perspective.

I want to go to the question of the programme with respect to the road reconstruction, maintenance and improvement. I would like to apologise to all Barbadians for the dusty conditions which have been created as a result of the Government's road improvement programme during the last 4 years.

During the last Administration they were unable to deal with a number of programmes which involved the international lending agencies. As a result, Mr. Chairman, of the renewed programme within the Division of Public Works we have been able to get the World Bank programme going. In the next administrative year it is hoped, and I start with Highway 6, Six Roads to Searles, that we will be able to complete that particular project. A contract was awarded to Rayside Asphalt in the sum of \$9 million for this particular project.

The project itself involves the construction of the entire road, the relocation of utility services, construction of 2-metre sidewalks, the construction of 3 roundabouts at Six Roads, St. Patricks and Searles. In order to carry out this project 23 whole properties must be relocated and it is hoped that some of those relocations will be done at Leadvale. We are hoping that we will be able to construct about 12 of these houses in order to do the relocations.

Mr. Chairman, it is all right to say that this is a programme which we came and found. We did not come and find this programme. There was an agreement which the last Administration actually did not carry through. Included in this World Bank project is also an overlay package D.

We have already during this last quarter completed the paving of the road under this programme from Roebuck Street to Magazine Lane, Fairfield to Tweedside Road and also on the Spring Garden Highway. We intend to continue during the next year on Hoytes Village to Holders Hill to Redmans Village. Work on this is almost 90% completed. We are also including a roundabout at the Prior Park Junction in order to avoid the many incidents of travelling accidents that have occurred in that stretch.

We have just started the road from Mile and a Quarter to Benn Hill which goes to the Duncan O'Neale Road. This is about 5% completed and it is hoped that we will be able to complete this during this administrative year.

That long stretch of road from Holetown back to Highway 2A, Trents Road to Holetown and to Greenwich we are hoping that we will be able to begin that at the beginning of April and it is also hoped that we will be able to start the Walkers to St. George Secondary, Mapp Hill Road later in June together with the road from Highway N to the Airport and to the Crane.

Mr. Chairman, due to the problems of structural adjustment we could not start the Bridgetown Bypass Road but it is hoped that in the next year we will be able to deal with the Bridgetown Road Project. I will come back a little later on that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one listens to the Honourable Minister of Housing one gets the impression that there is not a demand anymore for housing in this country. He is a very fortunate Minister, Sir. He has been able to acquire 382 acres of land giving him access to 16 639 920 square feet of land. If you divide that by 5000 square feet per lot it allows him to get 3 328 house spots.

The Honourable Member for St. George North gets up in this Parliament every day that we are discussing housing and he brags about 24 houses in 4 years or 6 houses per year. They have over 3 328 house lots to enable them to build houses.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member is grossly misleading this Chamber. I have never bragged about 24 houses being built by this Government.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Do you know what is disgraceful, Mr. Chairman? When you look at the private sector record of the number of houses built for rich people in this country and you look at the record of Government, compared with that, you cannot believe that this is supposed to be a country where poverty is supposed to be the number one issue. The poor people are not getting houses but the rich people are getting concessions to build houses and we are supposed to be attacking poverty in this country.

I am saying and I will repeat it and if the Honourable Member for St. Joseph agreed with me yesterday by saying that there is no housing policy he has total support on this Side. It is a fact because we are not interested in how much land that is available to the Ministry.

Dr. the Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM: On a point of order. I just want to make it clear that I never said there was no housing policy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry. It seems to me that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was attacked wrongfully and I apologise for being misled by the Member.

I am saying, Sir, that when you look and see the number of houses being built by rich people and you look and see the number of houses being built for the poor people in this country you cannot find them. I want to know if poverty alleviation is for the rich or the poor. It is clear to me that the amount of money budgeted seems to be going to the rich and not to the poor because I cannot see anything that is being done for the poor people.

Any Government that is prepared to brag about having a programme for the poor and you cannot see the results, one has to ask the question what is going on in this country. Mr. Chairman, it reminds me of a cook who took a job knowing that there were poor people and decided that she is going to implement a 5-year programme before she feeds people. That is exactly what the Ministry of Housing is doing. They are going to plan everything they want to do for poor people in a 5-year programme and only deliver at the end. By that time, Sir, the roads they would have built in the various areas would need repairs before one person is able to access a house. That means that we are spending money twice to achieve one product. It is not fair to poor people. We need not play games with poor people because, I have said in this Assembly, Sir, in the time of crisis it was the poor people who remained in Barbados. They took their pennies and invested in the economy, whether buying food or whatever you want to call it. They did not take their money out and go to St. Lucia to build businesses, neither did they go to Miami.

It is clear that in this country the people who can take their money out and go and build houses elsewhere can now dictate to Government where to put a road, how to put the road and when they want a particular tenantry. We have a disgraceful situation in this country where the Government is providing roads for poor people and after they have completed the roads they have private companies coming and telling the poor people that they want that land. This is a serious matter and a matter I will fight to make sure even if I have to fight for the people in Forty Acres to remain where they are, I will fight for them. The owner is not protected by the law. I am saying that one man who walks around with a briefcase can write as many letters as he wants about me, I do not care. I will represent the interest of the poor people whenever I see it is threatened. I am saying that somebody from the Government must tell this gentleman that because he sits on boards belonging to Government that he cannot treat poor people the way he wants to treat poor people.

The people of Forty Acres are entitled to remain there because the Government put in the necessary infrastructure. I am saying that if the people in Forty Acres believe that they have a right, they do, because under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act they have a right to remain where they are. No one can challenge it.

This gentleman seems to be capable whenever he sees a piece of land to come and get it and nobody seems to be prepared to challenge him. As a Parliament, we have to challenge this gentleman to let him know that poor people deserve to have that land where they have worked on that plantation to better the life of the same gentleman and many other people.

Sir, if we allow that to happen it means that whenever the Government cuts a road in any tenantry that the plantation owners can come and take that land from poor people. I am saying it should not be so because a law was passed to protect that.

We have a situation in this country where the National Housing Corporation has been spending large sums of money yearly and running down people for rent and not providing the services to the poor people that they should. I want to get a commitment from the Minister that the National Housing Corporation will repair the people's houses the same way they expect the people to pay their rents.

I have said already in this House that I do not understand how the National Housing Corporation can have artisans and sometimes they do not have work for them to do because they do not have the money to buy materials and there are old people out there with money and materials and they cannot find a policy where they could send those people to go and repair old people's houses even if it is in the City. But first, they must start in St. Lucy repairing those houses.

It is no way that the taxpayers in this country should be paying people and there are old people who have houses to be repaired while the Corporation does not have anything to do and they will allow people with nothing to do to remain on the job and pay them.

If we need to change the Act of the National Housing Corporation we are going to have to because the poor people and the old people in this country have worked hard for this country and they should be entitled to the services. National Housing must understand that they are there to provide a service for the country and I am saying there is

an old lady in Carrington Village or Brittons Hill or somewhere like that and in St. Lucy whose house should be repaired by calling National Housing, providing they do not have anything else to do. I cannot understand what is wrong with Government understanding a policy like that.

You are paying people and they cannot tell you that they do not want to do it. If the trades union decide they cannot do it I will back you with it because when you are dealing with the poor no trade union should be able to convince workers that they should not look after their brothers and sisters.

The same way we allow the Government services to provide services for large corporations the same way those services should be provided for poor people in this country.

I am a strong believer that land is a major cost for poor people and if poor people are allowed to get land at a reasonable cost with the necessary infrastructure the valuation can be done to make sure that the true value is shown and they can use that valuation to borrow money to build a home but if you are going to inflate the cost and make it difficult for the poor man to get that piece of land it is also going to be difficult for the poor man to get a home or a house.

The first cost is the piece of land and you must make that available at a reasonable price. I am also saying that once it is made to him at a reasonable price he has collateral that he can use and in a family or community grouping they can then turn around and build a proper house for that person.

We need as a government to* go back to the community and look at the values that used to be important and try to implement them again. We must understand that housing can be that factor that brings the community back together. It is not the Neighbourhood Watch and all that. We need to see people coming together on Sundays and on weekends and getting in the road as we used to do and turning some concrete and building houses for their friends and then when one is completed you go and do it for your neighbour and it continues like that. When that is done, what you are actually doing is bringing the community back together and you are also delivering housing to the poor people.

I am calling on the Minister to make sure that he utilises the 16 639 920 square feet of land that has been available to him since 1994. I am not talking about the other land that was available before because

Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I do not feel proud to know that there are over 10 000 people prior to 1994 who were knocking at National Housing Corporation's doors and only 24 of those people were able to get units in the last 4 years. It is disgraceful.

I am not talking about the swapping. I am talking about 24 new units have been built and we had over 10 000 before 1994.

Do you realise that if we do not watch ourselves that housing can become a crisis and lead to crime? It is a serious thing and we as a government must do something to make sure that those people are given the goods. The same way a man can provide a package and come to Barbados and he can get all the concessions he wants the poor man must be able to get some concessions to make sure that housing is cheap to him. That is why we need to make sure that VAT is taken off building materials for the poor.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, whenever the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks, he speaks as though we were the Government 10 years ago. He does not understand that only 3 years 6 months we became the Government of this country. 2.50 p.m.

Previous to this, Mr. Chairman, in eight years the DLP Administration built fifty units at Church Village, St. Philip. So far Mr. Chairman, in three years six months we have...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He did not tell the House, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. He said that all the DLP did was to build 50 units. He did not tell the House that at Husbands in St. James that the DLP built over 300 houses.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, we cannot be talking about sheep and goat in the same breath. You are talking about terrace units, Whenever your side gets up and talk, they talk about terrace units. So far 25 terrace units were opened at Maynards. In construction, Mr. Chairman, we have 43 being built at Pondside, 20 being built at Flat Rock that have started already. The Minister has outlined a number of other ventures that will see terrace units

constructed. By the end of our mandate whenever it comes in 1990 whatever, we would have completed more than twice the amount of terrace units that your Party built in the 8 years in power.

If you want to compare the number of houses that were started in a period of time then you have to look at other statistics. You have to look either at the Chief Electrical Inspector Records or you can look at the Town Planning's Records to look at the housing starts. It will show that on an average over the last 10 years between 1986-1991, there were 1 500 houses built in this country. Since 1991, Mr. Chairman, the average fell to a low of about 1 300 houses, but now it has picked up since 1994 and the average is now about 1 500 houses since 1996 and 1997. The average has increased.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Honourable Member is giving the House the impression that an average of 1 500 houses per year is being built by Government.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I have used the figures from the Electrical Department. It has shown that the average of 1 500 has been maintained over the last two years. I am not saying that the demand for houses has not out-stripped the supply.-It has, but we have tried to keep the average of 1 500. Within the next three or four years based on the number of acres that have been taken up, the Minister has already spoken on that, of the 382 acres, it would produce more than 3 000 house spots. And if you look at an average of lots being created I am sure that we should be able to produce between 300 and 500 house spots on an average in this country.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we are on target and this Government intends to keep our faith with the people. In our Manifesto we have spoken to the fact that there is a need for the creation of house spots in this country and we are doing just that. We will not be sidetracked by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy or by anybody on that Side. I am sure the Members know that our housing policy is quite strong. It is a fact that when we came into office that Administration was only concentrating on one site at Haggatt Hall, St. Michael.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House again. The Honourable Member works in the Ministry of Housing and he knows that when the Democratic Labour Party left Government, along with other projects, they left the Husbands Project going on, Sir. I speak about the

Husbands Project, I am not speaking about the one to the North of Queen's College. I am speaking of the one to the South of Queen's College and he is quite aware of that, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: They were doing about 100 lots at Haggatt Hall. That is the extent of what they were doing for the relocation of all those persons that you had thrown out.

Aside.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the last Administration started lots at Haggatt Hall. You were doing approximately 100 lots. You had abandoned Husbands and you had abandoned Cane Garden.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. It is not correct to say that we stopped the project at Husbands or at Cane Garden, Sir. The project at Husbands was completed, Sir, and the project at Cane Garden. The National Housing Corporation management was instructed to put the gentleman who was doing the project in court and it is when the Barbados Labour Party took over that action was stopped, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, they had abandoned the project at Cane Garden and when we came to office trees were growing among the houses up there. There were a number of persons using that estate for grazing their cows and sheep. That is all that was being done at Cane Garden. Since then Mr. Chairman, within three years, if one goes to Cane Garden now, one would see a fine community that was completed by this Administration.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, all the persons that were thrown out by that Administration after the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, only 100 lots were being done at Haggatt Hall. It meant that the Minister had to acquire land and he has already explained the process of acquiring land. It takes time. Now that the land has been acquired, and I am sure if the Honourable Member on this Side would read some of the briefs that were presented to us, he would find that we now have lots so that within the next year or so more lots will be put on the market for people. We did not do like the previous administration. We are not only creating lots, but we are providing a facility whereby people out there, would-be homeowners would get affordable homes. Would-be homeowners can get loans to repair their homes.

During this debate we will be able to point out to them what are some of the things that are being done, not only in the Ministry of Housing *per se*, but the National Housing Programme, as well as the Urban Commission

Programme, which, I am sure Honourable Members have welcomed as a means of helping to alleviate poverty in this country. I will be back to look at some of the other programmes, thank you.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, those of us who have been in this House for some period of time will notice that the Head of Housing, Public Works, in this session is exciting as much debate as it excited over the years. I think that it is important for us to remember that this is an area in which no Government in Barbados has been able to satisfy the demand. What one must do is continuously review the delivery by the public sector, and the incentives which have been granted to the private sector with a view to finding out how one can speed up the delivery of houses. There is no question or doubt about it. This is an area in which our infrastructure is deficient and it is unable to satisfy the demand.

