

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 20, 1999

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, April 20, 1999.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M. (Cantab.)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)
Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)
Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)
Mr. R. D. MARSHALL
Mr. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)
Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)
Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN
Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Health)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)
Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS
Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.
Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.
Mr. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A.
Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.A. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Monday, March 15, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of Monday, March 15, 1999 have been circulated and, subject to any observations, I would move that they be confirmed.

Before moving the confirmation, I wish to draw attention to what I consider is the need for standardisation of the Minutes. On the first page of the Minutes the names of Honourable Members appear with academic qualifications following those names. It is to my knowledge that at least five members have academic qualifications but they do not properly appear after their names. I thought that some weeks ago I had submitted a list with the academic qualifications of those members whose names appeared at that time without the appropriate academic suffix.

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I am going to ask that the Clerks repeat (he exercise. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East are the legitimate holders of degrees and it is a little bit discriminatory to have the degrees appear after the names of some and not all who are entitled.

I make this observation about the Minutes and ask that in future all degrees be shown in respect of those persons who are holders. Subject to that observation, I beg to move that the Minutes be confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt from the Accountant General of the Accounts and Statements for the months of April, May, June and July 1998.

PAPERS

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

1. Report of the Social Investment Fund for the quarter ended December 31,1998.
2. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter Ended December 31,1998.
3. The Customs (Amendment) Regulations, 1999.
4. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (No. 2) Order, 1999.
5. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (No. 3) Order, 1999.
6. The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1998.
7. Report of the Accountant General for the Financial Year 1997-1998.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The Instrument Adopted by the International Labour Organisation at its 86th session which was held in Geneva from June 2 to June 8, 1998.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill, the Trafalgar Square (Change of Name) Bill, 1999 and to indicate that Government would wish to deal with this Bill in all its stages today.

I also give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of parcels of land at Cheapside, St. Michael for the Cheapside Rehabilitation Project.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Trafalgar Square (Change of Name) Bill, 1999 be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 9 - THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE (CHANGE OF NAME) BILL, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter before the House is set out in a Bill which is one of the simplest but I would dare suggest one of the most significant that we will bring to the House during this session. It is a Bill of two clauses, the first that the Bill be cited as the Trafalgar Square (Change of Name) Act and the second is the provision that as from the 28th day of April, 1999 the place in the City of Bridgetown known as Trafalgar Square shall be named "National Heroes Square".

Sir, there is a tendency on the part of some to trivialise the efforts being made by this Administration to attach an appropriate honour and dignity to the celebration of National Heroes in this country. I hope that in the course of this debate this Parliament by the enactment of this legislation will rescue the national debate pertaining to national heroes from the vulgarity to which it is descending in certain places in this country.

The matter of elevating persons to the status of National Hero and the matter of holding up our heroes as appropriate role models for this society is not a trivial matter. It is not an exercise in the bread and circus as was the case under the Romans.

In 1986, a person who today is celebrated as a National Hero made what perhaps was the political speech of the century. The Right Excellent Errol Barrow in an historic speech challenged this society by the question: "What mirror image do you have of yourself?"

By that statement, Sir, he was recognising and telling the Barbadian society that we cannot successfully develop this society as a cohesive society unless we start with a sense of confidence and certainty about our identity as a people, unless we accept that the Barbadian personality is something that we should not be ashamed about, and unless we are prepared to agree that there are certain aspects of that Barbadian personality as represented in the work and the worth of the more significant Barbadians in our history that we should keep holding before our people as the emblems and the symbols of what being Barbadian is about. 11.35a.m.

I believe, Sir, also that the message in that question: "What mirror image do we have of ourselves?", was a message directed to the young people of this society in particular who are being bombarded day and night by images drawn from other traditions, other cultures and other legacies that have nothing whatsoever to do with being Barbadian. A lot of the alienation, a lot of the confusion among our youth in particular derives from the fact that they have presented before them very fractured images as to who they are and who they should be. It is fundamental to our efforts to build a Barbadian society that we should be clear as to who our heroes are, what are the appropriate symbols of the Barbadian character and we should be confident, Mr. Speaker, about dignifying those symbols of our character and our national identity in appropriate ways and also finding the best possible means of having the symbols of our national identity represented to the people in a way that should be visible to all and would make all of us proud.

This Government, Sir, has committed itself by way of its Manifesto at page 17 to the establishment of a National Heroes Square and the establishment of a National Heroes Gallery in the West Wing of Parliament. What we have embarked upon should not come as a surprise to the society. Nor is it a Government titillated with the excesses of its electoral majority seeking to force something on an unwilling public. We asked the people of Barbados for a mandate to establish a National Heroes Square and to establish a National Heroes Gallery in the West Wing of Parliament and

the people voted for this as part of the general mandate that they gave to the Barbados Labour Party.

I want to establish that point first of all because there are some persons who hold politics and politicians in contempt who will not want to run to come to this House, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but will want to exercise power as if they were in this Parliament, who will not want us to carry through the mandate as is set out in our Manifesto for which the public has already voted.

I say to the House that this Government is carrying out the purposes for which it was duly elected as represented in our commitments on page 17 of the Manifesto to establish a National Heroes Square and a National Heroes Gallery. We know that there are some persons, as I have said, who are contemptuous of politics and politicians and who speak in the name of democracy who will want to believe that unless they have their way, democracy is not being carried out in this country. We asked for this mandate, Sir, and we are carrying out a mandate as represented in our Manifesto.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my fundamental view that our National Heroes should be held up in a dignified manner and that they should occupy a place in the very centre of our society. The notion of having our National Heroes hived off to some car park at the back of Government Headquarters or in some obscure place may suit the purposes of some, but our heroes deserve and require to be represented at the very centre of our society. The centre of that society must be at the very centre of our most important City, in the environs of this Parliament where the people's business has traditionally been conducted by the people's representatives.

Sir, most of the National Heroes also served in this Parliament and I truly believe that it is a fitting thing, a correct thing and a proper thing for the centre of our most important city, Bridgetown, which has been at the core and source of our history and has been so involved in the formation of this society, I believe that it is a most fitting thing that the centre of our City should be dignified by being designated as that place where our National Heroes are recognised formally by having the centre of Bridgetown re-designated as National Heroes Square. Every Barbadian and every visitor to this country will be in a position to know that we are proud of the symbols of our national identity to the point where, Sir, we would want to hold them up at the very centre of our society.

There have been a lot of contentious issues pertaining to the place of Mr. Horatio Nelson in that Square. I just want to say today for the benefit of the House, Sir, that Cabinet has agreed to the re-naming of Trafalgar Square. Cabinet has also agreed that a special Committee should be established to examine all of the ways in which Trafalgar

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Square and the West Wing of Parliament should be dignified in a manner appropriate to their designation as the place where we will celebrate the achievements and the work of our National Heroes. That Committee, Sir, will be headed by the Clerk of Parliament and it will be given a mandate to supervise a process of national consultation so that we can get the inputs of the public in general as regards the ways in which National Heroes Square and the West Wing of Parliament will be adorned so as to confer an appropriate honour and dignity on those persons whom we have classed as National Heroes.

The image that we have made an arbitrary decision to remove Nelson is not something that we are aware of. We have decided to establish a group, as I have said, headed by the distinguished Clerk of this Parliament to advise us as to how we should proceed to develop the new National Heroes Square and the West Wing of Parliament in a manner fitting the status of our National Heroes.

I am not going to anticipate the recommendations that will come from that Committee but I just want to go on record as saying what are my own strong views. We have already designated as a Parliament and as a Government who our National Heroes are. Another Parliament at some time in the future may want to revisit the issue but for the time being, Sir, there are ten persons designated as the National Heroes of Barbados. The intent by some to import the status of national hero and impose it on persons of their choice is an arbitrary undemocratic action that flies in the face of what democracy should be about. There are some people who are now telling us who their own personal heroes are and as citizens they have their right to that particular choice.

Sir, the notion of a national hero is a concept that is so important to our attempts to develop a national identity that I would want that concept not be vulgarised by persons seeking now to suggest that who is not a national hero ought to be a national hero. I want particularly, Mr. Speaker, to say that the notion that there should either be black or white national heroes has no place in Barbados. A hero is not a hero because he is either black or white but because he has done heroic things. I want to make that point, it has nothing to do with blackness or whiteness. In fact, when I spoke at Government Headquarters on the occasion of the designation of National Heroes Day, I made the point that what struck me was not so much the blackness or whiteness but the blend of colour of our national heroes and that they reflect the blend of the Barbadian society.

No persons should be designated Barbadian National Heroes merely because they happen to be black. No person should be designated a national hero of Barbados merely because he or she happens to be white. 11.45p.m.

One should be designated a national hero because one has done something of extraordinary quality sustained over a period that has changed the course of this country's history for the better and that it was an act of such extraordinary excellence that the contribution of that person could be held up as something that persons should seek to emulate and achieve.

Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir, is a national hero in my view because he performed as a cricketer with a degree of excellence that no other Barbadian in any other field in the entire history of Barbados has managed to emulate and that is what makes him heroic. Not the fact that he was born black, but because he was an emblem of Barbadian excellence. I am saying that those persons in this society who now would want us to go out of our way to impose on ourselves a hero who is a white hero, in my judgement, are subscribing to a form of subtle racism.

They are not going to say at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that there are people who should be designated as heroes because they are black and for no other reasons. I want to make that point very clearly that I have nothing against white people. I want the vulgarity to come out of the debate and if at sometime in the future there are persons who believe that there are people who in our past history are deserving of being elevated to the level of a national hero, let it be upon the basis of an objective analysis of their real contribution to this society's development, rather than upon the basis of the notion that there has to be a kind of reverse affirmative action by us now as a society in dealing with the question of racism as it pertains to the naming of National Heroes.

As regards Sir Horatio Nelson, my own judgment is that his contribution to Barbados' history was simply to ensure quite frankly that Barbadians do not speak a form of patois like St. Lucia.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: His contribution was to make sure that Barbadians remained in the hands of the British rather than enter the hands of the French. His real impact on Barbadian history has been to enshrine a British legacy and particularly to ensure that Barbadians do not speak patois as some persons in the Eastern Caribbean do. But, as between the choices to whether or not our colonial masters should be English or French, Sir, to me that is the choice between whether you want to be hung as a lamb or hung as a sheep. Colonial domination, whether by the British or the French was colonial domination that was not intended to develop the Barbadian society, but to enrich the colonial powers.

I must say from the Floor of this House that certainly there is nothing in his career that would qualify him to me to

be treated as a Barbadian hero. If the British want to adopt him as a British hero, fine. He served the British cause well. But in the context of Barbadian history, Sir, I could not easily agree that a person who merely stopped this country from being captured by the French and imbibing a bit of French culture should be elevated to that pantheon of persons whom we want to hold up to our young people in particular as the representation of Barbadian excellence or of our people who, over a sustained period have by the dint of sacrifice and great effort, Sir, made a fundamental difference, for the better, in the manner in which this society has been developed.

It will now be left, however, Sir, as I said when I first mentioned this matter earlier in the year for us to have a form of consultation and we are going to allow a process of consultation on the matter, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because we believe that Barbadians should be allowed to participate in fundamental decisions affecting how we develop this country.

The designation of a National Heroes Square and the appropriate honouring of our National Heroes is not a trivial activity, Sir. It is something that goes fundamentally to the development of this society, as much as our economy policy or fight against poverty and our general social policy.

So that I hope, Sir, that we can take a lot of the heat out of this debate. There will be a group chaired by the Clerk of Parliament that will convene national consultations "at strategic places so that the public can make an input, not just into how we adorn Trafalgar Square, but how we will treat the Halls of Heroes which will be established at the West Wing of Parliament.

I want to say in particular that I hope this initiative also is the beginning of an initiative for us to carry out some serious redevelopment of Bridgetown. There is still so much to be done to have Bridgetown develop in a manner that befits its status as our leading urban centre. The Honourable Member for the City will speak to this, I am sure, but the matter of Bridgetown proper redevelopment and the removal of a lot of the squalor from Church Village and other parts of the City is a matter that cannot any longer tarry.

I am glad, Sir, that the Central Bank has recognised its responsibility to its immediate environs and has designated \$2 million to assist in the rehabilitation of Church Village. When the building of the Central Bank was first conceived of, it was intended that that should have been part of the general redevelopment of the Church Village area and its environs, which has stood out as a block on this City. The Central Bank building was built, but the general improvement of the Church Village was not proceeded with, but that is very much now not only on the cards, but resources have been committed for that purpose.

I would like this House, Sir, to enthusiastically support the renaming of Trafalgar Square as National Heroes Square. May I say for the benefit of the House that this will not be the first time in the history of Barbados that the area named as Trafalgar Square has been renamed.

The Clerk of Parliament was very good to bring to my attention, Schomburgk's History of Barbados and before it was called Trafalgar Square, Sir, it used to be called The Green. It was The Upper Green and there is still a Lower Green of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East says that it needs renaming and perhaps we can consider that too, Sir. There was a time when Trafalgar Square had a different name. It was called, The Green.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: I am not going to get into that debate, Sir, but I would urge the Honourable Member for St. Lucy not to look backward, but to look forward.

The point I am making, Sir, is that that is not the first time that this has been done. In other Caribbean countries, Mr. Speaker, there have been situations where monuments to British monarchs have been removed from one part of the City to the other.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am also sure that in Jamaica the statue of Queen Victoria was moved, but in our own circumstances the monument opposite the Library was in Lower Broad Street.

I hope however, Sir, that at the end of the day the group that will be designated with the responsibility to help us to plan this and to take the public input will come up with a set of proposals of which all Barbadians can be proud.

We have in the centre of our City, Sir, the monument of the war dead and it is appropriate that the war dead should be in National Heroes Square, because in a sense they paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. And those who would want us to place the National Heroes Square elsewhere, like in a back yard at Government Headquarters, Sir, miss the point. 11.55a.m.

It must not only be in the centre of our City but in a place which has already come to attract the public empathy, as a place dignified by the presence of those who are remembered there.

All of Barbados' heroes should have statues, Sir, but all obviously could not go in National Heroes Square. There is already a statue of Sir Grantley Adams at Government Headquarters, and we do not propose to move that, Sir.

But there is no doubt, Sir, that the Barbadian public should now not only see a memorial to our war dead in National Heroes Square and a beautified and dignified Fountain Gardens with a fountain that functions as a fountain and is a thing of beauty, Sir, but that Barbadian youth should be able to see at the centre of our City symbols representing the best quality of what being Barbadian is about, Sir, and that is what we are trying to do in this particular endeavour. We believe, Sir, that there should be no national rancour about this matter whatsoever, and that it should be proceeded with, with good sense, with good taste and in a dignified manner.

I wish the group of which the Clerk of Parliament is the Chairman will preside over appropriate national consultation, not only in relation to National Heroes Square but also the West Wing of Parliament.

The West Wing of Parliament, Sir, is an asset that has been allowed to remain in relative decay for too long. These precincts, Sir, this Parliament, has been the place where throughout its history in Barbados the people's business has been done.

It is proper that the West Wing of Parliament should now be dignified as a hall for our heroes where their memorabilia, their lives can be on display, where an ordinary Barbadian wanting to understand what Barbadian heroism is about, Sir, can go and see it represented before their very eyes, Sir, where our visitors can also go to see our interpretation as to what the development of this Barbadian society has been about, as represented in the lives, the work and the worth of the persons whom we have designated our National Heroes. I think, Sir, it is a project that we should proceed with, with good sense and good taste.

There are things that have to be done to the West Wing of Parliament that should not be expensive, but should enable us to create an asset of which Barbadians can be proud and would add a richness to the entire precincts of Parliament, such that the sense of alienation that some members of the public sometimes want to express about Parliament, Sir, can be reduced.

But at the end of the day, Sir, Government will have to govern and I am saying that we are allowing a process of national consultation. I stressed the point, Sir, and I want to stress it again, that there are persons who hold politics and politicians in contempt and who very often, Sir, want to hold themselves up as the archangels of democracy, but who are

of the view that unless their point of view and their point of view only is adopted, then democracy is being threatened, Sir.

Their contempt for Government is represented in their view of the fact that if the Government has to take a decision for which it is accountable to its people, Sir, and say so, they do not believe that Government should do those things.

At the end of the day, Sir, Government will govern and that our responsibility will be to be accountable to the people for what we do in relation to the designation and the honouring of our National Heroes, Sir.

We are going to allow consultation on it, Sir. We want to proceed with a sense of propriety. We are not seeking to rewrite any history of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but to set out for the future of our young people in particular, a better perspective as to what the Barbadian identity and the Barbadian character is about, Sir.

This is why this is in Parliament, that we are not doing this by any back door decision, in camera or *in vacuo*. The place where this should be done is on the Floor of this Parliament which has served Barbados so wonderfully well throughout its entire history.

It is with that sense of history, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but more with a sense for the future and what that future should be for Barbadians yet unborn that I have the highest honour to move that this Bill, the Trafalgar Square (Change of Name) Act, 1999 be read a second time. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not think that matters of this sort in the past have attracted great controversy in here and I see no reason why on this occasion they should.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter himself should take a little bit of the blame for the fact that it reaches here while the controversy may still be raging. That is because the Government perhaps made the announcement without enough time being made available for the discussion, the point being that by the time a matter like this reaches here, all of the rancour of the debate should have passed. The strong views expressed on the Other Side should be factored into that debate.

As Barbadians, we have a rich heritage but a significant portion of that heritage which relates to the racial contributions of the majority of Barbadians is the part in which there is the greatest lacuna in our knowledge.

Now, that does not mean that we should be annoyed when white people say that they are proud of their heritage and I do not feel any resentment when I hear a white man say that he is proud of being white or he is proud of his white heritage. That is his affair.

I think Orlando Patterson having spent many years in the rancour of this kind of intellectual debate has written a recent book called "The Ordeal of Integration" which he believes is his right of passage.

He has now come to understand that he spent an entire lifetime saying that as black people we should be proud of our heritage and should speak about it and know about it and search for knowledge. But while he was saying that, he was also getting annoyed every time he met a white man who said he was proud to be white and called that man a racist for saying so.

We have perhaps, therefore, available to us in this Chamber the opportunity of correcting much of that lacuna in our knowledge and we must do that in a proactive way. We must not do it in a defensive way.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter's presentation has to be faulted today, because he is defensive on the matter and he must not be defensive.

From as far back as 1994 the Democratic Labour Party said in its Manifesto and it was the first political party ever to say so on page 39, prefaced by the remark that

"The culture of any society is characterised by uniformity and diversity at one and the same time. However, it is that element of social life around which the people of a nation interact, and it is ultimately the basis of our identity and our development. It is necessary, therefore, that the development of culture, its revitalization, its protection and its promotion as a central factor in national development should be at the forefront of any political agenda."

That was our view and we do not resile from that and that is why we promised on page 40;

"A nation needs to draw strength from its history. Successive generations of Barbadians should be made aware of those persons whose lives have significantly influenced the course of national development. The

next Democratic Labour Party Government will within the first six months of office establish a national broad based commission to recommend criteria for determining those persons on whom the status of national hero will be conferred. A DLP government proposes to establish a National Heroes Square where the busts of national heroes/heroines will be displayed permanently." 12.05 p.m.

I think they should have said "statues" because our experience with the Grantley Adams bust in a public place was not very fortunate. It is far too small and certainly not well placed so perhaps the word "statue" was what was being thought of. Thirdly we said:

"Barbados needs to confer national honours on its citizens who have toiled beyond the call of duty in their several endeavours, and those who have brought distinction to their country. We also need to strengthen our ties with the African diaspora."

There was a matter at that time which had caused considerable debate and it was the pledge by the Democratic Labour Party to rename Farley Hill National Park the Nelson Mandela Park. I do not remember what the position of the Honourable Member for St. Peter was at that time. Farley Hill falls within the constituency of St. Peter...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ... of St. Andrew. Okay. He is off the hook; if not, we would have drawn him out today on his position on that.

We felt strongly then that he is the most outstanding leader of this century and that the Farley Hill National Park should be renamed. People once again got into, the same people, got into the same kind of debate. I do not resent their views. I believe we should have a National Heroes Square. I do not know that Trafalgar Square is the best place. I have not actually sufficiently addressed my mind to that. It is too short a time to do it, but the Government has said that it views that area as a suitable area. You pledged it in your Manifesto. Those persons who voted for you some of whom are the writers in the newspaper obviously did not read the Manifesto. So I suggest that before they write anymore they read the Manifesto of the Party they support and then when they do, they know they will not get any succour from us because four years before that the Democratic Labour Party was recommending - and I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will tell you and that the files in the Ministry of Culture will confirm - that I felt extremely

strongly and still feel strongly and will go to my grave feeling strongly that the time had long passed for Barbados to identify its pantheon.

In addition to that, in a sense a renaming of the entire landscape of Barbados where appropriate should be undertaken as part of that initiative. It is a small area. The most I would say about Trafalgar Square is that, thank goodness, the Democratic Labour Party so redesigned that area that it is now suitable without a single alteration to receive the strong support, even of the Member for the City who I do not know supported that project. Without a single alteration, it is suitable for renaming as a National Heroes Square at short notice, a matter to which I say I am not addressing my mind but I will say that credit should be given to the Ministry of Public Works for the work that it undertook in that area to make it as beautiful as it is and so suitable to be named, as I say, without any major physical alteration into a National Heroes Square as proposed by the Barbados Labour Party.

I want to reiterate, hopefully for the benefit of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, that I do feel strongly that these debates are going to be characterised by discussion about race, about complexion, about social background. It is because we bring all of these issues to the table in our normal political discourse. The only thing is that we probably bring with them more hypocrisy and that hypocrisy then translates itself into the national discourse. People then start to take positions which they are not even conscious that they are taking in the name of white Barbados, in the name of black Barbados, in the name of Indian, or Chinese or Syrian Barbados and so on. So my own view is that much of that hypocrisy has translated itself into the discourse on this occasion, that in seeking to fill that lacuna in our knowledge and that break in our connection and our relationship to our history, the Government at the same time must never, particularly where it has such a large majority, appear not to be giving an opportunity for the widest possible debate on the matter.

Even though the Government must govern, it certainly in my view fell to the responsibility of those who are now being paid from the public purse to undertake this kind of debate. From the time the elections were over they should have started that debate so that by the time it reached here all of that rancour, all of those different views would have been available. I do not think you can stop it, but at least we would have had an informed debate in here and probably we may even have been able to resolve some of those elements of hypocrisy that exist.

I will make bold to say that the planning for this year's National Heroes Day has essentially been an afterthought and the work that has gone into the planning of National

Heroes Day would give credence to the view of those who were of the view that the placing of National Heroes Day last year on the birthday of Grantley Adams was a political move and the Government needs to avoid that.

I am cautioning that if we are having a National Heroes Day the planning for it should be year round. I have seen the planning for Independence Day activities develop into a serious programme. From the time one Independence Day is finished, my St. John Committee is cutting down bush, doing this, and planning for the next Independence. From the time of National Heroes Day last year was finished, work should have started on the programme for this year's National Heroes Day. At the last minute, in the past few weeks, a flood of letters and faxes and calls have been received by the Democratic Labour Party to get us involved in activities which at the last minute, with the greatest will even with money, is going to be extremely difficult to plan and execute. It is going to be almost as difficult for you to plan and execute those activities.

I felt that it would be desirable....

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What they are asking for is the involvement of major national institutions but the lead-up time for planning and mobilising people... You see, what may very well happen and you will find this: the same key people in the unions may be some of your key people and our key people. Some of the same key people in other national organisations may be your key people and ours. There must have been a better way that we could mobilise the resources of all Barbadians in the lead-up to National Heroes Day and I am saying the planning has been absolutely unsatisfactory.

We will do the best we can because we believe that National Heroes Day should be celebrated but I am very dissatisfied and I feel that the Government needs to correct this aberration by ensuring that a more consistent and better organised programme for the celebration of National Heroes Day is put in place in the future.

When you compare with what happened last year. Of course, you could not hold back last year. Up to now I have not seen the final figures. The point is that, based on that great start there was something to build on because once you have a momentum like that you can build very quickly on it. Everybody will then want to be involved. When you break that off by that poor level of planning, then you have a problem. Let us get it sorted out next year. I believe even the Government itself must be uncomfortable, too, because the way in which all the activities are disjointed and mixed up and we are not sure who is in charge and you get calls

from people that you do not even know are working in Government planning and organising these activities. A word to the wise is enough because we consider it to be a serious matter which needs serious attention. 12.15p.m.

I remember in relation to Errol Barrow Day we started and every year consistently we had a cultural programme and other activities. These things are very difficult to maintain but if you have a core of people, as certainly the Government has at its disposal - the kinds of people who could be involved are certainly more that we ever had - it is possible for you to have a non-partisan, serious programme of activities which mobilises everybody in the effort.

I have never as a politician advised my constituents or any organisation that I am involved in to avoid its national duty to be involved in national activities. As long as we accept that the activities do not have a partisan political basis and that they are good and healthy for the country you can rest assured that the Democratic Labour Party's involvement, the involvement of my branch and certainly the Honourable Member for St. Lucy feels the say way about his, will be forthcoming.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We have not seen that kind of thing this year in the way that we would like. As an alternative then, I think that Government also needs to have regard to the fact that there are other potential sites. I know the Honourable Member for St. Peter is often influenced by what happens in Jamaica but in Jamaica, their National Heroes venue is obviously so attractive now that instead of bringing the heroes venue to Parliament, they now want to move Parliament down to their National Heroes Square.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There may be a different reason for that. The point is that they have a large area, almost a sanctuary, for their National Heroes. It is not well maintained, it could be much better maintained, but the point is that it is a large area. We do not have that area in our City. We probably will never be able to identify a large enough area and it therefore means that you have to take an area that is already designated, whether Government sees it as Trafalgar Square - in the National Heroes debate I suggested Queens Park - at some point somebody suggested Farley Hill and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy no doubt has a site in St. Lucy because most of the National Heroes have their origins in St. Lucy and therefore he has, I am certain, a site where he could locate....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, it could be next to that airport and I will have no problem with that at all.