I recall, Sir, that over the last ten to twelve years a deliberate decision was taken that the public sector should not operate upon the assumption that the public sector can satisfy all of the demand for housing of the low income people of Barbados. Incentives were granted by way of tax concessions for the delivery of completed units. There is an amendment to the Incomes Tax Act in Barbados which was specifically tailored long before any question of special development areas, long, long before it became fashionable to grant to big developers total concessions like what were granted at Kingsland or what was granted at Westmoreland. For the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the record is clear. The introduction of tax concessions of that magnitude was not by this Party, it was by your Party. Check that out and you will see.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I want to make it clear that incentives for the building of houses as opposed to the subdivision of lots were granted in here to ensure that we have a cadre of people who would look at house building as opposed to subdivision of land. It has not worked to the extent as one would have thought it would have worked. I believe that Ideal Homes, I believe that Eastern Land Development, I believe that a Mr. Pillersdorf, and a couple of others who have come up...

Aside.

Sir. HAROLD St. JOHN: Eastern Land Development is a new phenomenon. Who are you talking about? They do not have any track record like Ideal Homes, or any of them, who for the first time, brought together the concept of delivery of a house within a certain price range for people who could get a mortgage teamed

up with the Barbados Mortgage Finance and things like that. In addition to that, the other contribution that the public sector made so as to ensure that you had inducements for the private sector, was that they brought a tranche of money which was tailored, namely the Housing Credit Fund. That was tailored to the developers. The Barbados Mortgage Finance Company was given additional funds, and the concept of housing bonds were introduced where you had an institution such as the National Housing Corporation which with a Government guarantee, would go to the market and get large sums of money which the Housing Authority would lend to these developers.

That was a total package that was designed to try and ensure that the demand would not only be catered to, by the public sector, but also by the private sector. I remember the debate very well. It was felt that if the public sector continued only to build terrace units, having regard to the record of the National Housing Corporation as owners, in which, the housing stock of somewhere between 3 000 and 4 000 units was not able to generate enough revenue even to pay for elementary maintenance. That is a fact, and a paradigm shift in policy took place in which it was said that the National Housing Corporation would concentrate on providing units for the poorest of the poor. Also it would act as a subdivider of land for the provision of house spots, the provider of capital for these people who wanted to engage in their own activity of building their own houses, and that it would act as a sort of a catalyst to implement a housing policy in Barbados. That is the position. The record of the Government between 1986 - 1994 is there.

As far as I remember, other than Husbands, and the attempt at Cane Garden, which was done by Inversiones, which was a loan from the Venezuelan Petroleum Fund or the Venezuelan Investment Fund. That had a lot of problems because that was one of those loans that you had to use Venezuelan contractors. It ended up in disaster, not only in Barbados, but throughout the other islands.

The Venezuelan Investment Fund and the Barbados Housing Authority had a joint venture to build 500 houses between Cane Garden and at Husbands. It was not completed. The project was not completed. This Government completed the ones at Cane Garden since it came into office, and I believe the Government still has claims against it for the bad building that was done by Inversiones.

We have also seen something else happened in Barbados that we must recognise when we look at this. There have been other developers. I now remember some, Sir. The Barbados Workers' Union itself started a housing

project at Mangrove as a result of the Government's encouragement - a housing project at Mangrove by the Barbados Workers' Union came about because the Government of the day decided that it would provide tranches of money and inducement and other institutions too.

I am very, very glad to see that some big insurance companies are involved in this exercise now. My only criticism would be that Fort George Heights could hardly be said to be tailored to the demand in the area that really is needed. The point is that they have gone in because of the inducements. I know there are other insurance companies too. One of the biggest developments that is taking place now is 300 or 500 houses done by the University. I cannot even remember the name of the developer "Procon" or "Probuild", something like that. I know it is being financed by a well known Caribbean insurance company. They do not need the government's aid. They have the money.

When we are looking at this housing, we must look at it in relation to the demand, analyse the demand, and analyse what the Government has done. I do not think it is fair. I want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to understand that when he checks his facts he will see it is not fair to say that the Government has not provided any inducements for people to build houses for low income people but have provided inducements for the people to build houses at Sandy Lane and around. That is not fair. It is not true. I am surprised that people as intelligent as some of the people over there would say so. I am surprised. The evidence is clear. The greatest inducement for house building we have ever had in Barbados...! know, but I am sorry. I am not going to say it because I know you want me to say it.

Aside.

3.10 p.m.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Now, Sir, let us get down to practicality. I see that there is 389 acres of land which is a substantial amount. Three thousand house spots are substantial in the context of Barbados. The National Housing Corporation, if that land is being vested in them, must have a Project Manager. They must have a team of people devoted to the total implementation of that project in that area of land.

You cannot have a housing development of around 3 000 houses spots and say it is a part-time activity, or you could do something in conjunction with that. That is my criticism because I know if you are going to build, as has been done in the Caribbean - the largest house builders are people in Trinidad, the twin city, and if you saw the elaborate structures that twin city had to deliver those

houses and even that was late. So you cannot develop 3 000 house spots by saying that you have a couple of officers.

When I look at the staff at the National Housing Corporation and their qualifications and so on, they cannot carry out that within any reasonable period of time. They either have to contract out for expertise in surveying, expertise in design or not, or decide that it is going to be a 20-year project. You would decide that, but the basic position one has to understand is that this is a tremendous effort.

You are dealing with a group of people in Barbados called bankers, the most obstructive people when it comes to giving people loans for houses. It took us time after time, meeting after meeting to get them to understand what the Housing Credit Fund was. It is only now that a few of the banks use it, and the fact that we have the emergence of credit unions who are also using that fund, although some of them are now in such a prosperous position that they are telling you that they do not want Housing Credit Fund money that they have their own money.

My understanding is that over the last year 166 people got money from the Housing Credit Fund that is additional to the people who have got money from the General Workers' Housing Fund and the Honourable Minister has told the House how they have expanded the scope of the General Workers' Fund. So you have to look at this in a comprehensive way to see what is being done. The record does not bear the unfair criticism that the Honourable Member is trying to place upon it because the record is better than that of the Democratic Labour Party.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The facts justify that statement. I am tired giving you the facts. You do not want to understand the facts or do not want to understand. You are wilfully blind. You know what they say? They are none so blind as those who would not see and none so deaf as those who would not hear.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I will stop at this point, Sir, because I can see that I have to disabuse the minds of so many people about a lot of misconceptions that I will come back.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the contribution I wish to make is to say that there has been a change in policy for housing, certainly between 1976 and

now, and that change in policy has been driven by the desires of consumers. Today, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will confirm, particularly among rural people, their desires are not for terraced units but rather house spots which they can own, start small and gradually expand to a more elaborate dwelling over time. As they say, "it was not ever thus."

I was Chairman of the National Housing Corporation between September 1976 and late 1979 when I went to CBC. In those days, there was a greater demand for terraced units and the policy then was heavily concentrated on satisfying that demand by the construction of a number of terraced units about Barbados.

I have here, Sir, three Annual Reports of the National Housing Corporation. The first one, April 1977, (check report) that is six months after the Election to March 31, 1978 and it says that the number of houses completed in that fiscal year 1977 to 1978, was 154 in one fiscal year, made up thus: Lodge Terrace - 2. When I say Lodge Terrace, I mean Stage 2. Income Group - Lower Middle, Unit Type - Single (concrete blocks) - 41; Lodge Terrace, Lower Middle, Single (concrete blocks) - 31, Wildey, Lower Middle, Single (concrete blocks) - 17; Wildey Lower Middle, (multiple blocks) - 65 giving a total of 154. Those were the houses completed, 154.

Then in that same year, those under construction were 187 in one fiscal year, 1977-1978, made up as follows: Houses Under Construction, Wildey - 31; Lodge Terrace - 26, Lodge Terrace 11-12, Wotton, multiple block - 118, that is 154 completed and 187 currently under construction.

A year is missing, Sir, 1978-79. They cannot find it in the Library. Go to 1979-80, Sir, page 5. The number of houses completed 367. Haynesville terrace- units - 55, Haynesville again, terrace units - 62, Bagatelle - terrace units - 10, Free Hill, Single - 26, Orange Hill, Single (timber) - 20, Ferniehurst, terrace units - 28, Ferniehurst again, terrace units - 51, Wotton - these are single units now - 51, Wotton, Project No. 214, single - 64 which gives a total of 367.

Under construction there were 126, Sir. Wavell Avenue - 2, Haynesville - 16, Ferniehurst - 8, Ferniehurst again - 53, Haynesville - 47, total 126.

I go now to 1980-81, houses completed - 153 including - I will just give the terrace units, for example, Haynesville - 45, Haynesville again - 8, Ferniehurst 18, Ferniehurst - 57, Wildey - 16, Bonnetts two-bedroom - 2. 3.20 p.m.

While those 153 were completed in 1980/81, 133 were under construction being Haynesville 8, Rosemount 59, Wildey 6, Bonnetts 32 and the Ivy 28. That was the demand of the day for terrace units.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph who was in here at the time will recall and the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister will recall that I used to speak in those days on the land bank and they used to tease me that it was my catch phrase. But consciously, we developed a land bank. So that as soon as one construction was finishing, you could move to another. You can see from that list that I gave just now that there was house construction in Wotton, Haynesville, Bagatelle, Ferniehurst, Rosemount among others.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There was also the development in North Wildey which was a mixed development of timber and wall and terrace units.

In recent years, no Government has achieved that level of output, no Government has achieved it. The Honourable Minister was quite right when the Government changed in 1994, there was not a land bank and we have systematically and rapidly acquired parcels of land with a view to having land available upon which to build and the fruits of those acquisitions cannot immediately be realised but will in time be realised.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must also point out to the Press that at that time whenever the Democratic Labour Party acquired a piece of land, they were always accused of taking agricultural land to provide housing.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I really am not speaking for the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, there can be no quarrel therefore with the pace of acquisition. What I am concerned about particularly is the pace of delivery of house spots to individuals.

In my constituency, the old District 'D' Police Station was in a dilapidated condition when we took over. A conscious decision was made to push it down and clear the site. That decision was carried out in February 1996. In February 1996, the National Housing Corporation agreed that they would do the design for sites and services. The Chief Town Planner gave his approval to the development in November 1996. Up to now, even though permission was granted, nothing has happened by way of putting in the roads, water and light to create 16 house spots. In

November last year, a tender was advertised. I am not aware that an award has been made.

The problem that I have therefore, Sir, is that it seems to me that there is too much bureaucracy in a Statutory Corporation which ought to be more flexible, operating with large autonomy to....

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is nothing to do with the Minister. It is a culture. In order to satisfy the demand, we have to break the culture. You have to bring to bear in the management of these organisations, commercial private sector oriented practices otherwise your best intentions will be frustrated.

Now that we have 3 000 lots acquired, I hope that there will be greater energy to get those lots serviced. All you have to do is to get the layout and design of the lot, you have approval, you have a meeting of your committee or board, agree that you are going to put it out to tender, the tender should not take more than six weeks, you have a meeting of the tenders committee as soon as the tender is closed, a decision is made. You send the letter and tell the contractor that he has been awarded the contract, get on with the job, put in the roads, put in water and light

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Once you have money, there should be no problem. I do not think that the problem is money. We never used to have these difficulties in the past.

Having said all of that, I should also say that I believe the composition of the National Housing Corporation has changed. In these years, 1976 to 1981 the National Housing Corporation itself employed a large labour force, what we called in those days 'direct labour'. That labour force built a lot of these terrace units. Over time that force has been withered down and we have to go out to private contractors and so I think that a mechanism has to be found for the speedier delivery of these lots.

One thing that you can say about the Minister is that he is a man of action. He does not mess about. I am sure that Minister, now that he has acquired the large amount of land, will encourage the National Housing Corporation to follow through and get these sites developed. Once the sites are developed, the demand is there and gradually you are reducing the problems of housing particularly for the poor people of Barbados.

Sir, I think in my entire 22 years in Parliament, this present Ministry of Housing has been the most active and productive in terms of preparing for the delivery of housing that we have ever had.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I gave the figures already. You were not in here. Listen carefully to what I said, "preparing for the delivery of houses", because they came into a situation where there was no land bank. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in here on Tuesday or maybe Monday was talking about large acquisitions, hundreds of acres creating new towns, new developments. The Ministry of Housing has acquired a large amount of land for precisely that same purpose. The whole Dean Town project will be about 1 000 lots. That 1 000 lots would make a significant impact on the topography of that area in St. James. 3.30 p.m.

I cannot reflect on something else we will do today, Sir. We cannot anticipate legislation but all I would say, Sir, having regard to what will happen later on, Government is providing all of the necessary financing to support, not only acquisitions but to support the availability of funds for people who want to purchase land. Clearly as I said, Sir, over the last 20 years there has been a shift in attitude, a shift to be welcomed. People are interested in home ownership and the Government has to promote that interest in home ownership by making lots available.