Let us therefore, as I have said, move away from the symbolic gestures. I am not going to get into the contribution of Nelson at this time because it is not before me for consideration except to say that if all that Nelson did was to stop Barbadians from being able to appreciate the pleasures of speaking patois.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...if that is all, because I am not saying it is, then I would like to tell Members that they have been deprived of a very special pleasure.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As you know, French is the language of romance and coupled with good English - and St. Lucians are very well known for their command of the English Language - I therefore believe that if that is the basis on which Nelson is to be removed from Trafalgar Square, I will have to reflect a bit more on that and consult the patois speakers in my family to see if they agree.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But that is not before us. What is before us is the National Heroes Square. I say that the Democratic Labour Party was always in favour of establishing it. Government said that it is in favour of Trafalgar Square. We are saying that we have to see how that unfolds, there are also other locations in Barbados that could be considered, but that, in matters such as this, let us have a longer lead up time so that all of those interested, the stakeholders, the public commentators, the frustrated politicians, the intellectuals and so on in Barbados can make their input into the debate. When we come here what we are essentially doing is distilling from those inputs our views and that we are giving consideration even to the most nonsensical, even to the most unreasonable view point because a Government which has a large majority must always be careful to do so. That is my greatest consideration and fear in this matter, the lead-up time for discussion of it. It is very important but I am glad that the Barbados Labour Party Government having read the Democratic Labour Party 1994 Manifesto....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If you compare the Barbados Labour Party 1994 Manifesto and the 1999 Manifesto, the 1994 Manifesto on culture was interested in the commercial aspects of the performing arts and culture but

by 1999 it drew very heavily on an intellectual tradition which was the Democratic Labour Party's. We know that as being the mission of the Honourable Member for St. Peter and in this regard, since that is his mission, all I can say is that I hope in copying the Democratic Labour Party's proposal in that regard, he will implement them, and that he will get his colleagues to implement them with the same sincerity with which we would have implemented them had we been elected in 1994. That is all I would say about that aspect of it for now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to support this Bill which is before this Honourable House, there are a number of things which I would wish to address. I would start first by saying that it is indeed in my view a fit and proper thing that this Honourable Chamber should be discussing today the renaming of the area which we have come to know as Trafalgar Square as National Heroes Square.

Sir, we are indicating as a Government that the importance which we attach to ensuring that those things which define us in terms of the building of a nation and which we believe to be necessary to reflect who we are as a people must occupy a centrepiece in our landscape - both physical landscape and indeed, Sir, our mental landscape. Over the course of the last few years, Sir, contrary to the utterances of the Honourable Member for St. John who would wish to place their origin in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, this Government has set about a proud action of ensuring that there were a number of decisions taken which helped us as a nation in defining who we are and in creating the structures that are necessary to prop up a country in the process of nation building.

We believed, Mr. Speaker, during the course of the last term that a country that was majority derived from persons who were slaves had a duty to place at the centre of their national practices a recognition of Emancipation Day. We believed, as we still do, that that was the basis from which all freedoms and rights derived in this country for the masses. Emancipation did not lead to an immediate upliftment of the conditions of the people and therefore there have been other events in our history which have marked significantly the capacity to allow us who constitute the majority or to allow the majority to be the beneficiary of an improvement of their rights and in the quality of life that they enjoy.

It was for that reason, Sir, that we also have pride in declaring July 26th as a day of national significance in commemoration of the riots which started at Golden Square because we recognise that as a defining moment in the

building of modern Barbados and indeed in the enjoyment of the level of social, economic and political rights that we enjoy as a country.

We believe also, Sir, that the people involved in that activity who lost their lives or who lost their liberty or who were injured as a result of their courage to fight on behalf of the rest of us, that those persons should indeed be honoured in a fit and proper way. To that extent, Sir, we were happy when the Governor-General of Barbados announced that those 400 persons would be pardoned the convictions which they received just shortly after the riots in 1937. 12.25p.m.

We also believe, Sir, that simply to pardon those people and simply to declare Clement Payne a National Hero was not necessarily enough in terms of fixing him and them in the physical landscape of our capital City. We took a decision that led to the refurbishment of Golden Square, refurbishment in a sense that would not only allow it to have a fitting memorial with those who participated in the riots, but equally important for it to be a place where persons could go, could reflect, could see the monument, could see the bust of Clement Payne that was donated of Clement Payne by the Clement Payne Movement, could also participate in other uplifting activities that would only enure to the benefit of this nation because of the wealth of creativity that might flow from it.

We also took a decision for the establishment of National Heroes Day. And unlike the Honourable Member for St. John, when they had the opportunity in Government, we did not believe that we should single out any one person and create a day for that person in isolation of the contribution of other persons. We felt that there should be an objective approach and that regardless of a person's political persuasion or a person's colour for that matter, once people met those objective criteria that they should be elevated to the status of National Hero.

Sir, that status of National Hero as the Prime Minister indicated in his speech, will come one day again to be extended. But we believe that it should be on the basis of the criteria set down. It matters not a person's colour, gender, class or political persuasion, but if their actions and life reflect that level of sacrifice that led in a defined way to the building of this Nation, or if by their excellence, they so embody that spirit that we would wish to emulate as a country, we believe that they should be allowed that opportunity.

Sir, it is inevitable in this country that when we speak of certain things people will seek to shroud it in emotional language and there are those on another side who will say it

is only being done because of colour and there are those on yet another side who would say decisions are only being taken in respect of class or political persuasion. But I am here to say, Sir, that the process of building a nation in the interest of the majority, not the process of running a country in the interest of a few, but the process of building a nation in the interest of the majority is one that has only become our lot during the course of this century. It is one, Sir, where we therefore must take decisions that seek to reinforce the very foundations upon which this nation can go forward with a level of confidence and comfort with whom we are as a people, recognising, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that that process has less to do with accepting values of people from outside than with the process of defining whom you are as a person.

Sir, in many ways the path that a country embarks upon is similar to the path that the individual person embarks upon during the course of life. And, yes, you will have people who influence you as a person, and how you grow as a person, but it does not mean that because someone influenced you in your early years you are to reflect entirely the views or the perspectives of that person. You have the capacity as an individual person, just as we have the capacity as a sovereign country governing in the interest of the majority, to determine those things which are reflective of us as a people and reflective of us in terms of our history.

So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is inevitable that as we seek to mark out the lines for the things that we believe to be important in nation building, that you may not always have unanimity. And we respect the fact therefore that the process of consultation is critical, because we believe that while all may not agree, the important step is to be able to give persons the opportunity to be able to voice their concerns and to be able to speak frankly as to how they believe this nation must proceed.

I believe, Sir, that we will achieve that act of reflective consultation by the establishment of this Committee which I announced in part some ten days ago and which in fact as the Prime Minister indicated will be chaired by the Clerk of Parliament and which will have representatives from the Barbados National Trust, the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, the National Cultural Foundation, the Pan-African Commission, the National Conservation Commission and the Ministry of Culture. Everyone, Sir, will be given the opportunity to speak to these issues and I urge all Barbadians who have strong feelings on this matter to make use of this opportunity. In fact, Sir, I am clear as to the message the Right Honourable Prime Minister said on the night of his re-election that in circumstances where we felt that there were matters that would fundamentally change things, that particularly given the level of the majority that this Government enjoyed, that we would ensure that there will be consultations.

I have already assured the public, Sir, that the Government of Barbados has absolutely no intentions of divesting itself of the property of this statue. I have already indicated that this Committee will have three months within which to report and that the Government will take decisions based on the recommendations of the Committee in consultation with the public of Barbados.

I therefore look forward, Sir, to this matter finding its way in the appropriate forum, where the discussions will lead to concrete actions as opposed to being scattered in all different directions. I find it also interesting, Sir, and I must say for the record that we would have wished that the planning period for the National Heroes could have been a little longer this year, but the reality is that we all were engaged in another activity that occupied our attention for the most part of November to January. To that extent we had difficulties, because the planning for this event last year started in the previous October and we would normally have five to six months to be able to effectively plan it. This year we were left with two and one half months.

I want to commend, Sir, the officers of the public service as well as those people who have volunteered to put their shoulders to the wheel and ensure that there is an appropriate and fitting celebration. We indicated that rather than having cultural shows which can be put on every week, we felt that this year, all future National Heroes Days should at least be met by some level of sacrifice on the part of the Barbadian public as a tribute to those who would have gone before and to the sacrifices that they would have made. We can put on a cultural presentation every night, but there must be something that is more defining about our activities in relation to how we celebrate National Heroes Day.

The element of community service, therefore in areas where you want to mount shows, will require a lot of coordination and a lot of forward planning. 12.35 p.m.

But if there is a genuine sense of community service and if there is a genuine commitment to give of yourselves, Sir, three or four weeks is more than enough time to mobilize particularly since many of the projects are existing projects. We are simply saying to people, do something that goes beyond your commitment to your family, to your job and to your church.

You provide for your family willingly, because they are family. You go to your job because it provides you with a living. You go to your church because it provides you with spiritual upliftment.

Do something now for your country or your community outside of the parameters of those three things, because we believe, Sir, that that element of voluntarism and community service must remain a hallmark of this society in the process of nation building.

Sir, we hope, that we can therefore, give it a central place every year. Not that it should only happen on Heroes Day but that we focus on it on that day in the desire that persons will participate in those activities of voluntarism all year round.

I want also to say, Sir, therefore, that I am appealing to all Barbadians. We have said that you can become involved in one of the structured activities which reflect a community service brigade of one of the National Heroes. Or you can do your own activity with your own community group or your own family or with whoever. But the point is, give at least four to six hours of service back to this country on that day.

We also ensured, Sir, that there is not a level of partisanship in how we do it. I am happy that both the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party are bringing forces to work on the same projects in St. John and in St. Joseph. Because we believe that the level of partisanship should not be reflected on National Heroes Day.

I also would like to say, Sir, before I finish, my own views may not necessarily be the views all the time of the majority or of the public or of the Government. I recognised my responsibility as a Minister to put things out to the public and to determine what the public's views are and my responsibility is to bring things to Cabinet for the decision of the collective agency of the executive arm of Government.

I feel, Sir, that it may be a bit difficult for me to understand or explain to anyone, how a person who does not reflect those things which have been defined by the majority as worthy of praise, can occupy a central place in National Heroes Square.

If I, Sir, had a private role in this matter, Sir, I would certainly be giving evidence that I believe that the statue of Lord Nelson can keep its heritage value without necessarily being in National Heroes Square. But I want to stress that that is only my personal opinion and that is not the opinion of, or the decision of the Government as to its activity. We would await the Committee's Report as to how best to treat the issue.

The Prime Minister has already indicated, Sir, that moving monuments and moving statues has been a common practice among most Governments. In Jamaica, they found

that they had to move the statue of Queen Victoria. They did not take it and push it down, because they too, like us, are not trying to rewrite any history. We do not have to rewrite a history that is clear and speaks for itself.

We here in this country, have taken decisions over the course of the history of the settlement of this country, that have seen the relocation of the Montefiore Monument there opposite the Library and the Jubilee Gardens and even this very seat of Parliament has never always been in this place.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the appropriate criteria should also be whether the Government is going to do anything to cause damage or cause a disinvestment in the statue. We have no such intention.

We believe that it is a monument that has some value to this country, however, you want to define value. We believe, Sir, that we should await the Committee's response, not only on the statue, but more importantly how do we treat the issue of ensuring that National Heroes Square as an entity, becomes an area that is dignified in its appearance, that inspires us when we see it and when we visit it. That can cause persons who visit this country to be capable of understanding more about who we are as a people or who we are as a nation.

The relationship between the Heroes Square on the outside of the gates of Parliament with the national museum that will go in respect of the National Heroes in the West Wing of Parliament in the Hall of Heroes will create an opportunity for persons within the same locale to be given that perspective.

While it is important for us to have that there for persons who visit, it is more important for young Barbadians. You cannot go through Bridgetown without noticing the imposing nature of this structure called Parliament and it is only fit and proper that this building which today reflects the will of the majority of people to be governed in the likeness of their own image, that this building should relate closely to an area which we can also hold up to young Barbadians and say, within this area we have deemed almost sacred, that we respect this physical area, because it represents for us a way to give tribute to those whose lives were sacrificed in order to do better and to make sure we have a better quality of life.

The Prime Minister has already made the point, that the memorial to the war dead, therefore is appropriately placed within the context of that Square, because they too gave that ultimate sacrifice.

We believe, Sir, that a country must be able to reflect its character and its identity to its young people and to those who visit, without us having to search for it under a bushel.

I am therefore, Sir, proud to be associated with a Government, who for the first time, could speak of a record in term of actions and activities to build the process of national consciousness in this country and who are not prepared just to make emotional political speeches on a platform without resetting them in the institutions of Government or the actions, Sir, of the former life of this country.

I therefore, Sir, want strongly to support this Bill that is before this Honourable Chamber today, and say that we in a very real way, Sir, are taking steps that will define the confidence with which this country will go forward into the new millennium.

To a large extent, all that we understand about globalization, will require of us a level of confidence in participating in that global sphere that we are yet to show as a people. That confidence does not come overnight, Mr. Speaker. But things in our curriculum, things in the way in which we treat one another, things in the way in which we treat our institutions, all of those reflect the confidence and the same level of social justice that we want to continue to be a hallmark of this country.

The same inspiration, Sir, that would cause us to want to do our very best for the people of this country would be the same inspiration. Sir, that would cause us to want to ensure that even in defining those icons of nation building and in defining, Sir, the physical landmarks that reflect that nation building, we hope, Sir, that we are doing an action, that is reflective of the will of the majority and that we do not seek to act in a high-handed manner. Rather we seek honestly, Sir, to be able to reflect what we believe is from the ground and what we will ensure is the will by the consultative process, and in a way we believe can only bring honour and dignity to the people of this country. 12.45p.m.

I hope, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that we will see all Barbadians participating in some way. It is an opportunity to be able to play your own part in doing those things for nation building.

We have had a lot of talk around here within the last two years or so about how young people have changed, and how the society is different, but I want to say that a part of the reason for that difference has to do with the very fact that unless we build communities, unless we build parishes, unless we build a nation then you cannot expect those things to come just so.

When we build a house, Sir, we have to work at maintaining the integrity of the house, and when we are

building a nation we have to take steps to make sure that the foundations of that nation are not threatened whether it is through building communities, giving of ourselves or creating a space in our head that is acceptable for who we are as Barbadians.

People may say that was done three centuries ago. I say to you that the fundamental difference of a Government who governs in the interest of the majority from one who governs by reason of power and money in the interest of a minority cannot escape unnoticed today in this debate.

I only hope that the public truly does not feel that these actions are meant to be high-handed or to be ignorant of their wishes. We will ensure that by the establishment of this committee that we do the right thing in the right way. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this morning I see this Bill before me which says: "This Bill would change the name of the area known as Trafalgar Square." We in this country must acknowledge that the history of anyone's country is important. We also must acknowledge that we must recognise that in a country where people have made significant contributions those contributions must also be recognised. A country like Barbados in 1999 will always have to be a united country. We must be prepared to accept our history and we must be prepared to grow on our history.

I once said, Mr. Speaker, that I have no problem with being the offspring of a slave and the history of myself being the offspring of a slave, I have no problem with that. All those who have a problem with being an offspring of a slave, in my opinion, do not have a right to be in Barbados because their calling would have been wrong.

I sat and listened very well to what was said in here today and I want to bring some balance too. I was told of the War Memorial outside of this Parliament that those people who fought have a right to be there. It is a very important point. That is a fact. They have a right to be there. But those who led them to fight do not have a right to be there.

Mr. Speaker, something is strange. You cannot tell me that you bring somebody with you, they fought, they achieved something and the person who led them has not achieved anything.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member's mental furniture is in chaos. I wish he would explain in simple terms what he is saying. Is he saying that Nelson led the war dead out there? He is talking foolishness.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that all those people who were in Barbados and who fought for Barbados have made a contribution whether they fought with Nelson or they fought 100 years after Nelson. I am saying that all those who fought for Barbados are my heroes, whether they fought with Nelson, or after Nelson, or before Nelson.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not interested in Nelson. I was not in Nelson's time but I would say if he had a part of Barbados' history he had a part of Barbados' history. I do not care whether Nelson is important to Barbados or not but the point is if he has a part in Barbados' history, he has a part. I have no quarrel.

I am not going to look over my shoulder to find out whether Nelson is a white man or a black man. That is not important to me. What is important to me, Mr. Speaker, is the history of Barbados.

In 1994, Sir, I came to this Parliament in discussing a tourism issue and I said to this Parliament that if we were serious about tackling the problem with the American tourists we would have gone to the Naval Base, reconstructed the Naval Base, put a baseball field down there and then we would have exploited that Naval Base to get American tourists in this country. Five years after the Bermudians have done exactly what P told Barbadians. You hear what I tell you? Five years after what I told this Parliament the Bermudians have done it.

I also have a couple questions to ask. I have no problem with a National Heroes Square. I want to ask one serious question. Are we limiting the number of people that we are going to put in National Heroes Square? When we have completed the allocation are we going to name another area National Heroes Square too? Do not tell me, Sir, that the area out there will be able to hold the number of heroes that I see in my mind because I am telling you, Sir, that there are a lot of national heroes walking through St. Philip and in St. Lucy who have not been recognised, who have built this country and who deserve to get their rightful place.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Do not trivialise it? You are telling me when I am talking about people in St. Lucy and St. Philip that the Honourable Member for the City tells me I am trivialising things? There are people who have built this country and who deserve to get recognition and that is why a place like Bayley's Plantation also must get its true recognition from this Parliament.

A place like Bayley's Plantation where everybody in Barbados associates with a man named Bussa, must get its recognition too. Why would we only want to recognise a place that was dominated by Nelson and called Trafalgar Square and not Bayley's Plantation?

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: When we talk about Bayley's Plantation we think about Bussa. We do not think about the white man. You have a problem with white people all of a sudden. That is not my problem.

I also want to recognise a fact, Sir. It is rather interesting that every time the Barbados Labour Party comes to Government they bring some rather significant changes in this Parliament. In 1994 after telling the civil servants how well they were going to look after them they came with an amendment to the Constitution to protect the civil servants' pay from being cut and in the years after, the civil servants suffered to get an increase. Now we are hearing about a change to Trafalgar Square.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. After 1995, and between 1995 and January 20, 1999, if memory serves me right, there were at least three increases to the salaries of public officers. Between 1989 and 1994 there was one partial increase and that was to certain persons at the top under the Democratic Labour Party in December 1990. Thereafter not another cent. 12.55 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I expect that when this Bill is passed in here today, the small man in Barbados will be empowered in such a way that he can see something significant from this Bill and not mere words because of the changing of the location. I must see empowerment of the small man and not just a changing of a Bill to make something look good. It will make it look good but I want to see something to empower that man.

When one looks at the type of debate that is going on in Barbados it is evident that this Bill has affected somebody and I hope that the spin-off of this will not see the small man being downtrodden. I call on that Side to protect the interest of the small man because if there is any fall out between bed fellows I do not want my small men to be affected by the fall out. That is why I am saying, Sir, that I would hate to believe that a Bill like this could be a camouflage in this Parliament. I do not expect it of my peers. I expect this to be a serious Bill and that there will be significant changes coming about because of this Bill and that ten years from now we would not have just seen a change of name but the significance of the change.

If the Honourable Members can tell me on that Side what we will see afterwards from this Bill that will uplift the small man in the street, I will wholeheartedly support this Bill and I will canvass it for you, if you can show me how this Bill will uplift the interests of the small man in the street and will also show me that -it will have no effect on him.

I do not believe that this Parliament should find itself in a situation where there is a war between bedfellows and this House should not be engaged in debate because there is a war between bedfellows.

Let me say, Sir,...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must not offend the rules of the House. He is speaking about wars between bedfellows as though there is a war between Members on this Side. The front page of today's *Advocate* indicates where the war is among bedfellows.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is true, and that is why the front page of today's *Advocate* will also show you that if you take up... It is true that you cannot talk about newspapers. My apology. I will apologise. I am not the Leader of the House but I will apologise to you for referring to a newspaper and I will not breach the rules of the House.

I am saying that if there are wars within certain ranks they cannot be as serious as the war I have seen in a certain letter. I have not introduced it. When the financiers are at war with their clients it is a different stage. You have to find out who are the clients and who are the financiers. I could tell you something, Sir. Mr. Speaker, nobody can write that letter against me in any newspaper because they do not even know my number. They cannot call me. They cannot even complain to me. They know what they are doing.

In 1994 those same people brought down a government because of turning Nelson but I would say to this House if this project is a good project I will praise it. It is regrettable that when we greened Trafalgar Square and turned it back to the Upper Green, the Barbados Labour Party in 1994 cursed us and they joined with the National Trust, that organisation in this country that I cannot find in my head the useful purpose for yet.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. It is absolutely incorrect. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Barbados Labour Party took issue not with the greening or the attempts to green Trafalgar Square but with spending hundreds of thousands of the taxpayers' dollars simply to turn Nelson around.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is not true. Nelson was not only turned around but he was moved. If they felt at the time when we were doing that that he should have been removed they should have said it in 1994 not 1999.

Why would we take up two sets of taxpayers' money to do the same thing? If they felt that he should have been thrown in the Careenage in 1994 when it was on a crane they should have driven the crane right into the Careenage.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, if that is how they felt they should have done it in 1994. Why would they come back again and use two sets of taxpayers' money to achieve the same objective.

Mr. Speaker, that is the core of our history because it is in the City where we are about to use two sets of taxpayers' money to do the same thing and we were cursed and told all sorts of things in 1994.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I can imagine him shaking his jacket and dishing those lashes to the Democratic Labour Party. I would have loved to be in here at that time. But as I said before, Sir, I have no problem with my history. I will walk the whole world and tell everybody that my great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather were slaves. I have no problem with that.

Do not look at where I came from, Sir, look and see where I am going. I am saying, Sir, that the history of Barbados must not only be where it came from but where it is going. That is the problem in this country. It is clear to me that it is a headache and there must be something to scatter the peas and divert the attention of the minds of Barbadians. It is a strange thing in this debate I also heard from the Central Bank. Somebody mentioned the Central Bank and all of a sudden, Sir, Trafalgar Square is an issue. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 1.05p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The Sitting is resumed. This House is now in session.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to lend my support to this matter before the Honourable House of Assembly. I want to support the Bill which proposes that the place in the City of Bridgetown known as Trafalgar Square shall be named National Heroes Square. When I was a child, Mr. Speaker, there were old people like my nanny and so on who referred to what is known as Trafalgar Square today as the Upper Green. My godmother, the old folks, used to talk about the Lower Green and the Upper Green. I have here before me, this is a document of the Honourable House, the history of Barbados by Robert Schomburgk at page 245 he makes the point:

"This square, which was formerly called the Green, contains Nelson's statue".

For many years, certainly from the time I came into this Chamber, I have always had a little difficulty with the nomenclature of Trafalgar Square. Trafalgar where the battle was fought was not even in an English speaking country. Trafalgar is part of Spain. It is a little point off Spain very near to the straits of Gibraltar where the battle of Trafalgar was fought. No relevance for us whatsoever. I hear the Honourable Leader of the Opposition making the point most interestingly that if in fact it is true that the jubilation at the time of the victory at Trafalgar was because Barbados would have been saved from becoming a French colony, there are some who would say, why would this be such a terrible thing?

Certainly those who were our ancestors, those who were in slavery, it did not matter to them who the colonial masters were. We were all taught in my time European history and English and colonial history. When I meet my contemporaries in the United Kingdom they are always shocked that I know more about their history than they know themselves. All that says is that we were well taught. They did not teach us Caribbean history. What Caribbean history I know I had to teach myself.

Those were years when as a consequence of wars being fought as we are seeing now in Central Europe, an island in the Caribbean would belong to the Spanish today and the Dutch next month and there would be another treaty next year and it would belong to the French and so on. Barbados has had the distinction, some people think, of being a British colonial island throughout its colonial history. Even so, there are certain aspects of our colonial history that even the ordinary person walking about the street in Barbados is not aware of. How many people know that Barbados was once an unitary state with Tobago?

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is a fact. Barbados was once a unitary state with Tobago. It did not last very long. There was another war, another treaty and it went back to Trinidad. You will see many likenesses to this day between Barbados and Tobago and I am not speaking about flying fish. I am speaking about Protestantism and place names and so on and so forth.

To get back to Trafalgar Square. For many years I have regarded it and in fact have spoken of it as Parliament Square. I have no difficulty with it now being called National Heroes Square. Some years ago, a Democratic Labour Party Administration spent a lot of money simply turning around Nelson. I remembered calling at the time and suggesting that that was the opportunity to relocate the Admiral. They put a few neem trees which are not native to Barbados. There was time when that Square had, as with the Lower Green, the Upper had wonderful evergreen trees - ficus trees for which Barbados is famed - trees which are indigenous to Barbados and now I look and see neem trees all over Barbados and I do not know why.

I have in my hand a card that I use as my personal card if I give a luncheon on the Government's behalf or a dinner party or a reception. I have this card made and it is an old print of Trafalgar Square, Bridgetown, circa, 1909. I am pleased to make it a document of the House. It shows Nelson in a quite different location. It shows the old schooners and buggies and so on. A beautiful, beautiful print. Honourable Members will be pleased to look at it. I am very proud of this City which I represent here in this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a time when Bridgetown and what is to become National Heroes Square was a much lovelier place than it is today. We have allowed this beautiful City of ours, the capital of Barbados to run down. The old City behind here - when I was a child the Route 24, Percy Stewart's buses from Walmer Lodge and Paynes Bay, used to come and park outside Barry Springer's barber shop there right next to the Trafalgar Hotel - the old City was a wonderful place and we need to make the old City a wonderful place again.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: To walk to Queens College you went up Amen Alley because of its proximity to the Cathedral and you passed the Masonic Lodge and you went up through Church Village and butt out at the Nelson Gate. How many people know that the two main gates of Queens Park one is named for Admiral Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson?

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, the gate nearest to Fort Royal is known as the Nelson Gate. The gate looking up to Government House is known as the Governor's Gate. I do not know how many people know that. What I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker....

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I want to speak to this matter of the Admiral. He was an able man. Barbados in those days was a place where there was a large naval installation and a garrison as well. All up through to Worthing, all down Bay Street you still see vestiges of it. Go into St. Paul's Church and look at some of the plaques in there and you will see what they speak to. This was a busy bustling city. It was wonderful. It was a pearl of a city. Silks and satin you could find and the finest wines, the finest cheeses, there were taverns, there were hotels all in and around Bridgetown.