There is a cultural difference between Barbadians and let us say, people in Singapore. You go to Singapore and you see high-rise houses, terrace units and in Hong Kong worse yet. All the washing all over the place and so on.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You could consider that in Barbados? No Sir. Our culture, our people like their own little space, separate and distinct from others. I have no doubt however the day will come, because of the lack of available land, when consideration will have to be given to going up but in the foreseeable future the attitude of Barbadians is that they want to have their own spot of land and Government must facilitate that by the provision of lots. Nevertheless there will always be, in every society and in Barbados, a class of persons who just will never be able to afford to have their own home. For them, those who want to rent or who want to start out life by renting, saving and then moving on to acquisition, Government will still have to provide some modicum of terrace unit housing, Sir. As I can see it, Sir, there will continue to be a mix of housing development in Barbados but with the greater

emphasis in that mix on the single unit private home for the individual who will acquire it either by a long mortgage arrangement or by outright purchase.

I am sure that the Minister has spoken in here before about Government's decision to assist in the promotion of home ownership by creating 100% mortgages. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is smiling, saying that is his idea. You cannot stop him from saying that. So that, Sir, I commend the Ministry for sticking to their plans, sticking to the White Paper which is the policy document, acquire the land first and have the lots available rather than running helter-skelter over the place building 5 units here and 5 units there. Do a proper plan and follow the plan. My reservation is with the pace of delivery of those lots. That is a function for the National Housing Corporation. They have a responsibility. They must now in the contemporary jargon be proactive and deliver those spots, particularly those 16 in St. Thomas at District 'D'.

I am also reminding the Ministry of Housing that in these Estimates there is provision for the building of a fire station at Arch Hall and behind that fire station 60 house spots and a small playing field. The acquisition has not gone through. It is taking too long. I am losing patience but in my Ministry of Home Affairs we are planning that fire station all like now. The consultants have been appointed and they are doing the drawings. I do not wish a hold-up nor do I wish canes to grow back on that land that has been earmarked for that development.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Sandy Lane plans have been drawn in full recognition of the fact that Government wishes to acquire that parcel of land bounded by the cart road that leads to Magistrate Greaves house. You will see that the Sandy Lane development does not come out there at all. That is separate and distinct. It is only to be acquired.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: At this point I will ask you to wind up.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: My time has expired? I am obliged to you, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to one or two aspects of these sub-heads. First of all I want to address the area of flooding and I am terribly disappointed to see an inadequate allocation of money for drainage services, especially the provision of bridges, culverts, wells, the upkeep of paved drains, rivers and so on. Some of our people seem unable to make the

connection between our water problems today and the drainage in the island, and until it is clearly understood that if we want to have adequate water resources then we have to make sure that when the rain falls the water goes under the ground rather than run off into the sea. It is as simple as that.

I am not going to detail again the number of things that have happened to ensure that a minimal amount of water goes down into the catchment areas. It relates to the reduction in acreage for agriculture. It relates to the changing pattern of the cultivation of sugar canes. It relates to the fact that all the wells that were attached to almost every field of cane in Barbados those wells are now blocked up and need to be reopened. It relates to the fact that those fields are no longer protected at their edges by khus khus grass and guinea grass. The net effect of all this is that the surface catchment for water has been substantially reduced.

Then on top of that the network of roads that have been put in place and which have been paved over the years that has created a situation where there is a much faster run off of water into the sea. It is a physical property, it relates to the laws of physics, a thing called viscosity. If you have a smooth surface, quite clearly the water is going to move far more rapidly than in the old days when you had cart roads with sand surfaces and what not where in any event you got a lot of pooling and easier penetration of the water, even on cart roads into the coral underneath it. So until that is done no matter how much rain falls you are still going to have water shortages and instead of spending some money in getting those wells and culverts and so on once again put in a position where they can catch water we have to start thinking now of expensive salination plants and what not.

So that the water problem in Barbados has been created not only by increased consumption but the fact is that we have also been very negligent in dealing with very basic things to make sure that when the Lord sends us the rain that we try to catch as much as possible.

The second point I want to make, Sir, is that I do not think there is a problem with the financing of housing in Barbados. I think the problem lies with the conceptualisation of the way in which houses are financed and a failure to understand that we cannot continue to have billions of dollars tied up in ideal home stock when that money can be mobilised for further housing and further development. 3.40 p.m.

Now the whole issue of 100 percent mortgages, everybody knows where that came from and I was very

pleased to see that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central reminded me that we were given the special responsibility to articulate that particular aspect of our programme way back in 1991. He spoke very eloquently to the issue of 100 percent mortgages. So that he did not only leave us, but quite clearly he carried something very important with him and we are very glad about that.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is crystal clear to anybody. Common sense will tell you that if you want to do anything for poor people, then they have to have access to 100 percent mortgages or they are not going to get started.

The second area where there is a vast amount of money tied up is in those housing districts. There are hundreds of millions of dollars that can be released if a sensible policy is put in place in relation to the various public housing developments in Barbados. Many people have reached the stage now where they could purchase their homes.

We have a place called the National Housing Corporation and the National Housing Corporation is not only a place that builds houses, the National Housing Corporation is in fact a financial institution. This is not often realised and just as in the private sector we have individuals who allow people to buy land with a minimal down payment over the past 20 years, in point of fact they are running a financial institution and the sale of land is only now a by-product on the basis on which they make money. I hope Mr. Chairman you are following me very closely. So we have the National Housing Corporation that has the capacity, supported by Government guarantees to take care of that kind of situation.

We have a situation in Barbados where all kinds of different mortgage arrangements can be made in order to make sure that when people invest in homes that there can come a time in their lives where that investment could be made to come alive and work for them. But we do not provide the opportunities for them here in Barbados.

Sir, I would say as far as houses are concerned, you do not need to go anywhere to borrow money. You have the physical housing stock here. All you need to do is to mobilise and catch some of the value of those houses by allowing those who wish, Sir, to buy those units and provide adequate mortgage facilities for them through the Government Housing Agency which functions as a bank. Hundreds of millions of dollars will become readily available.

In 1989 I did a study of what could become available as a result of an exercise and the figure was in the range of \$210 million in 1989. I am quite sure now with inflation and so on that that figure will be substantially higher and also I suspect that more and more families will now opt to purchase those units. So if it is a positive policy and the financing arrangements are put in place, if that is one way to generate a considerable amount of cash which is non-inflationary, which is realistic and all you are doing is you are transferring the equity in the building from Government to a large number of individuals. So it is a perfectly simple exercise which I think can be done successfully. As a matter of fact, in my judgment I think that it would do a tremendous amount to enhance those estates, enhance the behaviour pattern in the estates and in the long run Government would save an awful lot of money.

We will get back to more specific things as we start talking about roads. But I am talking now about roads in the area of development. I believe, Sir, that as we approach the 21st century that Barbados should have one major project which is entirely Barbadian, which responds to the national psyche and which would open up a major part of Barbados to new dimensions of development in the 21st century.

It would also be a project which would put largely to an end the idea that somebody cannot get access to a day's work at some point and time, if it is properly designed. I believe, as I have said again and again that that project should be the building of a highway between somewhere like Pico Teneriffe to Sam Lord's Castle.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Do not worry about the cost. You can spread the cost out over five, ten, fifteen, twenty years whatever it cost. The fact is that 100 years from now Barbadians of the future will look back and say that this is the way we went into this century with a major idea involving Barbadians, a total Barbadian project and one on which the work is done in such a way that any Barbadian on any particular day, if he has nothing to eat he could go up there and get a job. If he wants to work for one day, he works for one day. If he wants to work for two days, he works for two days and let the project be spread out over a period of time.

Just begin to imagine what would happen to that whole East Coast area if that is done. Possibilities for tourism, possibilities for housing development, all kinds of possibilities will open up as a result of that kind of development. It is also something which I think would take the national spirit of this country to a higher level to know

that there is some major thing that we have conceived and which Barbadians have put their hands, Sir.

Today, Sir, many Barbadians are so proud that they played an important role in building the Panama Canal. That is almost a century ago, but their families and Barbadians speak with great pride of the role that they played in building the Panama Canal. That same pride can be developed here in Barbados with a major project of that nature, which seeks to deal with future economic development, seeks to relieve immediate employment and can be expanded or contracted, accelerated or decelerated over a period of time according to the resources available.

I believe, Sir, that this is something that is very worthwhile thinking about because if it is done, I can see potential for agriculture, for agroindustrial development, for housing, for tourism, for ecotourism, for the whole lot and I could see the possibility of even the retention of more and more of the tourist dollar in relation to the services that would develop in relation to such an infrastructural development.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one more minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, it is so difficult when I have actually warmed up on these matters, but it is something that has been very dear to my heart for a long time, because it seems to me that it is an opportunity where we can help to sweep this country into the 21st century with a big noble idea and that we can put on the map something which I can assure you 100 years from now Barbadians will still be talking about as one of the major contributions which their ancestors have made to the development of this country. Generations yet unborn would benefit significantly from it. 3.50 p.m.

It is something which I think needs to be considered. Every Minister likes to have a legacy and at this stage I am sure the Honourable Minister responsible for Transport and Works is thinking of his legacy. That should be your legacy, the fact that you put such a project in place. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am really delighted to be a member of this Administration at a time when there is such a magnificent building boom in Barbados. Even a blind man on a trotting horse has to recognise it. Everywhere you turn, concrete blocks in the front yard. Everywhere you turn, lumber leaned up somewhere. I tried last week to get some putty. You cannot get putty in Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to speak to 2 or 3 points. Let me perhaps first of all start with the Pondside. I have never and no disrespect meant to the National Housing Corporation because I know that their task is not an easy one. I know that they have people who have registered with them for 23 and 27 years and are still waiting. I have to say that every time I have come into Government I have turned to the Prime Minister and said, "Please, in the City this is No. 1 priority and you really have to help."

I have to say that in 1976 when I said that to the late Tom Adams he took me at my word with his then Minister of Housing and Kensington Lodge became a reality, one of the best, if not the best of the housing estates in Barbados today. Other people talk about that, never myself. I know where priorities are.

In another Administration, in 1981, I shamelessly went back to the late Tom Adams and said to him, "It is not enough." That was the beginning of the first stage of Pondside. The Barbados Labour Party acquired all those surrounding lands for that purpose.

I came back in a later Administration 8-9 years later and said to the Right Honourable now Prime Minister, Owen Arthur, "It is not enough." There is a terrible need for urban renewal in the capital city of Barbados as is true of so many other capital cities in the world. I have to say like Prime Ministers before him he took me at my word as did his Minister of Housing - now the second stage of Pondside is underway. I am very pleased for it - on the clear understanding that priority for housing must go to people who are living in worse than sub-standard housing in the City of Bridgetown.

When I came to the City of Bridgetown in 1976 there were people living in houses with dirt floors. When I first came to Bridgetown in 1976 there were people living in barracks and there is a generation in Barbados who do not even know what a barrack is, who were bathing at the Waterloo Public Bath and washing their clothes at the standpipe next to the public bath and living in one long building with communal cooking in the yard. That is what a barrack was.

I am happy to say, Sir, that that no longer exists in the City of Bridgetown.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a matter that concerns me greatly and I have spoken of it in this House before and at the risk of boring Honourable Members I am prepared to speak to it again because I feel so strongly about it. We have to be very conscious and careful about how urban

renewal is planned. In the Tourism Development Programme, Sir, there are large proposals for redevelopment in Bridgetown, Speightstown, St. Lawrence Gap and other areas.

It concerns me greatly and I can only speak for this constituency that I am representing for some 22 years. I am deeply concerned. I remember, Sir, when the Central Bank, now the Tom Adams Financial Centre, was being built and subsequent to its being built writing a letter to say something is wrong with this administrative building having in the shadow of it one of the poorest villages in the whole of Barbados namely Church Village.

It continued to concern me all the years that Boards through successive administrations at the Central Bank never saw fit to do anything to enhance the quality of life in Church Village. It pleases me greatly, Sir, that the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance barked to my cry of some 20 years and the now Tom Adams Financial Centre's Board is to take a decision in respect of Church Village and not only Church Village but the 5 houses in what is known as Riverside across from the Park's gate.

A few years ago I wrote the Board of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. It had been drawn to my attention that the Insurance Corporation had plans for development along Roebuck Street or I should say a further development along Roebuck Street. I wrote and made the point that its juxtaposition of really decrepit housing verging on squalour to elaborate construction. I pointed out to the Board or the Chairman of the Board of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados that in whatever was their plan, and I am not clear as to what it is as yet for the development of a particular part of Roebuck Street, bear in mind the existence of the Greenfield. Some of the worst housing that you will see in Barbados even now is to be seen at the Greenfield where you open a kitchen door but you cannot step out because it opens onto a well; where people have to use Jeyes Fluid by the gallon to try to maintain some kind of sanitary conditions. It is a wonderful place!

The Moravian Church on Roebuck Street had a very ancient burial ground in the back of its church that very few people know about. It is now in very bad condition. The Moravians tried to clean it up at Easter time because it is part of a ceremony which they carry out there but then for the rest of the year it is in bush and it harbours vermin, mosquitoes, and is a dumping place for garbage. It is a bit of a lonely spot too so it is a place where women are likely to be molested from time to time.

People driving along Roebuck Street on a daily basis to and from work would hardly believe the quality of life existing in the Greenfield. It is not possible as far as I

am concerned that we are now in the closing years of the 20th century that the National Housing Corporation is about to renew its building on Country Road which is contiguous to the Greenfield and could do so without reference to some degree of urban renewal in the Greenfield. It is just not possible that those 2 institutions and they are not without financial means. The Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the National Housing Corporation of Barbados could be undertaking such substantial development on the very perimeter of the Greenfield without some reference to renewal of the housing product in the Greenfield. I throw that out.