We are hoping that the early 21st century, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Bridgetown will again be a vibrant and lively City. It is going to be very beautiful to see the boardwalk going down the side of the wharf there. Barbados Shipping and Trading owns a lot of property on the promontory known as the Pierhead and so does the Government. Over there just across the water, if Nelson's good eye - because you know he was blind in one eye - a cannon ball hit him in one eye - if he could look over the water of the outer Careenage he would see something that would be of interest to him. That is one of the most important dockyards in the world. There is an old dry dock over there and that dock is known as a screw dock, Sir. I am reliably informed that it is the only one of its kind left in the world today. There is a proposal that it should become the focal point of a maritime....

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, why is it called a screw dock?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will not be diverted by these matters. It is the only one of its kind left in the world today, Sir.

Again, when I was a child it was very much in use. Now it is proposed...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if people could only get their minds to move from one thing to another we could get on here. There is a proposal as far as I am aware, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that that entire area where the dry

dock is now will become a Maritime Museum and that the dockyard will be a focal point there.

The Committee is going to sit. I would be very willing to write it or appear before it but in my submission that would be a wonderful relocation for the Admiral. He would be in the dockyard. He would be in a place that is a very important tourist attraction. He would be in a place where tourists would still be able to see him in the middle of Bridgetown. He could still look over the Careenage.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Exactly, move from one side of the Careenage to the other or some other location. It is important that it should be a public place.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Exactly, he would be in his briar patch so to speak if I am not mixing metaphors here.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In my submission, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is a far better location for the Admiral than where he now is because, frankly speaking, once the Square becomes National Heroes Square, devoutly to be wished, his presence there would be quite incongruous.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: He is not our hero in that sense.

It is a bit of a pack of cards but I would be willing to make it a document of the House, Warren Alleyne's Historic Bridgetown. At page 91, he gives a small chapter to Nelson's statue. The history of this statue is most interesting because there are at least five different proposals for relocation of this statue. 2.30 p.m.

If I could quote it at page 91,

"In December 1888, rumours that the statue was to be removed to the Fountain Garden prompted a Mr. Thomas Gill, a Member of the House of Assembly, to ask whether it was the intention of the Government to remove the statue, and if so, to inform the House under what authority it was proposed to do so. The following July, a Resolution granting the sum of £50 for the removal of the statue was lost by 2 votes.

A proposal made in September 1891 to raise the statue higher, however met with the full approval of the legislature who voted £108. The pedestal was raised to its present height the following November.

Early in 1928, the removal of the statue came up again for consideration, and a Resolution was passed granting the sum of £50 to have it relocated in the centre of the Square. The matter then passed into the hands of the Central Road Board, but for some now obscure reason, the statue was never moved."

Suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there has been ample public discussion well over a century, on this matter of the location of the statue of Admiral Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson. The truth is that in my opinion, the matter has now been overtaken by events, which makes it very inappropriate that he should continue to be located in what will become National Heroes Square.

I have made my recommendation. I am prepared to make it formally to the Committee when it sits. I think somewhere over there, because part of the plan is that at the very tip of the Pierhead, known as the Mole Head, once the Coast Guard has been relocated to the Flour Mill site, a lighthouse - like structure which will have a revolving restaurant and would really be very beautiful is going to be located there. There are all kinds of possibilities over on the other side of the Careenage for Lord Nelson to continue to attract tourists. They could continue to have their photographs taken there. He will still be in Bridgetown. The intent of our ancestors, whatever we may think of them, will still be intact. So I think that we can service all shades of opinion in that respect.

Sir, I wish to say a little bit about part of the landscape of Bridgetown. The development plan for Bridgetown shows very clearly - you know people thought it would never have come to pass - where the boardwalk is now going in. There are proposals for the inner and outer careenage. What is left of the Constitution River has to be dredged. There is a proposal for landscaping the embankment of the Constitution River right up to the roundabout at the Globe with nice little cafes and centres for vendors and so on, so that it would be a beautiful walk right up there.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is all in the plan. It is all here, Sir. It concerns me that on the south side of the inner Careenage, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have a square which is our Independence Square which is easily the scruffiest square. Golden Square is now beautiful and we have to say thanks to the Honourable Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture for the restoration of Golden Square. But Independence Square, I have always thought was scruffy. I never understood why we allowed it to become a car park and a nasty, dirty and scruffy one. I am ashamed when people come here to point and say, "this is our Independence Square." I have to acknowledge it. I cannot pretend that we do not have one, because we need these

monuments and these bench marks. These are moments in time, in our time, before our time and subsequent to our time which mark the history of ourselves as a nation and I hope in time that we will have a Republic Square too.

The development plan for Bridgetown calls for four multi-storey car parks and it is proposed that those cars will move from Independence Square and that Independence Square will have trees and nice outdoor furniture and nice period lighting. It would be a beautiful place where you could go and look at something wonderful happening in the inner Careenage.

I am hoping that we would see quite soon, a floating platform there where you can have evening performances, people who will sing and play music, and it really would be a wonderful place where you can have fountain sprays and beautiful lights and so on, so that the Centre of Bridgetown will be so delightful.

When I first started to talk about the redevelopment of Bridgetown in this House, Mr. Speaker, Sir, 20 years ago, people laughed at me and some are still laughing now. But some people took me at my word and we saw the Waterfront begin to develop. I remember the night when I opened the Waterfront Cafe and I said at the time "I give you madam, a lot of credit for having not only faith in your own venture here, but faith that Bridgetown will again become a place where people will come in the evenings and be happy to sit down here and have a meal and a drink, laugh and talk to each other and feel safe and comfortable." Look at The Waterfront today.

If you go a little further, you can see the development all up Bay Street. Bethel Church owns all of the land behind it going out to Wellington Street and to the back of the properties on Nelson Street. They are in the process of developing that. Once I get Baxters Road with its old verandahs coming back and a beautiful place again where people will want to come in the evenings, we are going to tackle Nelson Street.

Bridgetown, Mr. Speaker, Sir, like London, is a patch work of little villages and bit by bit this is going to become again a place where in the early 21st Century, people will want to come. Bridgetown will not be going to sleep at 5 o'clock every evening. People would want to come back into the City and there will be interesting things for them to do. Down at the Lower Green there are proposals for that, but here around National Heroes Square there are plans for the Treasury Building, one of the ugliest buildings in Bridgetown, I am unhappy to say. I remember when there was a foundry there, but between that and the National Insurance Building, I do not know which is the uglier. They

were not fine monuments, Sir, but there are proposals for shrubbery.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, not bulldoze, you can always soften architecture. Look at how beautifully we made this building and there were people who thought it could never look like this. When I came in here, it was all coated with a dark green plaster. I remember the morning when I came in and said that I wanted to see the soft stones and the architect said, "Madam, I cannot promise you to touch that" and I asked for a hatchet and gave it six blows and told them to finish it, and this is what we have today. People cannot even remember what this used to look like before we did this. So we can transform that Square, Mr. Speaker, Sir and make it a place where people will want to be and where we will be proud to say that this is in commemoration of those whom we designate as our National Heroes.

The development of the Pierhead, the restoration of Independence Square: when the Fairchild Street market is rebuilt - and that will happen as soon as we get the Cheapside market rebuilt, then, the proposal is that Fairchild will be rebuilt - that will move on then to the embankment development going right up to the roundabout at the Globe - the Tudor roundabout. I even have a proposal that we could do something at the western end of Queens Park a nice boating lake there backing right into, what was the Constitution River which is only a canalised watercourse, nowadays. But at the beginning of this century the Constitution River was tidal all the way up to the Prisons. 2.40 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, beyond the Globe at the beginning of this century.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the West Wing of this Parliament, has been long in its restoration, overtaken by other priorities. But we have the roof on, a roof that will last several hundred years now, like this one, of copper.

The proposal was always there, that we would have a small parliamentary museum. That is entirely compatible with the proposal that a large part of the West Wing will be given over now to be a repository for memorabilia of one kind or another, which would speak to our National Heroes. I hope that those who will plan that will plan it in such a way that it would not be something that you feel that you cannot touch or that you cannot go into.

I would like to think that, like where the Senate Chamber is, is replicated over in the West Wing, that it

would be a huge hall where from time to time the Government can even entertain. It must not be untouchable. I would like it to be something interactive, as they say nowadays. I would like it to be something that visitors to Barbados would visit, could go any day of the week including Sundays. Tourists complain that we close down our Museum and other such places on Sundays, which does not happen in other countries, so we have to begin to look at these things. But it is important that we commemorate this.

I remember in the early 1970's, when we first looked at Tyrol Cot and saw it as a heritage property, there were people who said it could never happen, it would not be done, but it is today and it is a beautiful place. We do not have enough of those places. I have had an idea at one stage, that the Senate Gallery was a beautiful place where we could have busts of all the Prime Ministers of Barbados, so that you could look up from the Square and actually see them there.

I went so far as to speak to Mrs. Carolyn Barrow and I remember she told me very plainly she did not think that her late husband would be interested in any painting but perhaps he would not have minded a bust of himself. I remember even speaking to Karl Broodhagen about that, and that could still be a possibility.

But as the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister pointed out this morning, already, some of the National Heroes have found their place in the landscape of Barbados. Clement Payne has found his place in Golden Square. Samuel Jackman Precod, I remember commissioning his bust, and when we opened the Polytechnic, I had taken over from the Honourable Member for St. George South who did the lion share of the work, but the commissioning of the bust was my idea.

In fact in all of the Polyclinics that were built in my time when I was the Minister of Health, we have always insisted, I always said there must be some work of art - a stained glass window at Oistins to catch the setting sun - there is a frieze in the one at Warrens and so on and so forth.

But we have to find these ways and means of commemorating those who are our Heroes. I hope that in due course when we have cleaned up the Square and when the Independence Square is a thing of beauty, that statues will be raised to some of the National Heroes who do not yet have their likeness located in one place or another in this Barbados.

Two of the National Heroes of Barbados, are very much associated with this City of Bridgetown. As part of the celebrations for National Heroes Day in my constituency, I

am to deliver a lecture tomorrow night, and I have decided to select those two for special treatment and that is, Samuel Jackman Precod, the first man of colour to sit in this House of Assembly and he was representing the City of Bridgetown, and Sarah Ann Gill.

I myself am a Methodist, Sir, and Sarah Ann Gill - interestingly both Precod and Gill were mulattoes - but Sarah Ann Gill put her life at risk on more than one occasion and was not afraid to put her money where her mouth was in terms of the preservation of Methodism in Barbados. I am going to treat specially with those two. I would like to think that in due course somewhere within the City of Bridgetown, our remembrance in the form of a likeness or some other kind of remembrance to them will be raised in and around the City.

Most of the National Heroes or many of them I should say, were Members of this Parliament. It is entirely fitting, that I have thought at one stage that you could look across the water of the inner Careenage and you would see a number of statues in a nicely treed and shrubbed square.

There are others who, perhaps in the National Heroes Square itself, would like to see some of the statues.

The possibilities are legion, Mr. Speaker and it gives me nothing but pleasure, especially as we are coming to the end of a century; I make the point, all the time, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that when you are coming to the end of a century. When you are on the cusp of a millennium, as we are privileged to be, there is always a sense of urgency. There is always the feeling that there is unfinished business that you have to bring to closure. I have no doubt at all in my mind that this proposal, brought to this House, is part of that necessity that we feel, to bring certain matters to do with our heritage and who we are, to a certain place in our history before we move into a new century and into a new millennium.

I think the timing is right. I think that the context in which we want to do this is right. I think the environment, both physical and otherwise, in which we want to do this is timely and is right. I give my absolute support, Sir, to the proposal that what was Trafalgar Square will become National Heroes Square. Trafalgar has been commemorated elsewhere.

Nelson, himself, I believe that there is a watering hole on Broad Street known as the Nelson Arms, quite separate and distinct from the Nelson Gate at Queens Park and so on.

There is going to be a lot of that in the new millennium. There is nothing new, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and there is going to be a lot of public debate every time we want to do it. There

are other things that people, myself among them, would like to see renamed. I would not divert into that now because I know that my time is up, Sir, but I am very much obliged that I have had an opportunity to add my voice to those who would give support to the creation of a National Heroes Square and a Hall which would carry the memorabilia of our National Heroes, so that future generations, would have a better feel and a better appreciation than we were afforded in our time.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I want to lend support to this Bill, the aim and purpose of which is to change the designation of Trafalgar Square to National Heroes Square.

I have been listening to the call-in programmes, Mr. Speaker. I have been reading articles in the newspaper and I really do not see, Mr. Speaker, the reason for a lot of the controversy which seems to be emanating from the discussion. 2.50 p.m.

There is nothing nationally, historically, or culturally offensive in changing the name "Trafalgar Square" to "National Heroes Square". Our colonial past will still be intact. By changing the name we will not obliterate our colonial past as some people seem to suggest.

Wilberforce, Churchill and a lot of other prominent English persons would have made substantial contributions to the Caribbean and to Barbados. We have, as far as I know, no statues here for them but still we recognise the contributions which they have made. Therefore, I do not see why in a lot of the discussion we seem to be implying that if we move the statue of Lord Nelson by one fell swoop we would have completely obliterated our colonial past.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that renaming is part of our history. Renaming is part of our culture. We have renamed so many places in Barbados. We have renamed Seawell Airport to the Grantley Adams International Airport. We have renamed Chapman Lane to Emmerton. We have renamed Penny Hole to Gemswick and the list goes on and on.

What we are actually doing now, Sir, is not really renaming for renaming sake. This is taking a square or a location which is historical and giving it pride of place in your native land. That is all we are doing, taking the square and really giving it pride of place. The name "Heroes Square" maintains the integrity of the place. It gives it a significance, Sir, which it did not possess before.

In actual fact what we are doing, Sir, is taking Trafalgar Square and elevating it to National Heroes Square. That is the point we need to make that we are not renaming it just for renaming sake. I do believe that at any point in our history we as a people have the right to ask ourselves whether it is more beneficial for Barbadians to maintain the *status quo* or to opt for change. I do not think that anyone should dare attempt to deny us that right. As a people that is an inherent right which we have.

The only way, Mr. Speaker, that we can move forward is through change. The design of our cars, the design of our houses, our clothes, the way in which we do business, the only way we can move forward is through change. Sometimes it makes a lot of sense to incur the wrath of some people who will criticise us. Sometimes it is better to incur the wrath of those people than to refuse to do what we know is the right and proper thing to do.

Today, for instance, I saw an article in one of the local publications where someone is making the point that if we remove or relocate Nelson automatically English tourists will drop off. That is one of the most nonsensical points I have heard for a long time. If we appear to be cowardly as a Government we will never be able to move the country forward. Sometimes we have to take strong action to let people prove and realize that we are indeed a strong Government.

I believe, Sir, that something is wrong with an Independent country which has just a single statue that stands out, that is Bussa really, as being part of the struggle toward Independence.

I believe too, Sir, that we must have our own icons and that the presence of these statues will inspire young people to say to themselves, well, if these Barbadians could do it, if they could achieve, then I can too. People will see them and people will feel a duty to read about them and to learn of the contribution which they would have made to Barbados.

I do believe by having a National Heroes Square it will inspire a lot of national consciousness especially in our young people and that the designation of Heroes Square is indeed tangible evidence of the esteem in which we hold our heroes. There must be monuments, Sir, which are representations of those who have fought long and hard in our struggle and we have to perpetuate their honour.

I do not believe, Sir, that there can be any better place which would give us that feeling of reverence than just a stone's throw away from this Parliament.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point and it is that Barbadians, people generally, have to understand that the Square will be a place of reverence. It will be something like a shrine that when you visit the Square automatically there should be an almost spiritual connection.

I would hate to think, Sir, that we would have Barbadians who would pass through the Square and drop their sno-cone cups. I would hate to think that we would have Barbadians who would pass through the Square and drop their fast food snack boxes. It would really hurt me if we have a Saturday night when someone at the bottom of Broad Street after picking up their liquors would walk up by the Square and stop and urinate and so on. I would hate to think that type of thing would happen to a National Heroes Square. It really and truly would be one of the most embarrassing things to see something like that.

I know that the Committee is out and that they are discussing exactly how and what form it is going to take. My feeling is that the Square should be well lit. I believe it should be fenced around, not in terms that you cannot get into it, but there should be rails around the Square and that security should be there 24 hours.

I personally like the idea of having, and I heard it was called the Upper Green, some foliage, some greenery about it. It would be like creating an oasis in the middle of the concrete that we have. I do believe that that is the kind of thing which the Committee will have to think of. I do not think that there would be anything distinctive in having an all concrete square. 3.00 p.m.

The last point I want to make is that last year after we named our National Heroes we allowed a golden opportunity to go a-begging and I make no apologies for making this criticism. There should have been more socialisation after National Heroes Day and there should be more public awareness as to who our Heroes are and as to what contributions they have made and why they are renowned.

We did not do enough over the past year to instil in our young people who our Heroes are. It was not ongoing and it is a fact because I tested it. After the ceremony last year people hardly remembered the names. This should have been an ongoing public awareness campaign that the names of the National Heroes today should be on the lips of every single Barbadian. We did not have enough follow-up of that.

I would hope, now that we have come to the stage once again, that we will go full blast in letting the people know the Heroes and what contributions they have made. As I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with this Bill. I do not see the reason for all of the controversy as we are

hearing about and the Bill has my wholehearted support. I am obliged to you.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to lend critical support to the debate here in Parliament in relation to the renaming of Trafalgar Square to National Heroes Square and the ideas which we have heard in this Chamber in relation to the removal or relocation of Lord Nelson or perhaps the destruction of Lord Nelson.

In relation to this Sir, I am wondering at this time about the removing of Lord Nelson. Since you are going to be renaming the square National Heroes Square it is obvious that Lord Nelson could not fit into the square based on the fact that he cannot be considered a National Hero. But we must also understand clearly the timing and if there is going to be a cost involved in relation to this movement or whatever we decide to do with the statue, if there is going to be a cost involved.

I personally believe that if there is going to be a cost involved, when you look over the last couple of years and also taking it as far back as what the Member for the City said in relation to the statue when it was replaced and how much it was supposed to cost Government and the taxpayers of the country, then down to the point where a couple of years ago we saw a situation where the sun was taken from hitting him in his back and he had the opportunity of looking full into the sun, I am sure that this would have cost the taxpayers of Barbados some money.

My position on this exercise at this point is, is it wise to spend money on someone who has done nothing for this country that we can benefit by? Does it make sense at this time to burden the taxpayers with a cost of replacing him or removing him? My idea, if you are going to do it is an idea that I believe the taxpayers of Barbados should benefit.

Since the taxpayers should benefit, the idea I would suggest would be that only yesterday I was watching the television and to my surprise one painting was sold for \$39 million. It was on CNN. I would say that time is important. What we can do to recover all of the cost that Lord Nelson has cost this country is simple. Let us have an international auction. Perhaps advertise Lord Nelson on the Internet and we could set a day apart later in the year and auction that good statue to the person who would purchase it. I am certain that it would bring this country millions of dollars and we would be able to recover a lot of the money that he has cost us over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I am perhaps what is called a city boy, someone who has seen this City change and, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would know very well, I am also a northern boy. When I look at this City of

Bridgetown and I look at what I knew Bridgetown to be as a youngster roaming the streets of Bridgetown, as a cash boy at Fogarty, way back in the fifties, it burns my heart to think that we in this Chamber now are trying to bring back to life a city that has been completely destroyed by commerce.

We have allowed business people in this island to take Bridgetown and do as they like with it, even to the point of restricting Barbadians like ourselves from parking our vehicles in front of buildings because they have no parking signs and expatriates who own buildings in this City of Bridgetown prevent our own people, supported by the law enforcement of this country, to prevent us from parking in our town. But that is a frivolous point in relation to the changes in Bridgetown.

The changing face of Bridgetown, When you look at the Cenotaph, to my knowledge, you ask any youngster in Barbados if he has ever had the opportunity of going to the Cenotaph and trying to see if somewhere along the lines a name on the plaque represents a name that he is familiar with, very few young people in Barbados... It is all right to talk about National Heroes Square but if you do not condition the minds of young people then the Square will not serve the purpose it is set out to serve.

For example, we are talking about National Heroes Square and when you really start to study, are we going to do a clean slate? Are we going to wipe all the paintings from around the building? Because as long as you are going to start to talk about National Heroes Square and you are a stone's throw away from National Heroes Square then every time we look around we are seeing people who have kept us in bondage. We were dictated to in this Chamber by people somewhere along the line who have oppressed people like my parliamentarians and others in this country. So if we are going to have a National Heroes Square then we have to clean the slate. Then we have to see the pictures of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy as well.

One can come into this Chamber and talk about National Heroes Square and then I am going to drive into Bank Hall and I am going up Buckingham Road and then I am going to drive across Bank Hall in your constituency and I am going to come down Queen Mary Road. Then what are we saying? Are we truly going to have a National Heroes Square or we are going to be doing something because we have the time to do it?

I am saying that if we are going to have a National Heroes Square that we have ten National Heroes and my grandchildren should, fifty to sixty years from today, be able to know more about the National Heroes that we have now than some of the people today who do not know who

Clement Payne was. Some of them do not know who Charles Duncan O'Neal was.

I am saying the process is not making a National Heroes Square, the process is not removing Lord Nelson. The process is the re-education of what Barbados really should be in the twenty-first century. Yes, if you are going to have a National Heroes Square let us have a clean slate. Let us tell our young ones that the Cenotaph is just as important to that Square as the statues that you may put there or the statues that you may be removing.

We talk so much about the removal of Lord Nelson and we have not said a word in this Honourable Chamber about our honourable great grandparents who fought World War II and World War I and lost their lives for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that as a Barbadian, I am proud of some of the things that have been done in this country over the years. I am extremely proud that we have reached a stage in our history that instead of talking we have Heroes. Time will come when we will have more Heroes and as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said earlier there are heroes walking the streets of Bridgetown daily.

Moving the statue and taking him to Fort Willoughby still does not make any sense. You are still living with the image, the colonial mentality. You are still living with the situation. Your freedom cannot be the same that way. The whole point of it is, are we trying to put on a show or are we trying to educate our people in the twenty-first century?

My recommendation is that yes, National Heroes Square but I am asking if the word "national" could not be held back for a little time and that it be called Heroes Square, based on the fact that the education process is lacking in this country in the sense that you must start to condition.

Look at Bridgetown. I heard the Honourable Member for the City a little while ago reliving Bridgetown. Just to our right you have the Cenotaph. Daily you pass there. What are you going to do with the taxi drivers? Look how people treat the Cenotaph. Look at how people treat that Square. I could say this in this Chamber because I am a city person. If you walk around the Cenotaph and you walk around that area you want to know if you are walking around a latrine. Are we going to provide a National Heroes Square that we will be saying the same thing about the National Heroes Square in another ten or fifteen years? 3.15p.m.

Mr. Speaker, my position on this - yes, the time for it must be sometime but every year, Mr. Speaker, are we going to come and put portraits of the various Heroes so that when

you drive in you see them and another couple of weeks they are gone as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has just said? That people forget who the Heroes are within the next couple of months? I say let us have a National Heroes Square. I say that if you are going to move Lord Nelson, do not move him at the expense of the taxpayers of Barbados. I say, Mr. Speaker, that we could bring hundreds of tourists to Barbados, wealthy tourists to Barbados, people who are prepared to buy that statue and take it and put it on their lawn any part of the world where they are living. I would advise that in order for us to recover the money that has been spent on Lord Nelson over the years, Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasise in this Chamber that the Planning Committee because there is a Committee I have been told that has been set aside to look at planning and I say that what they could do is put Lord Nelson up for auction. When Lord Nelson is auctioned, this would mean, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that you would remove that problem that you have had for almost 200 years. Then you would have a situation where you would have recovered what you had lost on that problem for the last 200 years. Then you can start to establish your National Heroes Square.

As I go on further, I heard a lot of talk about the screw dock. Mr. Speaker, as a youngster one of the things that I would remember well is walking or riding down the wharf on my bicycle and seeing boats on dock at the screw dock. We have allowed the screw dock to deteriorate to the point where I do not think it would be wise to take money to try to recover the screw dock. I will tell you what has happened to us as far as the screw dock is concerned. The fishing fleet of Barbados has grown tremendously over the last couple of years. That screw dock would have been a benefit to Barbados now if it was in existence but, unfortunately, we have allowed that area to deteriorate.

Mr. Speaker, as a youngster and some of us in this Chamber will remember well the Sunday afternoons when we would have gone on to Queens Park and we would have journeyed down to the Pierhead and watched from the Pierhead the movement of the ships in Carlisle Bay. I am saying that in that area some mistake has been made as far as the cultural history of Barbados is concerned. A lot of our cultural history has gone under, has been taken from us and has been destroyed and you cannot recover it, Mr. Speaker, in a flash with any National Heroes Square. You just cannot, Mr. Speaker. You have to re-educate the Barbadian young minds.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: You have to start to let the Barbadian young minds know exactly what Sarah Gill did. You have to let the young minds know what Sir Frank Walcott did. You also have to let the young mind know that

Lord Nelson did nothing because when he came to Barbados he was 20 years old. 3.20 p.m.

It took Barbados two months to know of the Battle of Trafalgar, because he sailed out of Barbados and the Battle was in October, but Barbados never knew about the battle until December. So how much did we know about Lord Nelson at 20 years of age?

Mr. Speaker, let us be serious, Sir. A lot of us have become very conscious of our colour and I would not like to think that this debate on National Heroes Square will be brought down to an issue of colour. I have heard a lot of historians in this country who seem to have an axe to grind as far as ethnic Barbados is concerned. And, because they have an axe to grind as far as ethnic Barbados is concerned, we are liable to be led astray by those very historians. In truth and in fact, history is distorted.

This history is distorted and I say, Sir, yes, Heroes Square. Yes, let us recognise those Heroes and I say, yes, as far as this country is concerned, this country is poised for the 21st Century. I am saying that if it is poised for the 21st Century, Mr. Speaker, you must have a clean slate.

Lord Nelson is not the only problem. We have to remove Beckwith Street. We have to remove people like Wilberforce, Cromwell and Churchill. We have to look at renaming streets and roads in this island in order that the young Barbadian who is going into the 21st Century, Mr. Speaker, will then know that he is living in a different Barbados.

For example, take Broad Street, you have an area in Broad Street which was a holding area for slaves. It was known as the slave gate. You have allowed commerce to come and shut that gate out, Mr. Speaker, that none of us can take our grandchildren and say "this is where we passed. This is how we came out." Because, we have allowed commerce to dictate for us, so that slave gate in Bridgetown which is between the building of Y. De Lima and the Bank does not exist any longer. So how are we going to have a National Heroes Square when in truth and in fact the passage has been hidden from us. The passage has been shut out from us.