I just want it to be known that as far as that issue is concerned I am in battle dress and will continue to be so. I am like a dog with a bone. I do not let go. It is like the piece of land in Reed Street that the Government finally after 22 years has given to the Salvation Army. Thank the Lord! I speak about it every single year. In fact as long as I am in here I think I will go on speaking about it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the collaboration that we speak about so often between the public and the private sector has a long history in Barbados as far as housing is concerned. It is not anything new. I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South speak at length about several options which are available today for collaboration between the private sector and the public sector on this question of housing.

In the capital of Barbados, in the City of Bridgetown, there are several options available for the way in which the Government and the private sector can renew the capital. Something has to be very wrong that everywhere else in Barbados a case is made for renewal of housing stock or new housing stock but in the capital to which everyone comes to, which you expect your tourists to resort, it is a dump.

Everywhere there is urban renewal around them going on in the capital. In early December, last year, I was in Cuba greatly impressed by the work that is going on in old Havana restoring it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are placing high priority on heritage tourism. We have a tremendous heritage in Barbados in respect of our environment that we tend to take for granted. We have a number of old forts in Barbados. The only one we have ever developed is Charles Fort which is the site of the Barbados Hilton Hotel and possibly you would have to say also St. Ann's Fort which is the site of the Defence Force but there are many other sites in Barbados of forts which we need to develop.

We have some very picturesque lighthouses and I am very pleased that the Barbados Port Authority is planning

to develop some of these lighthouses. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has made the point to me from time to time that the lighthouse in his constituency has a very great attraction not only for tourists but Barbadians as well. The potential for developing restaurants and boutiques and water sports and a whole host of other activities in and around the lighthouses of Barbados are without horizon, I would say.

We have a number of old estate houses perhaps the one that we know best which has been developed particularly for the benefit of not only visitors to Barbados but Barbadians themselves is the Sunbury House and now there is Francia and I believe that many others will come on stream. These beautiful old estate houses have tremendous potential.

Villa Nova which is one of the best known among those houses is now in the process, I am happy to report, of being converted without doing too much violence to its historic facade and the beautiful trees and gardens around it. It is in the process now of being converted into a very exclusive kind of hotel, a different kind of hotel in Barbados. This will not be a beach hotel. 4.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I will have to return to this because there are a number of things I would like to speak about. Under this Head I wish to make reference to the West Wing of Parliament, which is another of the historic buildings in Bridgetown. There are a number of historic buildings in Bridgetown. The old Town Hall is one. The Bridgetown Harbour Police Station is one. This Parliament Building, both wings of it are one. We are now living and working in a restored East Wing but I see reference in the Estimates at page 129 - major works and renovations. I see in the Explanatory Notes that this subprogramme provides for the major renovation works on government buildings including Parliament West Wing and other prescribed works. I want to appeal to the Minister of Housing and Public Works that the restoration of the West Wing of Parliament has got to be treated as an urgent matter.

In the interim since the last Estimates debate I am pleased to say to you that the roof has been replaced on that building. It has a parapet roof and it was without a roof for a long time. All of the rains of 1996 and early 1997 did some damage there. That is now arrested and it has a proper roof, which I hope will last for hundreds of years, but the internal works now have to be done. There are great plans for the West Wing. It is to house the Opposition's offices. It is to house offices for other Members of Parliament as well. I am hoping that it would be able to house a small parliamentary museum. Honourable Members would be surprised at the number of tourists who come to view this building. Its potential as

a tourist attraction should not be underestimated. I make this point every year, Sir, and I make it again that it is a disgraceful thing that a Parliament of 360 years does not have a library in 1998. I have been saying this year after year, but we need more space. It is incredible. How can Members be expected to do their work, to do the research which has to be done. Look at our desks here on both sides of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Honourable Member to return and elaborate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I will wind up and return to this subject. I am much obliged to you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I rise in this debate to praise the National Housing Corporation because I have been doing my homework and the Housing Act of 1955 was the genesis of the Housing Authority. Prior to that it was a Housing Board but suffice to say that the National Housing Corporation has now been in existence well over 30 years.

The National Housing Corporation receives a grant from Government every year and it gets the majority of its income from rent and the sale of properties and the like. It therefore means that this institution has established for itself a reputation. It has developed expertise. It has a staff who is well trained, and one wonders why such an institution which has been around for well over 30 years finds itself in a position where a recently established Urban Development Commission gets a grant from Government of \$10 million, more than double that of the National Housing Corporation.

I wish to ask whether or not the Urban Development Commission can in fact be involved in the business of building houses. They cannot. What really is the purpose of the Urban Development Commission as I see it, or as stated in the Estimates? It provided for activities geared towards improving the living and working conditions of households of urban areas with the objective of ensuring access to adequate housing.

The National Housing Corporation has been in existence providing such housing for a number of years. I continue - to provide security of tenure to qualified tenants within the area of control, to generate employment opportunities and support existing informal sector arrangement for job creation. That is the Urban Development Commission. While this Commission was established, and for whatever reasons it was established, I wish to suggest that a serious housing programme... We are now seeing the establishment of a land bank. We have been told that over 3 000 lots of land already reside in that bank, however big the size.

I am still at a loss as to why it is that the Urban Development Commission which has 9 members is going to be more capable of delivering the housing for Barbados than the existing National Housing Corporation. I ask the question because we are well aware that there is a shortage of housing in Barbados. Who can best address that problem at this time? Is it a nine-member committee with a number of handpicked individuals or is it the well established National Housing Corporation which has been in this business for a number of years, which has developed expertise, which has the capacity and capability as far as staff is concerned? Why are we in a position to grant the Urban Development Commission, whose purpose it is to mainly provide housing, a grant of that magnitude while only giving the National Housing Corporation \$1 million in 1996-1997. It has now been upgraded.

When I check the report of the National Housing Corporation I wish to ask why is it that in the fiscal year ending March 1997, that there is no provision at all for bad debts while the previous year of 1996 bad debts accounted for \$1.2 million. I do not know what magical stroke could have been played here and what principle could have been invoked at page three of the *National Housing Corporation Report*, for bad debts in the space of a year, to move from over a million dollars to zero. I would wish for that to be explained by the technocrats, if not the Minister responsible for Housing, because that is instructive.

At the back of the reports one by Peat Marwick why it is that figure for bad debts moved from \$1.2 million to zero, ending March 1997. I would like an explanation for it. If it were possible I would wish to have my seat in St. Michael North West returned to the polls every year. I would wish for that because that is the only way I can be guaranteed of certain things within the constituency.

In a seven-week period in this fiscal year ending March 1997, 543 units were painted costing approximately \$200 000 in St. Michael North West. I am eternally grateful and look forward to another by-election sometime soon. In fact, the whole question of roofs - roofs were changed. Thirty-seven roofs were changed between Deacons Farm, St. Stephen's and one roof was changed at Golden Acre and a lovely photo taken with the Prime Minister present, removing the asbestos roof. We were promised that this would be an ongoing exercise. We are now a year and a half almost after the by-election and not one other roof has been changed at Golden Acre.

Aside.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He said that 37 roofs were changed during the by-election and then he said that subsequent to that no other roofs were changed.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, that is not what I said.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am saying that it is an ongoing programme of the National Housing Corporation and we have changed roofs throughout the housing estates of Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On page three of the report it states a high proportion of this work was a response to requests from doctors to assist tenants who confirmed as having respiratory problems. It is fascinating to me that the National Housing Corporation could respond to a tenant on a block, say of five, find the resources necessary to change the asbestos to galvanise or some other material. The other tenant from another block presents a letter and says this is my doctor's letter, I have a respiratory problem. The NHC goes to another block and changes the roof. Then on the previous block three months after the person immediately next door gets permission from the doctor to remove the roof and you go back to Block A and change the roof.

It is time that we decided to make this a stated policy, that is, all people are affected by the asbestos and that we put a system in place to replace them. More importantly as I just said you are only giving the NHC a small grant. They mainly get their income from rents and the sale of property and the like. Therefore there must be some concern, given the abundance of revenue around, for a stated policy in this area. You cannot ask for better. I have heard all kinds of things about the record of previous governments but no other Government in the history of Barbados can boast to be in possession of the kind of revenue that this Government is in possession of.

In 1989 which was a very good year for Barbados, everything happened the right way except one thing. We had the best fiscal performance. We had the highest tourism arrivals. We had the lowest fiscal deficit. We had the highest growth in Barbados but we suffered one thing - the foreign reserves continued to fall in 1989. That was the major problem. That problem now does not present itself to the Government of Barbados. This wicket you are on is a lovely wicket for batting and all you need to do is to play straight. I am asking for that.

Let me say to you that you can provide a bigger grant to the National Housing Corporation and not to consistently criticise the National Housing Corporation for not delivering when you have just seen it fit to establish an Urban Development Commission without any expertise whatsoever to provide the same housing which is required by Barbados, except that you are going through a different channel. I do not expect that channel to work anyhow. I

really do not expect it to work because I am saying that you cannot have a commission chaired by whoever and then you have a number of political "lackeys" who have been appointed to this Commission, people who are not even capable of dealing with the literature coming from the NHC.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member should know better than to refer to Members of staff who are not here to defend themselves as political "lackeys". If he was referring to people as political "lackeys". I probably could make the same comment with reference to Members on that side, or even on this Side. I do not think it would be fair to make such references. I am asking that those comments be withdrawn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: First of all, you have two minutes to go and secondly I would ask you to keep your language to a very high standard. You can do better than that

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I wonder why it is that time passes so quickly when I am speaking. I really wonder.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I am asking that the remarks be withdrawn.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: What remarks?

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: You are not going to last long in here, you know.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You do not mind how long I will last.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I asked him to keep his remarks to a very high standard.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: That does not mean that the remarks have been withdrawn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: He has not referred to anybody in this Honourable House.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member rephrase that statement, please?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The 9 members who have been chosen to run the Commission are not public officers.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Do you want me to call them political "yardfowls"?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can do better than that, please do that. I am now asking that those remarks should be struck from the Record.

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir, the entire management structure and the people who run the Commission are public servants. He cannot refer to them in those terms.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: There is a member on the Commission, who it is well known will not be able to handle the literature coming from the National Housing Corporation. I am finished talking. 4.30 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could you wind up now, please?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I wish to say that I just returned from a house fire at the top of Deacons Road and there is an urgent need to have a proper policy in place and stop this thing of when there is a house fire people come jockeying around looking for political advantage as a result of so-called connections or not having connections.

There was a house fire at the top of Deacons Road where two houses burnt flat and one was damaged. I felt very inappropriate as the representative for the area in terms of getting those people out of their misery, unable to provide any solace at all whatsoever because the National Housing Corporation lacks the amount of units to accommodate anyone who suffers the fate. So therefore we need definitely and urgently to consider what is the principal system used....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am asking that you now wind up your debate, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I will, Sir,... in addressing the kind of problems we have seen resulting out of house fires. Indeed, I ask that urgent consideration be given by the Minister of Housing in dealing with the most recent fire which occurred at Deacons only just two hours ago where two people...

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is trying to give the impression that nothing is being done because the matter was drawn to my attention by a Mr. Mark Williams and the matter is being taken care of.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, that is precisely the problem. Could you believe as the

representative for St. Michael North West that I was present at a house fire and that in a time of grief a member of the constituency would believe that his needs can only be addressed by way of political expediency?

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will ask you to wind up. You have had your time and I will ask you to take your seat, please.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member referred to political expediency. I would just like to say that this matter was also referred to me as Minister of Housing. It was referred to me more than two hours ago and it had nothing to do with politics. I would like to say that the matter has been resolved, thanks to the same gentleman, Mr. Mark Williams.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, this House cannot be reduced to the rubbish which is emanating from the Other Side if they think that by throwing the name Mark Williams into a debate that that solves the problem. The Honourable Member is an Honourable Member of this House and is entitled to the respect as an Honourable Member of this House and for Ministers to get up and throw up the name of Mark Williams in here like if that is an answer to a problem, I think that is a travesty. I have never seen it in here, a bunch of yardfowl people that they are calling. Why you do not call him Mark Smart. That is who he is, Mark Smart. Put it in the record that he is Mark Smart...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member, please! Order.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Members, please take your seats. I believe at this point everybody is getting tired. I believe we will have to take a break.

On the motion of Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS. Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.00 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 4.40 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

When the suspension was taken, this Honourable House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to give the Honourable House the names of the members of the Urban Development Commission so that Members will be aware of the calibre of persons that constitute this commission.

I was looking for the document with the names but speaking from memory, the Chairman of the Urban Development Commission is Mr. Dale Marshall, a respected Attorney-at-Law in Barbados, maybe one of the brightest up and coming, to use a common term, Attorneys in Barbados. The Deputy Chairman is Mr. Michael Sinclair, well known business executive at CLICO, an insurance company with which Honourable Members on that side should be very well familiar. I saw a photograph in yesterday's newspapers, I do not know if anyone has that paper here, but at least that paper would confirm that the CEO of that particular company is very well known to the Leader of the Opposition. The Chief Town Planner in his own right, the Chief Housing Officer at the Ministry of Housing, Miss Margaret Talma, Mr. Wallace Griffith, a well known business man, I do not remember the name of the company, a Mr. Stevenson, a competent engineer and a Mr. Nigel Bailey.

I have called all the names of that Commission. They are well known and respectable persons, attorneys, engineers, chief town planner, chief housing planner, all of these are people who deal with shuffling papers everyday. Mr. Nigel Bailey is a member of the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, by giving the impression that all the other members have a profession but Mr. Bailey does not have one. He read out

everybody's profession but not Mr. Bailey's profession and the man is a businessman.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Nigel Bailey, a successful entrepreneur. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is helping me with my wording. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is not helping me.