Let us be serious about our history. Let us be serious about where Barbados should go. Let us be serious about how the young mind is thinking. I lend critical support to a new Barbados. I lend critical support to an area of a Heroes Square. I lend critical support to the point where we need at

this time to let Barbadian youths know exactly what it was, but not at this point of doing something because now is the time. Now is the time we can make a mistake having it as 'now is the time'.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, yes, it can be done, yes, it will be done, but not at the cost of those people out there who do not have homes, not at the cost of those roads in Barbados that need repairing. Let us get some money out of it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things I would like as far as the new Bridgetown is concerned with all the plans and everything that has gone into place, I am hoping that some thought has been given to the Swing Bridge and that some arrangements will be made. I had the privilege of living in Curacao for three months and when I see the city in Curacao and I see the respect that people have for their city - the old city and the new city. My position on this is that your city is your impression. People have an impression of the country based on what they see in the city.

If we have a city that is run down and if we have a city where we allow vagrants and what I would consider to be people who have taken over our city apart from vagrants, people who are involved in devious deeds both people in commerce and people on the streets, people in commerce who own businesses in Bridgetown and the vagrants on the street, it is time for us to have a clean slate. It is time for us to take back the City and put the City the way it should be placed, but not, Mr. Speaker, to tell us that you are going to do it because now is the time. I think a plan is extremely important, to put these things in place. Yes, you have to rewrite history. There is nothing wrong with writing history. I hear historians making a noise that you have to rewrite history. History is made every day because there is no one on the face of the earth, including all of us in this Chamber who could relive this time and this day. So history is created every second and every minute as you make. I cannot relive - and I do not know who else in this Chamber who can, five minutes ago the same way I lived it. So I have made history five minutes ago. Others can say the same. So history is made every day. If one has to rewrite history, they have to rewrite history in the right manner and in the right way, so that the young ones who are coming up will know the benefit.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the situation of Bridgetown there is big colossal arch at the bottom of the street. In that arch there is a picture of the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. If you see the condition of the picture, if we cannot keep a picture of the hero in the right condition, what is the sense? And I lend critical support to a new Barbados, even though I am going away from the new Barbados, I want to be proud or my grandchildren must be proud of a new Barbados.

I am saying that if you cannot maintain and upkeep that arch with a simple photograph of a Hero of Barbados in it, what are you going to do to National Heroes Square? Yes, let us have heroes. We must have heroes, but the time has to be right. The time is now for our education process for a new Barbados into the 21st century.

Finally, it is not Nelson alone that we have to think about moving. We have to remove all, the Buckingham Road, Wilberforce, the Churchills and everything that symbolised colonialism and hardship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
3.30 p.m.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, coming down to the end of this debate, I now take the opportunity to address you and this Honourable House on this very special debate, one which is extremely dear to me, and which forces me to constrain myself, because I am filled with great enthusiasm at this great achievement.

It has been a long struggle, a long historic mission which I never thought that I would live to see within the 20th century.

But on the closing of this century, great things are happening in Barbados. It is only one more stage in an evolutionary process to a high level of national consciousness, and we have done so many good things within the last two to three years in Barbados, clearly indicated before by my colleagues on this Side, whose thoughts are a lot more refined than the thoughts of others on the Other Side.

The debate ranged from the wise to the unwise on this subject matter. Some people spoke about heroes. Some spoke about National Heroes and all methodologies came into play in trying to determine where the National Heroes Park should be, where Nelson should go, and who should replace Nelson. So, we had a variety of methodologies being given vent to in this debate.

But at the beginning of the 20th century, there were clarion calls of passion coming from the most eminent personality, in the form of Marcus Garvey of the time, and Garvey was very clear, he was very clear because Garvey understood that there was a void in our political culture, in our political history and he attempted to fulfill it by his advocacy, information and organization, to fill that void and he made the philosophical call. He asked where are our Kings and Queens? Where are our men of high affairs? I think that question is answered in the actual thinking of this party at this juncture of our history.

Because what we have actually done in this post colonial period is to attempt to bring some national pride to the hard working captives who were brought to this soil by force and contributed significantly to the growth of the civilization of Barbados. That is what the Barbados Labour Party as a Government has brought to this country and its political history in our current role as the Government of Barbados.

If there is a group who owes an apology to the State, (and unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. John, talked about an apology), but if there is a group that owes an apology to the State or to the people on the outside, it is the Government who brought nationhood through Independence.

A cosmetic nationhood in 1966 did not make the fundamental change to bring about the national spiritual consciousness of the people. Therefore, the burden that they now say is on the State to bring about that consciousness, came as a consequence of them not doing what they ought to have done in the post-colonial period.

Many voices in this country tonight are taking a stand at every progressive programme or plank that has been put forward to bring about this national consciousness. But this is nothing new, because they are the offspring of an ancestry that has always moved against anything that is progressive for black people. So when the argument comes up about it, it is not a black and white issue. Barbados is unique, and the black and white issue came because the oppressors were white and the oppressed were black. You cannot exclude the fundamental variables of race in describing who were the oppressed in Barbados and who were the oppressors. That is extremely difficult, so we can play with it.

But as a sense of tolerance that must be taken into consideration when we begin to deal with matters that bring conflict, between labour and capital, between those who advocate the views of the colonial ancestors and those who advocate the views of those who always have a philosophy based on resistance, that was very clear. I say it is the same voice. Because in 1816 during the Bussa revolt, the same voices who came out and supported the oppressors of the time and the ancestors of that time, these are the descendants of those very people who are taking the position which they are taking today.

I do not see anything contentious about understanding why a National Heroes Square should be placed in a central location in the City of Bridgetown. Any reasonable person should understand why you will use a methodology that would select the central location in the major city of Barbados for a National Heroes Square.

But in addition to its physical value, it also has a great impact, just like Nelson has it, consciously or subconsciously now, on the psyche of the people who come to the city.

So, we do not want to put National Heroes in the backwoods of a country. We need the National Heroes to be at a central point and to show that we are not prejudiced or racist, we are trying to make reservations or accommodation for the statue of a person who played a peripheral strand in the history of Barbados. No central role in the history of Barbados.

It was clearly enunciated this morning, the role that Nelson played. If it were not the British, it would have been the French. But all of them, both the British and the French were colonial masters. In my view the British were more sinister in their practices of slavery than the French. The British colonial masters are the ones who developed and rationalized the ideology that black men were inferior and that the black men whom they captured from the African continent were not human beings. It came from the British. The French at least had laws, whether they respected them or not, the *Le Code Noir*. But the British had nothing. They had an unwritten ideology that they lived by, that we were chattels, slaves, property.

So, to tell me that if Napoleon had succeeded, we would be worse off than if Nelson had succeeded, it is not an argument for consideration in this matter. 3.40 p.m.

The fact is that in a post-colonial period, and at a time when a black Government as a consequence of receiving a 26-2 vote by the people of Barbados, and a Government who respects the principle of democracy, with people who have vested their general will in this Government, we have gone beyond the support of the electorate and we are prepared to go back to the general public and have a national debate on this matter.

Those who believe that, because a few privileged, educated elite persons can get in a newspaper and express their views on this colonial perspective about the preservation of Nelson, if they believe they are going to dominate the debate when it comes into the public domain they are wrong about that. The debate will not be surrounded by the educated elite who were prepared to sacrifice their brothers and sisters for the right to vote in 1816 because after they sold out the Revolution in 1816 with Bussa they were given as compensation the right to go to court to give evidence, not to vote. They had no right to go to court to give evidence and as compensation for their role they were given that right to go to court and give evidence against their own people.

They repeated their behaviour in the Confederation riots in the 1870s. They came back and repeated their behaviour again in 1937 and that has always been their role and it will be their role in perpetuity. But this is a time when there are courageous voices and men who are prepared to put a counter view and not wait until conflict emerges in a society to look to rescue the situation. This is a proactive method.

In our society the young people are asking questions. The same questions that Marcus Garvey asked at the beginning of the 20th century are asked by the young men on the streets today. Where are our men of high affairs? What do we have to emulate? This action which we have witnessed within the last five years, Heroes Day on April 28, a Day of Significance on July 26, respect for the Emancipation on August 1, respect for our Independence. These major dates are now important to the people of Barbados and black men in this country feel a sense of pride.

I do not believe that I am alone. I do not believe that the leadership of this party is alone. We feel a strong sense of pride that we can point to national dates of importance and the great leadership of black men in this country. No longer will our minds be polluted by admiration for colonial heroes who were representing the interest of Great Britain. We can now look to people from this small 166 square miles country and talk about the contributions which they have made.

I believe we have a valid case if one could say that Nelson ought to be in a central position. We have a valid case for King Ja Ja. They have minimized and made comedy out of the role of King Ja Ja coming out of Opopo. The people of Barbados, as a consequence of distorted history, believed that Ja Ja was a clown. It is only in recent times that people learned of the contribution of Ja Ja and the admiration which the people in the Caribbean had of Ja Ja. The minds were not inquisitive enough to ask how come this man came to Barbados and was put in the same building which housed the CBU up to a few months ago.

Aside.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: If he was here at this time in history he would be my constituent and probably that is why I have to represent his spirit in these circumstances.

But King Ja Ja played a meaningful role and we know nothing about King Ja Ja no more than "King Ja Ja wouldn't let Becca lone." There are people who want us to preserve the distortion of history and the cultural imposition and say to our offspring that that is genuine history. Everything would be part of history but we have to know what is valid and what is not. What is unfortunate is that many people believe that because it is history that it is just.

While we are talking about National Heroes, we are talking about individuals who played a central role in the development of the quality of life of our people and the civilisation of Barbadian people, people who stood up for democracy, who stood up for liberty and justice and for the rights of man in general.

How can people become so passionate about a person who argued strongly against freedom of black people and who took up a strong position against the philanthropic voice of people like Wilberforce? If I am to err in my judgment, I prefer to err with Eric Williams as an outstanding historian, or Dr. Heckles, than some of the others who lay claim to being experts in the particular field. In "Capitalism and Slavery" if there is a role that you ought to judge the contribution of Nelson on as Parliamentarians you ought to judge him on the position he took against William Wilberforce, and that is my position on it.

This symbol of a square of statues is important to all of us as black Parliamentarians and to a State where over 90% of the population is black. It is essential to our stability, essential to our national pride and it also gives hope to a young population who needs something to look at to see that we have already made a meaningful contribution in the history of man. That is what these symbols mean to a society. So you do not measure the value of a square based on the monetary costs of a statue or the monetary cost of putting into place those symbols which are important to the psyche of a society. There are some people who can only see the value of something when you attach a cost to it and those are people who do not have the kind of refined thought that is required for a changing environment on the eve of the 21st century.

I am extremely happy to be in Parliament at this point in our history to be able to give full support to the renaming of that square, National Heroes Square. At some time in the future, I will be able to expand on the importance of all of these elements, all of these symbols and all the different perspectives on why we need to make our nation nationalistic at this time and not just be a nation as a consequence of a constitutional or statutory change but essentially to have a sense of strong national consciousness.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have made a valuable short contribution to the debate and like many other presentations I hope that my contribution is as valuable as the other contributions which were made here this afternoon. Thank you very much, Sir. 3.50p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the reactionary nature of Barbadian society always amazes me and this recent debate over whether Lord Nelson should remain in Trafalgar Square and whether the Square should be so designated is a typical example of what we are like as a people.

It raises the question, not only what mirror image do we have of ourselves which is a question posed by one of our own National Heroes the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and repeated here today during the remarks of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Member for St. Peter about how do we define ourselves. Whom do we wish to emulate? How do we want to be defined as a people, as individuals, and whom do we want to be identified with? Can it really be that after such historical development, after such tremendous education, our only image of how we want to define our town centre is by a symbol of our colonial past when in fact we have an opportunity to have standing in the centre of our town as a symbol for those who come after us and those who are yet young, one of our own, one of those persons who is properly described as nation builders, who by their love of country, their neighbours and their excellence in particular fields of endeavour have helped to shape our history and have helped to define who we are as a people?

It seems to me, Sir, that this raises the question of where we want to be at this juncture of our history and how indeed we should go forward. I firmly believe that the redesignation of Trafalgar Square as Heroes Square is important to us as people not only because we are defining and saying for all what we want to symbolise our history, how we characterise the best of what is Barbadian and the kind of effort that it takes for individuals to emerge and be recognised by a society as a people, those who have given labour and life to build this country to what it is.

The argument cannot be whether Nelson made a contribution to Barbados or whether Nelson made a contribution to British history. It really is about what do we want as a symbol in the town centre of Barbados?

When people go to Washington or any big city in the world and we see symbols of their past and of their heritage it is always what represents the best of the people in whichever country it is. It is that which symbolises who they are and from whence they came and what they can and should aspire to. It seems to me that surely at this stage we cannot be aspiring to be emulating our colonial masters and still holding them up as the icons which we revere. It has got to be if we are self-respecting, if we are thinking in terms of moving towards republicanism, then it has got to be that we are going to give pride of place to those people who helped shape and define Barbados. 3.55 p.m.