These are individuals who shuffle papers, in the insinuation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, they deal with paper everyday and if any paper is thrown at them they know how to read this paper. I do not know anybody on that Committee that cannot read and write. I do not know who the Honourable Member is referring to. I would hope that he is not referring to anybody in his constituency. I think that it is an insult for an Honourable Member of this House to speak about another citizen of this country who may be one of his constituents in that breath.

Mr. Chairman, he spoke in his remarks about the vote for the National Housing Corporation being a lot less than that for the Urban Development Commission. The vote for Urban Development Commission is \$10 103 364. The amount for the National Housing Corporation is \$4 891 346.

Lest one might be misled by these figures because the Honourable Member is very good at figures. He is an economist and he can read and interpret these better than I can. He knows that it is misleading to suggest that one is placing a heavier priority on the activities of the Urban Development Commission than the National Housing Corporation by the amounts which have been allocated here. The National Housing Corporation is a statutory corporation as you know which was formed over 20 years ago. It has a revenue base from the collection of rents, the sale of units and the amounts which are voted in these Estimates is just a small subsidy to keep it going during the year. There are about 4 000 terrace units throughout the island. It has a number of properties and it is fairly certain that that corporation would be in a position to attract revenue. It also has over 600 employees.

The sum which has been voted for the National Housing Corporation in addition to making sure that it meets its expenses during the year, part of this sum will go towards the payment of interest which it would have to meet as a result of the \$30 million bond issue which it placed earlier in this financial year.

The repayment of that interest was categorized in two parts. That section of the interest on the project of the corporation where there was cost recovery, the corporation would be responsible for that interest. It was a condition at the time when the bond issue was issued with an understanding with the Central Government that

Government would finance that part of the bond issue that was not recoverable. There are certain projects within the programme of the National Housing Corporation which are not recoverable. Those projects include Pondside.

We have spoken earlier about the Pondside project which makes provision for the construction of 43 units. Flat Rock the 20 terrace units, Dean Town and also the starter homes which we will be building at Hoytes Village. There are also a number of sites and services in this programme as well and it is hoped that those programmes with respect to that aspect of the project which has become known as Settlement 2000 will... 5.10 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: We both did English Language at Combermere. You remember who passed and who failed?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, if there were two of us and one of us passed, I passed. So it is clear that the Honourable Member failed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: That project, Mr. Chairman, is the one which is referred to as Settlement 2000 and the whole purpose of this allocation is to ensure that the National Housing Corporation would be able to make repayment of that component which is not cost recoverable.

Mr. Chairman, the question of the loans which have been disbursed by the National Housing Corporation were also the subject of some query. Between 1987 to 1995 the number of applications for loans under the General Workers' Housing Scheme is an indication of the activity in housing over the years. Between 1987 and 1995 we have 647 approvals for loans. Between 1995 and the present time we have had 760 approvals for loans. This year alone, Mr. Chairman, as if to give you an indication as to the amount of approvals for loans under the General Workers' Loan Scheme and as I said this would clearly give you an indication of those persons who have been able to repair their houses or build new houses whether it is on Government lots or other lots. This year alone 529 loans have been approved and the chances are that that number would increase.

With respect to the Housing Credit Fund 133 persons have benefited from the Housing Credit Fund and they have disbursed this year \$9.1 million. It is hoped that we would be able to utilise the facilities of the Housing Credit Fund in order to supplement any further amounts that

might be needed as we proceed with the project under the Settlement 2000 even though it might be outside the actual project.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got 1 minute.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I also wanted to respond to the comments by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central with respect to the water problems but I think I will do that at another intervention.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, before I raise the few questions that I have for the Minister I feel bound to say that I am really a little disappointed that the question of the provision of housing for those persons who might have a tragedy in relation to, for example, a house fire has occasioned an element of levity and casualness about this in relation to the response of the Government. I really would hope that the time will soon be upon us when the Ministers of the present Administration would recognise that when there is a house fire it is a serious matter for the persons involved and that it is no time for playing around with piddling politics.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member by his comments would tend to suggest that we have not treated the recent fire and fires in the past as serious matters. We can only respond to certain requests which have been made by individuals, by Members of Parliament. If someone makes a request with respect to a particular house fire it is only obvious that the Minister would respond promptly. The mere fact that a Member of Parliament for a particular constituency did not get the first opportunity to reach the Minister of Housing or someone from the National Housing Corporation does not suggest that we do not have any interest. I can very well recall during the last Administration when I made representations to the former Member for St. Lucy, a Mr. Evelyn Greaves, about a house fire where 2 children were killed and 5 people were left homeless and up to now I have not received a response.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, if the Honourable Member is suggesting that there is *quid pro quo* my position is still the same that when there is an issue relating to a tragedy on the part of a family in Barbados that it is not a matter to be treated lightly or trivially. If there is a house fire in St. Michael West today, I was in here since 10.00 o'clock this morning and unless I send the person to burn down the place I would not know it is burning down and anybody who gets there first they either had knowledge that the house would burn down or something like that and they would be there first. But the fact is that when a house burns down the immediate hours after that, are traumatic for the people whose house has been destroyed. If the Member of Parliament is in Parliament doing his duty it

is only trivialising it for anybody to suggest that some other miscreant from some where was able to bring the information*

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAJTT: I was here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Do not let us go back into that. Let us proceed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St Michael North West introduced Mark Williams into this debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us proceed with the debate. Forget the Mark Williams thing now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, with due respect it is important that we lay these things to rest. I was in here and the Honourable Member was not in his seat because I was raising questions as to where was the Minister while we were debating. The Minister was not in his seat but the Minister for Community Development...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Are you telling me what to say? The Honourable Member says I was sleeping which would be an attack on you, Sir, because you would never allow any Member to sleep in here. The Honourable Member is misleading you again, Sir.

The Minister for Community Development came in and raised the question about somebody which is fine. Nobody took any notice of that. But then the Minister himself responsible came in here and sought to confuse the issue. I am not going to repeat it.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not seek to confuse any issue. I am insisting that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West introduced the element of someone else making an intervention. 5.20 p.m.

The Minister for Community Development got up and spoke and did mention that a Mark Williams contacted him. I also confirmed it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Minister for Community Development is a little young in his approach to these matters you are an old practitioner and you should know

better than to come in here, especially when you are the substantive Minister and putting gasoline on fire. You should know better. That is the only point I am making in this regard, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see, Sir, the problem is this would not be a matter of seriousness, if in fact the Minister had made the proper provision for accommodating persons who had these kinds of tragedies. I have had people who had fires and up to now they are not accommodated. But I am not spending any time on that now, because the Barbados Labour Party people do not think much of ordinary people, anyhow, so I do not know why I am confusing my head worrying about what they say, because except for one or two of them, they have a view of people, you would be included in the one or two, Sir, which is not a matter that I would wish to put on the record because you would send me out, Sir.

But I want to raise a question on the derelict buildings. Sir, for many years I have been raising the question about how our housing stock in this country could be better utilised. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Housing in the Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Harold Blackmail, when I was Minister of Health and I suggested to him that we should have a policy as a country which would allow us to acquire property that was on the verge of becoming derelict." There is a law at the moment, Mr. Chairman, which allows the Minister of Health to remove derelict buildings for purposes of environmental enhancement.

I wrote to the then Minister of Housing, you know Harold Blackman was Minister of Housing a long time ago. I wrote to him as Minister, from one Minister to the other suggesting that as a matter of policy, we should adopt a policy where, before a house fell to the point where it would become a derelict house, the Government of the day would acquire that house, the acquisitions are usually at whatever the correct cost is. They would repair that house and they would make that house available as part of the housing stock of the country.

Lip service was paid by that Minister, lip service has been paid by subsequent Ministers, lip service was recently paid by the present Minister, but all they do is talk. The truth is that anyone who observes what is going on in our country will realise that on a daily basis, many houses, because the people have gone away for whatever reason, if you go up Black Rock, Sir, you will see at least three of them, right in front of St. Stephen's there was a house that was a nice bungalow and it is now being reduced to nothingness, and soon you will see it appear in a list

of houses to be demolished. And then we will pay somebody by contract a sum of money to demolish that house and remove it.

Now that house has been taken out of the housing stock of the country, whereas the Government could have acquired the property, spent a minimal amount of money to put it back in shape and make it available to the large number of people who stand in line waiting for housing.

Mr. Chairman, I am not moved by them when they come in here and talk about land bank. I am not moved by it at all. It is pie in the sky foolishness talking about a land bank, but it is current jargon, so it will fall well from the mouths of those who deal with these matters to talk about a land bank.

Your Honour, you have in your constituency, a large number of people who have been trying to find some house spots and while the Honourable Member is accumulating the land bank, the constituents are trying unsuccessfully to get a house spot. They are the horses, so while the grass is growing the horse is starving. There are thousands of people in this country who cannot get a house spot. So the Government, in the meantime is accumulating a land bank. I spoke to that recently and I do not intend to go through it again, because it just falls on deaf ears.

But the derelict building programme which I have recommended and which the Honourable Member said on the Floor of the House sometime ago that he agrees with, the Government does not require any more than to go through the things they go through every week, because this House does not do anything else but acquire land. We meet week after week and we come up with three or four acquisitions. It is no big thing with the acquisitions because they do not pay the people anyhow. I cannot recall anybody in my constituency or in anything I know about whose land was acquired who has received any money recently. So they have the power to acquire.

Any Honourable Member in here can point out five or six or seven houses that are on the verge of becoming derelict in their constituencies. What they can do is having acquired the properties, if they have the funds, they can put the funds in escrow for the owners and they can make the properties available to people who need housing. They should be able to produce a funding with requests to the Inter American Development Bank or one of the other agencies because this is an environmental enhancement project that I am recommending. But it probably takes a little ingenuity to put the project together and the Minister does not seem interested in that kind of ingenuity.

I also wish to speak, Mr. Chairman, to the issue of drainage. We do not have a lot of time and I wish to go

quickly, but we have been discussing drainage now again for some considerable time. The Chief Technical Officer and some others went for about the umpteenth time to the Canal in Bank Hall. The canal that goes all the way through Headleys Land and passes through the Globe and enters into the Constitution River.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we should stop fooling the people. Drainage is important to the health of the people of Barbados. Dengue fever, when the rain is falling rages and then you will hear the Minister of Health on the radio saying what they should do and some other Minister. The truth is that all they need to do is to correct an error that was apparently made in the canal which they took about 19 years to construct. So that we can have proper drainage of a low lying area that goes through the Garden Land.

I do not understand why it takes so much to get. The engineers know what they have to do. And all we do is to have site visits. Mr. Chairman it is a waste of time having excited the people in a constituency for a neighbourhood and then nothing happens. It is like Government by public relations. Nice pictures in the newspaper showing that a lot of people went and looked at the water going out through a drain very slowly and gathering moss. It is a simple matter. The gradient is not sufficiently steep and all we have to do is to make the correction. But we are going to continue to discommode those people in that area and when next we get rain... 5.30 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: "Discommode" is a clumsy word? Only persons who are just short of semi-literacy would find "discommode" a clumsy word. You are a disgrace to the school that we went to. "Discommode" was the kind of word that would be used precisely. It is what they call in French "*fe mot juste*". You would say the "just word" but we would say the absolutely correct word.

Mr. Chairman, I must confess, Sir, when I look at the Barbados Labour Party's Ministers it causes me some stress. It is not that they are ignorant, Sir... It is being suggested that I get on.

I want to deal too with this. There is a large amount of money that has been allocated, I think it is \$13 million under 623: Structures on page 124, Head 42. These structures provide for a number of things including the Bridgetown Road and Safety Improvement Project and other Highway improvement

That is a project that was in vogue for a fairly long time. It is a project that is supposed to straighten up

Black Rock Road and Bank Hall and go all the way up to Culloden Road, Passage Road and Westbury Road.

I think that Ministers really ought to take account of the people and give us some information. All we keep hearing about and letters are written from various places but the truth is that Black Rock Road is in a mess and we are hearing that the reason why they are not repairing the Black Rock Road is because this project is in the offing.

Based on our knowledge we know that this project is not likely to get underway for some considerable time. We know that in theory it is underway. We have had public relations meetings and I am not questioning that but I think that you may have to fix Black Rock Road before. Just pave it! Black Rock Road is so bad now that it is causing a discombobulation.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not a clumsy word. You do not understand the English language. Do you wish me to speak in French? It is against the rules if not I would speak in French.

Seriously, Black Rock Road has now reached the point where it is a disgrace and I think you may have to do a temporary fix. Bridge Gap which is a short cut used by the ZR vans, the ZM vans and all kinds is dangerous to the people who live in that area. I know that the Honourable Member does not care much about the people...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Can you tell the ZR vans where to go? There is nobody in Barbados who can tell the ZR vans where to go. So what we have to do is to take it for granted.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would just like to inform the Honourable Member that he only has one minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have no vans. Don't be snide. I have never had any vans and do not intend to have any vans. If any of my friends have vans, their vans go through there as well, but you are the Minister of vans and therefore you are to look after... You may even have some yourself. But the Minister should make sure that the roads are fixed so that people's lives are not in danger. We have two schools down there and what this Government has done is to mark out a place for the children to cross the road. That is not sufficient. You should fix the roads and there is an open canal in Bridge Gap which we have been talking about for some considerable time.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I lived in America for 10 years and sometimes I get that accent

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member wind up?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am endeavouring to do so but I am being interfered with by the Minister.

Sir, I really would appreciate if the Minister would give us an indication as to when we might expect the Bridgetown Road and Safety Improvement Project could be completed because it has tremendous implications for a large number of householders some of whom would have to be removed, some of whom will have their houses dislocated. There are all kinds of issues relating to this and we have had no understanding from the Government as to when exactly or approximately they might expect the thing to be dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, I have one other thing and I don't think I will get a chance to return as the guillotine is going to come down very soon. I hope that the Minister can explain under page 126 the wells and the upkeep of repairs.

Mr. Chairman, the area in Upper Goodland continues to be flooded when there is rain. We have been promised that wells would be dug and I have seen no evidence other than a very industrious young man who is working in the sub-office who is trying his best. I really think that the Chief Technical Officer needs to survey the area once again so that we can have wells properly located so that Mr. Jordan and the other people who are suffering from continuous flooding under their houses even during drought that they will not have to go through this.

It is difficult to speak to these issues in the short time allocated but the Minister can direct the Chief Technical Officer to take another look at this area. The whole alluvial plain which is taken in within the Goodland area is suffering from an absence of wells. They have been promised during our time and they have been promised during your time and I really think that we have reached the point...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And I have given you a lot of latitude.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Those wells should be dug and I look forward to hearing from the Minister something specific on when we may expect those wells to be sunk.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I want to join in this debate and support the Honourable Minister and staff in the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the work that they have been doing in this country. I

would like to draw to the attention of the last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, Government's position on the use of abandoned structures and the use of derelict properties.

The acquisition and repairing of the 330 abandoned structures for sale or rent to persons who meet the qualifications of the National Housing Corporation. The acquisition aspect will cost some \$18 million but the repair component will be done pending the conduct of a more detailed field check and exercise. The demolition of ruined structures and their acquisition for housing and community development purposes at a cost of \$10 million and the establishment of the Environmental Engineering Division for determining action on derelict properties. 5.40 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member would give way, Sir, the point I made was that we have had definition and talk and I have not seen anywhere in the Estimates where provision is made for the money because they cannot start unless they have the money.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, this is part of the Urban Development Programme which forms part of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. Also I would like to mention the acquisition of vacant lots. A survey of the vacant lots...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Estimates constitute the programme of expenditure and the policy connected with that expenditure. All I am asking the Minister to do is to say that this falls within the ambit of the Urban Development Commission. It may be a fact but it does not in any way suggest that the programme is going to be instituted this year. I wish him to tell me that.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the Urban Development Programme is a continuing programme. Funds have been voted and allocated for the Urban Development Programme to continue the work. If I may continue Sir, the acquisition of vacant lots - a survey of the vacant lots in Greater Bridgetown Area was carried out by the Housing Planning Division and the results were published in the draft of the Urban Development Programme. It was decided that the Commission should take a two-prong approach in the acquisition of properties.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: My understanding is that you should not read your speech and if you are reading

you should tell us what you are reading from. I would like to know what the Honourable Member is reading from.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the other section says those properties for which land tax is outstanding...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is quoting from a document and he has to make the document a document of the House. He is in breach of the rules of the House. He has to make it a document of the House or he cannot read from it or if he reads it I am going to go over there and take it from him.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you going to make that a document of the House?

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: The White Paper on Housing is a document of the House already.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is okay. It is a document of the House. It is a part of the White Paper.

Aside.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: It is notes from the White Paper, Sir, and I will continue to read my notes until you say I cannot, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot read your notes.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: These are notes from the White Paper.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you can refer to your notes but you cannot read as such.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Okay, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If you are referring to your notes you can do that.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member is being rudely interrupted by Members on that Side. All the Honourable Member is trying to explain is that there is an allocation in the Urban Development Commission's Programme for \$10 103 364.00 and that part of that programme includes the same programme that he was talking about with respect to the acquisition of derelict buildings. He was very, very clear in reading his notes with respect to that aspect of it and those acquisitions of derelict buildings. All of that is part of the White Paper on Housing which you all have not read.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the clarification.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member ended by saying "which you all have not read." Your Honour will remember that I came in here and showed page per page that the Green Paper and the White Paper had not even changed a fullstop or a comma. The Honourable Member therefore must withdraw the remark.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Carry on, the Honourable Member.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: As I said, Sir, this consists of notes from the White Paper that has been made a document of this House, Sir. Do you want to make my notes a document of the House?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can refer to your notes, but you cannot read from them.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: The Urban Commission, Sir, has acquired the services of...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Give the Honourable Member a chance to explain himself. Please, you know better than I do, you can refer to your notes but please do not read.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: The Urban Development Commission has acquired the services of a surveying company to take care of the clean-up of these lots and giving advice to the Corporation, Sir. Mr. Chairman, I just want to refer to the document which is the bible of the Barbados Labour Party. The Barbados Labour Party has a distinguished record in the provision of housing. Housing is a basic need and many of our citizens will not be able to provide for their own housing. This Party has therefore been the pioneer in constructing low income housing for rentals.

The National Housing Corporation has a long waiting list for such housing. Those who need this kind of assistance have been abandoned over the last 8 years by a Democratic Labour Party Government whose record in this regard, is certainly the worst of any Government since 1940.

A BLP Government will resume the building of terrace units for rental to those who cannot provide for their own housing. And as the Honourable Member for St George North, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing has said in here today, Sir, under terrace units they are building 24 terrace units in Flat Rock, St. George and also in the City of Bridgetown, some 30 units are now under construction for these low income earners.

Mr. Chairman, it is not our policy, however, that Government should become a land owner forever and units will be sold to the tenants at their request. This is in keeping with our well established policy to sell both terrace units and separate housing to the tenants with rent being credited back against the purchase price.

A BLP Government will restore the income tax concessions on mortgage interest, home maintenance and insurance, and to keep that land tax down by relating to the practice of reducing rates whenever the value of properties is assessed as in this case, every three years. This is to ensure that once again young people in this country will be able to be owners.

They will also benefit from the lower prices which are anticipated to flow from our tax reduction policies. Mr. Chairman, a BLP Administration will also immediately resume an active sites and services programme...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of elucidation, Sir. One can sympathise with the Honourable Members on that Side when they do not want to hear our Manifesto. Because they have stated on the Floor of the House that they do not regard a Manifesto as a part of a social contract with the people of Barbados. So I do not see what is the opposition about reading the Manifesto.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central has just stated that the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party would allow you to claim all mortgage interest *et cetera*. He is misleading the House because it is not true.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I never said "all mortgage interest". I said "mortgage interest" and to date, \$3 500 is a deduction given by the Right Honourable Prime Minister for mortgage interest and repair of houses.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, \$3 500 cannot be mortgage interest. It would have to be part thereof.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, as I said, a BLP Administration will also immediately resume an active sites and services programme through which house spots are made available to those persons who wish to build their own houses and starter homes which would facilitate those who need to take a more instrumental approach.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I think we should have a resolution to hang the person who ran against you for us. I cannot believe that you can be the representative of my sister and get up in here reading a manifesto. Say something.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: The problem is that you are still vex about Mark Williams. You are still vex about that. Mr. Chairman, I just want to say to you that the Barbados Labour Party Government has embarked on this programme and is continuing to do so as we come to deal with the Estimates. I want to say first to you that between April 1, 1997 and January 1998, 705 people applied for housing in Barbados through the National Housing Corporation and to date, I would say to you, Sir, that in St. Michael some 389 people are applying for housing, from Christ Church 108, St. Philip 24, St. John 19, St. James 38, St. Thomas 19, St. George 38, St. Andrew 11, St. Lucy 12, St. Peter 25, and 16 from St. Joseph. There were six people from no fixed place of abode. I can say to you to date, Sir, that the Corporation has been able to house some 44 families. The reason for that is because we do not have the number of houses to accommodate people. 5.50 p.m.

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

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I also want to say to you that earlier today you heard the Minister say that some 27 acquisitions were made during the last year for the acquisition of land in Barbados, over 383 acres of land which would amount to over 3 000 house spots, with mostly people coming from the St. Michael area for the building of homes.

I also want to say to you, Sir, that these people can be accommodated through the General Workers¹ Housing Loan Fund through the National Housing Corporation. Right now, people who are working for \$582.61 a week or \$2 524.65 per month can qualify for loans from this department. This is part of our Manifesto that the Barbados Labour Party has brought to the people where we tell them that we are interested in their development and the development of housing.

Mr. Chairman, if time permits, I will come back and touch on urban development. I thank you.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, we do not have a lot of time in this debate but I think it is important for us to hear from the Minister a definite position about Government's plan for the provision of a water resource base for this country. The Estimates of 1998/99 are based

on achieving an economic growth rate of some 3%. We accept that for development to take place this country must be possessed with a water resource base that will satisfy the demand while at the same time satisfying the present requirement and the present allocation that we presently enjoy.

In 1994 when I was Minister of Public Works and the present Minister of Public Works was in Opposition, they interrupted Parliament and brought a motion of national importance to discuss the whole question of water which they claimed at the time was in such crisis, and they certainly gave the impression that in another three weeks time Barbados would have had no more water. The Honourable Minister of Public Works led the charge. He even suggested at the time that the shortage we were experiencing had nothing to do with the drought. He said that we were facing a crisis, that people all across the country faced the threat of not having a water supply.

The Government is talking about a developmental plan for this country in an effort to achieve economic growth. I wonder how serious they are. I mentioned in an earlier debate that they were confused and clearly there is some degree of confusion in their macro planning because in these Estimates there is no provision whatsoever for finance to be provided to ensure that Barbados has, and will continue to enjoy, a proper resource base. There is no provision.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I might not get a chance to mention certain things in reply. The Honourable Member is not speaking as though he was a Minister of Public Works.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St. John has a paper in front of his face because he cannot believe what he is hearing.

The type of assistance that is given to other statutory corporations of which the Honourable Member speaks is not normally given to a statutory corporation that generates income and would not need a subvention from Government. That matter is being addressed by the Barbados Water Authority through a loan from one of the lending institutions.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Now, Mr. Chairman, the members of the then Opposition in 1994, the Barbados Labour Party, led by the present Minister of Public Works said that the drought was not a problem, that the problem was either the Minister or the Democratic Labour Party, that we were the problem. We had no plan and they could solve the problem overnight. We knew that was not possible.

We commissioned a water loss study to seek to identify new water resource bases in Barbados because we knew that for any further development to take place as a matter of urgency we had to find new water resource bases.

The public of Barbados must not be fooled because on the one hand you have a crisis on our hands where the taps are running dry and the Minister does not even bother to bring the matter to Parliament as a matter of urgency. It is not important. In 1994 it was important because he sought at the time to lay blame on the Democratic Labour Party for Harry Right and Harry Wrong. They cursed us for everything including the drought. He was the drought at that time in St. Andrew.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not doing the same thing now. I am not blaming you for the drought. What I am saying is that you had four years because if you were talking about you were going to be developing the economy, you were going to be effecting growth, you are going to be having all these tourism projects, you knew there was a water crisis. We had money being held in the Water Authority at the time, some \$32 million.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South said we had put the money into the Consolidated Fund when it was being held in Government debentures, Treasury Bills and so on, money that was being held for the South Coast Sewerage Project that you are trying to take credit for. All the road programmes you are trying to take credit for were in place before we left office in 1994. The Overlay Programme A and the Overlay Programme B which are now to be executed, all of those programmes were in place. It had nothing to do with the Barbados Labour Party. It has nothing to do with you that all of a sudden a Minister has come in and he is now doing the road works. You are crazy? All of this was in place.

All the roads that were dug up and are now being repaired were part of a macro plan, not even probably the concept of the Democratic Labour Party but the technicians who have been developing Barbados and advising respective Governments. But we cannot seek to take claim for the work of the brilliant technicians that work in these Ministries. I stood by the side of the technical people who advised me at that time about the water crisis.

I am condemning the Barbados Labour Party because you all confused the public. You said you had a plan, that we were doing everything wrong and as we check out in 1998 we see a situation where you could as well have left the Democratic Labour Party in office.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. They probably had a plan but they had no programme. All the projects that have been instituted since September 6, 1994 are part of a new programme of this Administration. It had nothing to do with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East when he was Minister of Public Works. 6.00 p.m.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, just \$1 million was allocated under the subsidiary tenantry road programme. In these Estimates we have allocated \$8 million to the subsidiary road programme and we also allocated \$8 million under the subsidiary road programme during the current financial year. That is why you see roads all over the place including roads in the Member's constituency.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, all I am saying is that all of the roads that were done around the Southern District Council right throughout Lodge Hill all up Chancery Lane, all of that was part of a road programme that was financed by the Inter-American Development Bank. The Minister knows that. He cannot come and claim any credit for the Barbados Labour Party. The Bridgetown By-Pass Road, all of that was negotiated and settled and it was just a matter of putting the acquisitions in place and allowing the road project to go on. It has nothing to do with this Minister so I do not know why he is trying to take claim.

I condemn the Barbados Labour Party though because if they said that they are going to take over the country and they are going to be developing Barbados and so forth, they really, like the promise of jobs, had no plan for the development of a water resource base because you cannot do it unless you put a base in place. You had four years but you wait until there is a crisis.

We knew as early as 1994, we knew that by the year 1999 that....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member would give way. I wonder if the Honourable Member would advert to the incompetence of the change from Zone 1 to Zone 2.1 wonder if the Honourable Member can speak to that.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I was getting there, Sir. Because this Administration rather than seek to be fair in how they distribute land for development, even though the situation is critical in this country, this Government found it fit to approve an area of land west of the landfill at Mangrove for the development of a golf programme where land was changed from a Zone 1 to a Zone 2 under strange circumstances.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member probably has been reading the newspapers in recent times and is probably referring to certain statements which have been in the newspapers with respect to the changing of Zone 1 to Zone 2. This has not occurred even if there are proposals. These are proposals which were there even when he was Minister of Public Works and they have not yet been dealt with. It is misleading to suggest that this Administration has made any change from Zone 1 to Zone 2.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, it is a fact that a decision was taken by Cabinet and that a Memo was sent to the Barbados Water Authority indicating that an area of land has been changed from Zone 1 to Zone 2.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is a fact. Which now allows the developers in that particular area to use the water resource bases of Barbados, which are limited...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. No such thing has been effected as yet.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You have a situation now where this Administration has no difficulty in allowing developers who have large sums of money to develop an area of land in the rich West Coast of Barbados while at the same time in another Zone 1 area in Licorish Village there are 30 homes which have been there for donkey years in chattel houses, that cannot get access to a simple water borne facility, a pipe.

Something has to be fundamentally wrong with the Government's determination. They talk about dealing with the man in the street and urban development. They said they would set up a Ministry of Rural Affairs that would deal with all these problems with water crisis *et cetera*. They said so. They set up the Ministry of Rural Affairs and yet we still have a crisis on our hands because they have not been able to provide this water base that would ensure that Barbadians have a sustainable water supply.

This is not an easy issue. I do not want Parliament to believe that we can gloss over it. This needs a substantial debate and we may have to interrupt Parliament very shortly to discuss this matter in full. This has to be discussed in relation to any land use policy.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: While it is true that this Government plans to set up a Department of Rural Affairs, it is also true that this Parliament has set up the Rural

Development Commission but it is not true that part of the mandate of the Rural Development Commission is to do anything about water resources. It is not true.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am quoting from page 4923 and I am referring to a speech made by Mr. G. W. Payne. He said:

"We in the Barbados Labour Party have been calling for some time for a Ministry of Rural Affairs. This particular crisis shows up the need for there to be a Ministry of Rural Affairs to deal with this important crisis".

They said that they would set up a Ministry of Rural Affairs to deal with the crisis.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. I do not understand what the Honourable Member has cited. By the time the Rural Development Commission Act was established, nothing in the Act addressed the whole question of allocation of water resources to rural development. Even though the Honourable Member is indeed quoting from a document which I suspect that he has copied from somewhere, he still is not accurate by saying that as a matter of policy* the Rural Affairs Department is to manage water resources.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, with respect, Sir. I am quoting from the Hansard record of Parliament.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: He is not stating the date of the speech because he obviously is referring to a time when I was in Opposition.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: In the Estimates themselves, under subprogramme 181 for Rural Development Commission, page 47, it says:

"This subprogrammme provides assistance to the Rural Development Commission in the execution of its function, in particular implementation of the Rural Development Programme which is directed toward, the improvement of the quality of life of persons".

Does that not include water and the provision of water?

The Honourable Minister today said that they would set up a Ministry of Rural Affairs to deal with it. You cannot blame me if you had no plan but was just talking as you did with jobs.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member is reading from a photostat copy of Hansard. Hansard

does not necessarily reflect governmental policies. If you check Hansard you will see that the Honourable Member sought one time to postpone Xmas under the Democratic Labour Party because times were hard.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have got one minute. We are now coming to the end of the debate and time is very precious. You have one minute. 6.10 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: All I am saying in a nutshell is that for development to take place in Barbados there has got to be some degree of seriousness expressed by the present Administration. I am totally dissatisfied. They have not set up the Ministry of Rural Affairs as they said they would, to deal with it. The situation is chaotic, the Minister makes no comments to encourage or sensitise the public that we are in a crisis because he feels badly doing it since he said that it was not because of any drought in the past. I cannot account for his bad feelings. I understand his difficulty but we cannot accept it and I hope that in the very near future we can have an extensive debate on this issue in relation to our land use policy as well. Thank you.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I just want, before the guillotine comes down and the Honourable Member recommit a few items, just to respond briefly to a few points which have been mentioned by the Honourable Member who just spoke.

I think I answered the question with respect to the changing of the zones. With respect to the plan for water there has been an on-going public relations programme on the radio. I believe that the Honourable Member is fully aware of that. The Barbados Water Authority has come out with a Drought Management Plan which Cabinet has not yet discussed and I would not want to go into the details of a Drought Management Plan by the Barbados Water Authority before Cabinet has had the benefit of some discussion. Very shortly we would be letting the public know the results of that Drought Management Plan.

You would have noticed, Mr. Chairman, that during the past few weeks we have embarked on a policy of water conservation and it has certainly been working.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I think we need to get some clarification. Am I to understand the Honourable Member to say that there has been no change in the water zone allocations at all and it has not been discussed by Cabinet and that all those statements which have been made by members of the Government that

Zone 1 as it applies to Bennetts has been changed to Zone 2 are incorrect? Is that what the Honourable Member is saying? And that the option which has been exercised in relation to the sale of land in Bennetts, are we to understand that that is improper?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right, that is sufficient.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: What I referred to with respect to what has to go before the Cabinet is the Drought Management Plan.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to state that...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. By saying what he is saying the Honourable Member would lead the rest of the population to believe that statements of fact that have been made with regard to land at Bennetts are not true. The Honourable Member is therefore misleading the House because it is a fact that the Government has changed the use of land in the Bennetts area and land that was formerly Zone 1 has become Zone 2. And as a result land that was not available for development of a certain kind has now become available.

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

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: We have stepped up our metering programme. It is proposed to have a desalination plant very shortly. We are hoping that the desalination plant which will produce about 4 million gallons per day brackish water will be located at Spring Garden, St. Michael for discharge into the reservoir at St. Stephen's. It is expected that the desalinated water will become available around June 1999.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Has the Minister given any consideration to hiring the services of a water-diviner because all he needs is a white stick to walk around and he could tell you where all the water is.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, this will increase our water supply by as much as 10% but it would also involve an increase in the water rates when the desalination plant has been completed.

Mr. Chairman, we are pressed for time. I know that Honourable Members, the fact that they did not mention the Transport Board means that they obviously are satisfied with the performance of the Transport Board and I would like to invite Members of Parliament to a scenic ride. I will give them the date and I hope that all the Members will attend, under the patronage of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

I beg to move that Head 42 stand part.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order ...

The question that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, a number of Heads have to be recommitted in order that certain amendments may be made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Mr.

CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying that a number of Heads have to be recommitted. It is my contention, Sir, that when they were hurrying through the Heads in order to avoid debate they should have known that amendments were going to be due and therefore we are not going to be agreeing to any recommitting of any Heads which were hustled through in order to avoid debate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this happens every year for the last one hundred and something years and all of a sudden now we are going to hear that we do not recommit Heads. Every single year this happens.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of privilege, Sir. Yesterday a newspaper in this country, on its front page, carried a story that I was not in my place and several Heads were passed implying gross negligence on my part and a reflection on this House.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to make it clear that I was not here because I knew that these Heads would be recommitted and therefore I would have the opportunity to debate them tonight and therefore I hope the general public would appreciate ...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Of course it is an important point of privilege. 6.20 p.m.

Sir, to indicate how significant a point of privilege it is the Honourable Member said, it was not only negligence but gross negligence on my part, which did not occur. Because it occurred to me that these would have to be recommitted and therefore could be debated later.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 25 as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. It is to my certain knowledge that a Member of this House rose on a point of order, I refer to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and has been unable to make that point of order. Now that is a gross distortion of the rights of Members and, Sir, I believe that should not happen in here. I think you may wish to correct that to hear the point of order and to rule upon it. Irrespective of what the Leader of the House or any other person in the House may say.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member for St. Lucy make his point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was going to make the point, Sir, that the Honourable Member was misleading the House by giving the impression that everything was well with the Water Authority. And it is not true that the area at Polar Gardens and at Sandy Lane are still behaving like there is no water problem in this country and that is my point of order, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 25 be recommitted.

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 as amended stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. I believe that this is an indication of monumental incompetence on the part of the Government. These Heads were rushed through on Wednesday morning. The Government must have known then that these Heads needed to be amended. In my view it is an abuse of my rights and other Members rights as Members of this House that at this time there should be amended. They have already been passed and the Government should give an explanation for the amendments which are being made and how it could be so incompetent as to rush - when people were on the back and front bench even on the Government Side who must have wanted to talk on these Heads - to have these Heads passed and now at the eleventh hour in this debate, this incompetence has led to a situation where one of the Heads that we have already passed now comes to be passed. It is unbelievable.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Because we assumed that you knew what you are doing. If we agreed, we assumed that you had the right figures and so on. So why are we now back at this again.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the recommitment of a Head is nothing new in the work of this Committee of the whole House, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. John is, as I say, grandstanding after he has failed to exercise the necessary leadership from his Side.

I saw an account of this entire episode represented in the Press where it was made to appear and the Honourable Member for St. John has not yet contradicted the Press, Sir, that the absence of the Opposition from the House was by agreement with the Government Side because there were a number of Heads that they agreed with us did not warrant debate and that their absence was to allow the House to quickly pass those Heads.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it would seem to me that the Opposition cannot hold that position and now hold the position that he is holding today. The facts are, that the Opposition in this matter, as in so many others, was not only poorly led but it had no leadership whatsoever. The Opposition was not in its benches when these particular Heads were called. They were called not with any agreement between the Government and the Opposition, but they were called because the Opposition were not here to defend its interest, to defend the people's interest, nor to defend the interest of the constituents whom they represent in this House.

The Honourable Member for St. John, Sir, is putting a different spin on this matter. I say to the House, Sir, that the recommitment of Heads is a standard parliamentary practice. Let us press on with the business of the Government.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, Sir, is anxious to say that the Honourable Member for St. John cannot lead him, but we already know that, Mr. Chairman.

I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. John is really reflecting on the rulings of the Chair. The moving of these Heads, Sir and the recommitment is a standard practice and I beg to move that we press on with the Government's business and let us press on with these matters.

The guillotine, Sir, has fallen and there are rules governing...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading you, Sir, and by extension is reflecting on my character. The Leader of the House and the Right Honourable Prime Minister both asked categorically that the next morning we would reclaim the Head of the Honourable Member, the Minister of Labour. We left here with the clear understanding of both sides that the Minister of Labour would lead off the debate. Then I came here, I did not want to hear the Minister of Labour, Sir, because it is very painful to listen to him and, Sir, I thought I would come approximately the time when our Members would have spoken, only to discover that the Minister of Labour was so afraid of the Minister that he could not...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have made your point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am making the point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made it. Please sit.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 28 be recommitted.

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 28 as amended stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 - MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 30 be recommitted.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 30 as amended stand part.

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

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

HEAD 35- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTER-
NATIONAL TRANSPORT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 35 be recommitted, Sir.

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

The question that Head 35 stand part as amended was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division.

HEAD 41 - MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL
TRADE AND BUSINESS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 41 be recommitted, Sir.

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

The question that Head 41 stand part as amended, was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 41 as amended stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division. 6.30 p.m.

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 50 be recommitted, Sir.

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

The question that Head 50 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR GENERAL (as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 10 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 11 -JUDICIARY

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 11 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 11 stand pan was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT (as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 12 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 12 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
(as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 13 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 13 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE (as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 15 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 15 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 16 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 17 - OMBUDSMAN

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 17 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 17 stand pan was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 18 - AUDIT

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 18 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
(as amended)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Head 19 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 19 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 29 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 29 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 29 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 40 - MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE
& BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
(as amended)

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I beg to move that Head 40 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 40 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

The Schedule as amended, \$1 021120 201 was called and passed.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 as amended, was called and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 1998.

ORDER NO. 11 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE
RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF
SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANTS
OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF BARBADOS

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 11 (a) - HEAD 25 - MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, in moving that Head 25 stand part, I must indicate to this Honourable House that the purpose in bringing this is to tidy up the Ministry's finances in time for the end of the financial year at March 31, 1998. When planning for financial year 1997/98, two projects within the Ministry had not yet come on stream and by the time they came on stream during 1997/98 it was necessary for them to have been staffed by people who were not permanent staff but by people who were temporary staff and because no provision was made to provide personal emoluments for them, I am asking this Honourable House to approve the sum of \$153 000 under subprogramme 250601 - Item 102.1 am also asking this Honourable House to approve the sum of \$11 920 to cover the cost of Other Personal Emoluments.

With these two brief remarks, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am glad to be able to debate not only next year's Estimates but also last year's seeing that I did not get an opportunity last

year to discuss this particular Head. I am grateful to the Honourable Minister for introducing this Head at this time. 6.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the water problem in this country is very important, not only for golfers but for the small farmers throughout Barbados. I am extremely grateful to be able to say a few words on behalf of all of those small farmers whether they are in St. Lucy, Christ Church, St. Philip, St. Joseph or St. Andrew and all those throughout Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, as I pass through certain areas in Barbados one cannot believe that we have a serious water problem. The farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project have spent thousands or millions of dollars to develop their farms and they cannot get one drop of water to develop their farms but whenever you pass through Sandy Lane or Holders Green on the polo field you are seeing so much water that when you pass you get your car washed with the amount of water that is circulating in that area.

I want to know, Sir, if there is a law for the small farmers and if there is a law for the golfers in this country because it is clear to me that there is a policy in place and I would like the Ministry of Agriculture to point out to me whether I am wrong or not that there is a duplicate policy where there is a policy for the golfers and one for the farmers. It is regrettable that from the time this country was developed we had farmers looking after the interest of this country and the people who have developed this country now cannot get one drop of water to till their lands but people who fly in here by night can get all the water they want to play polo or golf.

Sir, I am not saying that the people who have the polo fields should not get water. My point is that the people who are farmers, everything should be done to make sure that those people get the same supply of water to feed Barbadians.

We are in a serious situation and if it continues as it stands Barbados will have to use the foreign reserves that we have built up to buy food when people can come here and at a flick of a rod and they can get all the water and the farmers cannot get any water.

I am also asking the Minister to tell me what is included in the Estimates to make sure that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, that they put a policy in place to make sure that ratooning as we know it continues to be the plan like older years and that we can get a better ratooning crop in this country.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation in this country and I will repeat this point that when canes are planted now we do not have a guarantee that we will get two or three crops out of them anymore. If anybody doubts me, Sir, all they have to do is to go around to the plantations and ask them to show you the second crop and the third crop canes that were harvested by the mechanical harvesters and also planted by the mechanical harvesters.

Mr. Chairman, when you look at those canes you would not believe that they are second crop and third crop canes. They are all dried up and we are spending millions of dollars every year in the agricultural industry and we cannot gain the valuable foreign exchange that is needed in this country. We need now to go back to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company and to ask the Barbados Agricultural Management Company for a new policy because it is clear to me that we have guaranteed large sums of money in this country to develop our agricultural industry and we are not getting the results.

You had the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, a good company that has been set up to develop agriculture in this country and we cannot get the goods coming from that company because we have moved towards mechanism which is not providing the necessary results that we want.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph yesterday spoke about the wages that are being paid to the agricultural workers in this country. I am saying that some of the subsidies that are paid to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company can be paid to those workers to make sure that mechanical planting be reverted back to hand planting as we knew it before. We must find a way that the harvester can cut the canes but the poor people must be allowed to get the necessary day's work. No one day's work is good enough for people if you want agriculture to continue.

What we are doing is developing a system that soon from now we would not have anybody to resort back to agriculture. We are creating an atmosphere where farmers are getting the money and workers who are sweating in the fields can only get \$40 and \$50 per week. We need to go back to a system where the workers can continue to get something from out of the fields where they worked hard.

This Head of Ministry of Agriculture also have Rural Development and I am being asked for a supplementary for the Head and whenever I get a supplementary for this Head, I do not know where it is going to be spent. I do not know how much money in this Head will be spent on my constituency.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not care who listens. Let me tell you something. My people from St. Lucy sent me here to get some roads. I want to know from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development how much of this money will be spent on roads in St. Lucy. That is what interest me. I do not care who listens. I am here to make sure that my constituency get something from this money.

I will continue to ask the Minister how much of the rural vote will go towards St. Lucy. I am very interested in that because if we do not get votes in this House that reflects on a constituency basis we could as well shut down Parliament and go home because all we do is to come in here and vote for money and we do not know how the money is being spent. We parliamentarians are wasting our time coming here and we cannot tell any of our constituents what will be done in a particular year. I want the Ministry of Rural Development to tell me how much of this money will go towards St. Lucy. If other parliamentarians do not want some, I want some.

Mr. Chairman, I need to know how much of the money voted in this Head will be going towards the constituency of St. Lucy. If other parliamentarians do not want any, I am sorry but I know that my leader wants some and the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South wants some too. I am saying, Sir, that we need to go to a policy in agriculture to make sure that when this sum of money is paid out that we are getting results.

I am saying, Sir, that since 1994 the goods are not being delivered. We talk a lot of foolishness about drought and sugar cane but let me tell you something. Sugar cane has been the crop of Barbados because of the same reason that we are complaining about. Because it is able to survive when the rainfall is not high. We have an additional problem where we are planting canes horizontally and not vertically as we used to. What you are doing is getting more canes in the first crop but because of a rooting problem the second crop and third crop is no crop.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The money that we are paying out we are not getting the results.

I am saying this, Mr. Chairman, I should not have to bring this to Parliament. The advisors in the sugar industry should be the ones bringing this type of information to the Ministry of Agriculture. I can bet any amount of money that he has not been given this advice yet. I challenge him to get up and tell me that what I am talking is wrong or that he has received this advice because wherever you drive through Barbados you are seeing sugar cane drying up and people telling you about El Nino. That is foolishness. It is because of a bad planting system in this country.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that the Ministry of Agriculture needs to call his advisors and ask them for the true reason why the sugar cane crops in this country are drying up. I want the Honourable Members who do work in their constituencies to walk around and see that second-crop canes and third-crop canes in this country look like ten-crop and thirteen-crop.

We as parliamentarians, we need to solve that problem because we would have wasted our \$100 million on the BAMC if we do not solve that particular problem. We must be serious about what we are doing. I expect the Ministry of Agriculture to do the necessary thing to make sure that next year when the sugar cane crop is replanted in certain fields that we do not get the same end result.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the various concerns have been noted. They will be addressed subject to resources.

I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 6.50 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in respect of Object 611 - Maintenance of Property, under Structures, Sir, \$150 000 was voted \$10 000 was spent. There is a savings of \$140 000. Since you cannot borrow from 623 to 611 you have to come under a separate line head to supplement 611. So in truth and in fact there is no expense. It is just a set-off of the new vote against what exists by way of savings in the Structures vote. That \$140 000 is required by installation of a new electronic security system for the Prisons and the work should start early next week.

In respect of the \$252 000 that is really from one Government pocket to another. In the calculation for materials and supplies no account was taken of the impact of VAT and this represents the 15% VAT that would be payable in respect of the supplies and materials for the financial year.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I would not say it is non-functional but it is not performing to its best capability and we are taking the opportunity to modernise it and install a new security system through a Trinidadian firm that

is installing security systems in prisons throughout the region, is building a prison in St. Lucia and has built one in Trinidad.

I beg to move that Head 30 stand part. I am much obliged to the Opposition for their consideration.

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

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the matter which is before this Honourable Committee relates to 3 or 4 different sums and in moving that the Head stand part, I would just note that the largest amount is in fact for the University of the West Indies. We had a record 200 more admissions in 1996/97 above what is estimated and that would be \$4.1 million. The \$1 million is for Alexandra School Hall. We started building that some 18 months ago and this sum has allowed them to continue and complete the process. The adult hospitality institute - we have just received the final accounts to bring to a close the amounts owed for that as well as the amount of \$73 000 under Plant, Furniture and Equipment.

Finally the Other Personal Emoluments for \$70 000 under School Meals so as to be able to complete payment of salaries this month and tidy up the accounts since they had a little more sick leave this year than normal.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, I just want to be sure that the problems that occurred during the last year, do not occur again when we had students at Mona waiting for their moneys to come.

I also want to make the point that my understanding is that there are some students who were awaiting funding from the Students Revolving Loan Fund and had difficulties in Trinidad. We want to be sure that Students are not stranded when they leave Barbados and be embarrassed. It not only embarrasses the students but it also embarrasses the country. I just want these issues be addressed for the future.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am a little concerned, Sir. I would like to turn to page 6 and look at the notes. These notes come from the Ministry of Education. I think on the next occasion that the Minister comes down here with a note on an addendum, I expect her to bring a note that is more in keeping with what one

expects from a Ministry of Education. This note will not suit. Look at the last phrase "Owing to the increase in students registering". Now, Sir, I will not have that in the future so when the Minister goes back to her Ministry, I would like her to remonstrate with those who sent this down here.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, no, the Minister could not possibly have written that. Are you sure that the amount for interest is \$8 million. That is what it says here, "the sum of \$8 145 628.20 is required to meet the cost of interest accrued as a result of late payments to the University". That is only part. Which portion is interest? All right I will not ask any more questions.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is as a result of the 220 odd students more registering and then the others relate to interest between 1993-96 triennium and 1996-97 academic year. I certainly note the lack of language that has been exhibited in the Addendum.

In respect of the other problem raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, Mr. Chairman as far as and certainly to the best of my knowledge, the University of the West Indies issued a public apology to the Government of Barbados and to the Ministry of Education for the incorrect submission that was transmitted by the Registrar at Mona, making people believe that we were not paying for persons and therefore there was absolutely no basis whatsoever for the newspaper report that persons could not receive funds from the Government of Barbados.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, there is no difficulty with respect to the Student Revolving Loan Fund disbursing funds. In fact we should be bringing amendments to the Regulations in the very near future to this Chamber to widen the scope.

With those words, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 34 stands part.

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

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

HEAD 35 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTER- NATIONAL TRANSPORT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in begging to move that this Head stand part, I would wish to point out that this is a supplementary to

accommodate certain fixed costs re travelling rates and so on, provision was not made for them in the 1997- 98 Estimates. 7.00 p.m.

There is an increase in the cost of conducting the Visitors Satisfaction Survey which we shared between the Ministry of Tourism and other agencies. Also in respect of the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation (BTIC) the cost of accommodating the staff of the BTIC now removed from Dover to Sherbourne and the additional cost for cladding the steel in the back of the Sherbourne Conference Centre. We were advised that to dismantle the steel at the back of Sherbourne would cost \$1 million. Equally it would have cost \$1 million to clad it and protect it for the future. There is money in there for that process which is going to start in a matter of days. Then in respect of the Tourism Development Programme...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, you have to protect it. It is exposed to the elements and deteriorating.

The Tourism Development Programme, we are asking for a supplementary under that sub-head. The second Tourism Investment Conference is taking place in Ocho Rios next week. The first took place in Nassau in the Bahamas last year. Prime Minister Arthur was very well received there but we prepared in the Ministry of Tourism a very nice looking brochure projecting and promoting Barbados as a destination not only for leisure but for business and investment.

It was snapped up so quickly and so much in demand that we have decided that we will distribute more this year. But we have to do virtually twice as many and so part of this supplementary is going to that documentation which will be distributed at the second Tourism Investment Conference in Jamaica next week and at that conference Barbados is bidding to host the 1999 Investment Conference as well.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 35 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Ministry of Health is seeking to supplement its vote \$446 453 and I beg to move that it stand part, Sir.

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

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

On motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Resolution has now been passed.

ORDER NO. 7 - A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE TO GOVERNMENT OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF \$10 MILLION AND THE INTEREST THEREON FOR THE REDEMPTION OF HOUSING BONDS TO BE ISSUED BY THE BARBADOS NATIONAL BANK

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, every ten years the Barbados National Bank issues housing bonds to enable it to finance the operations of the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation.

The last housing bonds were issued in 1988 with a structure for the loan instrument and terms exactly similar to those proposed this evening, namely, Sir, 7 percent interest. These bonds will be denominated in units of \$100 each and the bonds will be tax free up to \$50 000. I beg to move, Sir, the same structure, effectively just rolling over the bond, do now pass.

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

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

ITEM 10 - RESOLUTION THAT AN ADDRESS BE PRESENTED TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL APPROVING THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF CARL LEON INCE, ESQUIRE, TO THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has proposed and the Leader of the Opposition has concurred in the proposal to have Mr. Carl Ince appointed to the post of Ombudsman, under section 2 of the Ombudsman Act, Sir.

Before the Governor-General shall appoint the person, he is required to have the proposed appointment approved by both Houses of Parliament. This resolution therefore, Sir, is to formally seek the formal approval of Parliament for the appointment of Mr. Carl Ince to the position of Ombudsman.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. Hon.

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

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

ORDER NO. 9 - TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE INCOME TAX AMENDMENT BILL, 1998

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the matters before the House in the amendment of the Income Tax Act are intended to give effect to Budgetary Proposals announced in my budgetary presentation in September of this year, Sir, they do not depart in any iota from what was proposed.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by the Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair. 7.10 p.m.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 8 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Income Tax (Amendment) Act, 1998.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 14, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, if I may speak on the adjournment to say that on behalf of all Members, I would like to offer to the Clerks-at-the-Table, the staff, particularly the reportorial staff, the caterers and others who are here to look after our security and care for our well-being during this very long, intense and stressful week when we are here, a very warm thank you.

I am reminded that I must not forget those who sit at the Press Box. We thank them for their attendance and their reporting on the business before the House. As has been said at the beginning of this debate, it really is the most important week in the calendar of this Parliament. I think it is safe to say that Honourable Members conducted themselves with due decorum and that Your Honour would have had no occasion to be concerned with the honour of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, too, I would like to take the opportunity, since the Christian festival of Easter will have occurred by the time we return to the Chamber, to offer to Honourable Members and to all the persons, I have aforementioned our best wishes for a blessed and restful Easter break.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief in supporting the Resolution moved by the Honourable Member for the City, the Leader of the House, and to extend the gratitude of the Opposition to the Clerks-at-the-Table, the Reporters, the Press, the many persons who assisted with the work of the House during the course of this week, those who assisted us and those who assisted the Government, to the Chairman of Committees for the evenhanded way in which he conducted the debates, his first following on the lead provided by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East on previous occasions.

I believe that particularly because of the demeanour of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central that we all need to be much more cooperative with him when he is executing his duties. I have noticed a slight tendency by Members when he had indicated to them their time was up not to be as courteous and as thoughtful to him. I spoke to him about it and I said he needs to stamp his approval on the proceedings here following on other traditions.

To you, Sir, Mr. Speaker, I am certain that this being your fourth Estimates that you must be very proud of the Members of both Sides of this Chamber for the way in which they have conducted themselves during these Estimates.

With that said I wish you, Members of the Government and all the others who I said have assisted us a very blessed Easter period. I hope that coming out of that Easter we will be able to continue to work very hard

and get a lot of the Private Members¹ Business concluded very early when we return after the Easter period.

Thank you.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 14, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
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