In fact, I do not accept the arguments of those who say that it will adversely impact on tourism. It does not matter that our statue of Lord Nelson preceded that still standing in the United Kingdom. In fact, when we put up our own heroes in Bridgetown, that itself will become a place of great beauty, of great significance and tourists will be just as keen to take photographs next to statues of Barbadians. I can see people lining up, all those that are interested in cricket and so, to take a photograph next to the statue of Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers. I can see people lining up, for those who may have an interest in media affairs and so, to take photographs next to some other hero. For those who have an interest in the trade union movement, we will see tourists, I am sure going around from statue to statue reading those words which will be written there and thinking about who these persons are and what they mean to Barbados. It is important on the eve of this new millennium as we are talking so much about social transformation that we could also move towards a transformation of mind that allows us to accept ourselves for who we are. This has nothing to do with rejecting whatever our colonial past has been. It has nothing to do with re-defining history. It has to do with giving pride of place to what is Barbadian and finding a more appropriate setting for Lord Nelson's statue. Does it mean that the statue will be destroyed? As the Honourable Member for the City was saying, it could go on the screw dock where in fact it will be well placed, that being a military setting and will have great historical and heritage value for tourism and for the country. That would indeed be an appropriate setting for Lord Nelson while our Barbadian heroes stand in our town centre.

During the course of the speeches today, a number of persons also alluded to issues relating to wider Bridgetown. It is interesting that we should have a statue here that is older than that in Britain. Equally, Sir, other references have been drawn to other statues and symbols and icons that were moved but the Montefiore Fountain opposite the library is another fountain that is older than the Montefiore Fountain in Europe. There is a lot of history in Bridgetown and the history does not change if you move location.

People that were talking earlier about the whole re-definition of Bridgetown, you will recall that year before last the Ministry of Environment re-dedicated the whole area around the Montefiore Fountain and beautified that and that the greening of Bridgetown has yet to take place. When the National Heroes Square is dedicated and by the time the statues go in that the whole of Bridgetown will be transformed visually from what we know now. It will be a greener place, a more beautiful place, a place where people will want to come and relax and pause by the statues and ask questions or where young boys, I imagine, will gather or old men may yet sit and talk about one of Sir Gary's greater performances or reflect on something that the Right

Excellent Errol Walton Barrow made or somebody might speak to something that they saw or heard Sir Grantley Adams do. I was reading some of his speeches recently and was deeply moved by a lot of what he said.

Nobody knows in this generation or in recent history much about Nelson. If one read the newspapers over the course of the last few days, it would appear from the comments made by people in the streets responding to the questionnaires in the media that Lord Nelson had actually been a leader of Barbados. One person actually said that. They seem to have felt that at some point in our historical past he had been a leader of the country. People are not clear on what it is that he did. I think that there is some degree of extreme conservatism on one hand and secondly, people say, he has always been there so why should you move him? It is more a question of why should you not move him? Especially if and when in moving him we can create something that is better.

When Bridgetown is greened and visually transformed, I think I would wish to make the point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke to the issue of homelessness in the City. It is therefore a convenient time to inform the House that the Task Force on homelessness which was established earlier this year will shortly be giving its report and therefore this whole problem of our seeing so many homeless people in our town centre will be dealt with. You are not just going to have this place designated as National Heroes Square and be made beautiful and have all these vagrants sleeping around it. Certainly, with the implementation of the policy initiatives emerging out of the Task Force we are going to be seeing a Bridgetown that is transformed not only from the point of view of aesthetics but certainly from the perspective of the social transformation which needs to take place.

In fact, that is what re-shaping our definition of ourselves is about. How do we shape and re-shape and re-define Barbados. How do we make the future different? By giving people positive images of themselves, by giving them something to aspire to. By showing Barbadians what is the best reflection of them as individuals, as a people and giving the country something to look up to rather than icons out of the past whose contributions to our own historical development is dubious and who had only two passing visits to Barbados, two very short visits and whose sole comment on Barbados was that Barbados was a detestable place. Can it be really that our sense of self-esteem as a people is so low that we would wish to cling to the statue of a person whose sole description of Barbados was that it was detestable and we would protest that this person's image should stand in the middle of our town centre looking down on us with all of the

contempt which he could muster when he wrote off to friends - I wish I were not in this detestable place called Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: He said that, he described Barbados as a detestable place and he hated it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: In modern Barbados we are saying leave him there, keep him up, do not move him. Surely we have to have more self-respect than this that Nelson should be allowed to go to a place where he is more appropriately sited and that we should site where he is now, persons who not only loved Barbados but worked hard to make Barbados the beautiful place that it is.

Part of the confusion and the anxiety apart from moving him and the fact that we are accustomed to him there is perhaps because people are uncertain as to what we are going to do with the statue, people may be unclear as to when we designate Heroes Square what it will look like, what it will become and so on. People do not know how he really felt about Barbados or what his contribution was. I think that we are under a duty here not just to say that moving him is within our contemplation but to give some public education and some clear statement about what the Square will look like when it is re-designated and the new statues put in and what in fact will happen to Nelson's statue.

We are not trying as some are suggesting to change history because our colonial past is as much a historical fact as that as we are of African extract. We cannot change our history, we cannot change who we are and that is not what the Government is seeking to do.

If you have in your living room to choose between putting a photograph of a person who has been good to you and who has worked to help you and a person who hated you and had never been to your house or had contact with you, it seems to me that the average person would choose to opt for the photograph of the person who had been close to them and had been called a friend.

I believe that if we are to honour those designated as National Heroes and to find for them a permanent place where all can go and see and pause and look and recall or recite what they may have done to help to develop Barbados then the place for them surely has to be in the town centre, the capital of our country, the City, the place where all commerce has its hub and in the place where, in fact, by their effort, by their love, their life, their labour, they have worked to make Barbados what it is. We must choose to go with the

re-designation to National Heroes Square for the contribution of those who we now call Right Excellent and who loved Barbados, all of them, as opposed to hanging on to the statue of him who deemed us detestable. For me, Sir, that is the crux of the matter. Having a choice, would I wish to see opposite the Parliament buildings and in the centre of Barbados those who loved and laboured for Barbados or those who detested us.

The choice is clear, Sir. At least for me it is.

Thank you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank all Members who have spoken in this debate. From the tone and the substance of their contribution this debate has at least clarified that there is no divide among the major Parties regarding the concept of a National Heroes Square. The debate has revealed that that was announced Democratic Labour Party policy from as far back as 1994 and it certainly is the Barbados Labour Party's policy as specified in our Manifesto of 1999. I do not want there to be any dispute in the country regarding the concept of a National Heroes Square.

The House has heard a variety of proposals as regards where that Square should be but we still think, Sir, that the centre of the City in close proximity to the Parliament of this country and in close proximity to the Hall of Heroes, the West Wing of Parliament, is where our Heroes should be fittingly recognised.

Mr. Speaker, the one issue that was raised of substance on the Other Side was what appears to be the rushed nature of the planning of the celebration. I think the Minister of Culture has explained that the planning of the celebrations of National Heroes Day this year had to fit into a rather crowded agenda that included the general election campaign as well as the preparations for Estimates. It is not to derogate from the importance of the event itself but just to say, Sir, we have to give greater thought as to how we approach this matter in years to come.

The point is well taken that we should celebrate National Heroes Day with a sense of solemn exultation. I do not mean that in the sense of which judges have a sense of solemn exultation when they condemn persons to death.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There has to be something dignified about the celebration of National Heroes Day. We are looking to have a series of simple, tasteful and dignified events spread across the country involving the community,

focussed on community participation and the giving to the society as the ideal ways in which National Heroes Day hereinafter will have to be celebrated.

Last year, Sir, we had a formal ceremony to announce April 28th as National Heroes Day. That was a once in a lifetime ceremony. The focus this year is to designate National Heroes Square. We intend to have that ceremony simple and befitting the occasion. The House is now clear, Sir, that no decision has been taken as regards the removal or the addition of any statues in what is now Trafalgar Square. Cabinet has decided that there should be a National Heroes Square and that that should be where Trafalgar Square is now located. I think we should leave this House with no dispute that the Committee to be headed by the Clerk will be making representation to the Government after appropriate public consultation as to how we can dignify National Heroes Square in keeping with the image we want to project of our National Heroes. 4.10p.m.

The argument, Sir, about white and black heroes is a false argument as I have said in this debate. We have Heroes and those persons who want us to have a white hero merely because there is a white population in Barbados, I do not believe are adding to the debate, Sir. They are subtracting from it, because we cannot determine our heroes upon the basis of race, but upon the basis of contribution. I must repeat, Sir, that if a white person in Barbados was to do something sufficiently heroically in the judgement of any succeeding Parliament, that a person should be judged a hero on the strength on what they have accomplished, rather than on the basis of the colour of their skin and that is the position, Mr. Speaker, of this Government. It is a position to which I subscribe very dearly.

The issue of Nelson therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is left to be adjudicated after appropriate public consultation and I would urge that the consultation be dignified. I do not believe that we should allow a discussion about the National Heroes in this country to degenerate into rancour or a squalid discourse that does not add to the dignity of the Heroes themselves. The Honourable Member for St. James South gave me an indication today when she indicated that Lord Nelson went on record as referring to Barbados as a detestable place.

If that was widely known in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, I really do feel that some sections of the society might want to wheel a cutlass on him or invite upon his personage some more violent form of removal. I say that not because I want to inflame passion, but if he did say that, then that will also become part of the public debate and I suppose, Sir, that it would be a consideration that cannot be ignored by those

who want to appropriately measure the place that he should occupy in our Parliament and by association vicariously, the place that he should occupy relative to the pantheon of our National Heroes.

Sir, all we are doing by this Act and all that the Cabinet had agreed to do is to designate a portion of this land to hereinafter be termed "National Heroes Square". That is all we are doing, Sir. There is no political division on the issue, nor concept, of a National Heroes Square and let us proceed as if there is none, Sir. The other matters concerning how we adorn that Heroes Square is something that we will settle in a dignified and a becoming fashion. It is in that spirit, therefore, that I commend this historic legislation to this Parliament, thank all those who have spoken with the appropriate tone, temper and substance in this debate and beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: 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 Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, 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, each seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and cited as the Trafalgar Square {Change of Name} Act, 1999.

ORDER NO. 2 - INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (MEMBERSHIP OF BARBADOS) BILL, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the piece of legislation before the House is to enable Barbados to formally become a Member of the International Development Association. By way of background, Sir, the International Development Association is an affiliate of

the World Bank group. It is not commonly known, but the World Bank group is made up of a number of related institutions. The principal institution, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Redevelopment is commonly called the World Bank, but that is but one lending arm of the institution and that is responsible for making general loans available to countries from the ordinary resources of the Bank.

There is also the International Finance Corporation which is an affiliate of the World Bank that makes financing available to the private sector and of course one is aware of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. There is also a facility in the World Bank that makes loans only to the lesser developed countries of the world and then on the most concessionary terms and that institution is the International Development Agency which has been in existence since 1960.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, Barbados has never been able to borrow from the International Development Agency because its per capita income has always been too high to qualify it to borrow from it. And we have now graduated as of December 31, 1998 from being able to borrow funds from the World Bank - the International Bank for Reconstruction itself. So our formal borrowing relationship from the World Bank ended on December 31, 1998.

However, Barbados is entitled to become a donor member of the International Development Association, and in that capacity to have its resources used for lending on soft terms to the poorest countries of the world. It is an option that the Government of Barbados has decided to exercise for a number of very valid reasons.

The first, of course, is that we have a vested interest in helping - in the spirit of cooperation, to help uplift the standard of living of the lesser developed countries of the world and to help to remove the scourge of poverty from among the poorest of the poor. So there is a moral obligation which impels us in this particular instance, Sir. 4.20 p.m.

The second major issue is that some of our kith and kin in the region, namely Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have been entitled to borrow from the World Bank, a blend of resources involving monies from the International Development Association as well as monies from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Our joining the IDA will ensure that the resources of the people of Barbados are used to help develop the Caribbean region.

But there is also a third reason, Sir, that has to do with our own self-interest. Our becoming a member of the IDA would mean that firms in Barbados would be in a position to do in the future what they are not able to do now, to bid for consultancies for works to be carried out using IDA resources in those Caribbean countries that I have just referenced and in all the other Caribbean countries.

We would want, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for those three reasons to urge the House to give formal ratification for us to become members of this Institution.

As you are aware, Sir, one becomes a member of these international institutions, like the IMF, the World Bank, the IADB, by subscribing to shares and in relation to this matter under consideration, on becoming members of the International Development Association. The price that is attached to our becoming a donor member is that we would have to pay US \$ 178 000 for our shares to join the institution and also to make a contribution of US \$875 000 to the Emergency Trust Fund of the Association.

An arrangement has been made for us to make those contributions over a period of time. Last year you will recall, Sir, the House approved a supplementary provision for us to advance the amount needed for us to secure Barbados' membership in this institution by way of shareholding.

What is before the House now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, therefore, as was the case when we joined the CDB, is the legislation that sets out in very specific terms the Articles of Association between Barbados and the Association.

I am very pleased that Barbados now finds itself in this position where it can make a contribution to the general development of mankind.

But I may want before I sit, Sir, to say a few brief words on our future relationship with the World Bank group. As I said, Barbados has ended its borrowing relationship from the Bank as of December 1998 and officials of the Bank have expressed an interest in reconsidering our graduation from the Bank and have enforced the prospects of our continuing to have access either to loan resources or high quality technical assistance resources from the Bank, of course, Sir, at a price.

The Government of Barbados is not going to rush headlong into that relationship because the World Bank has in recent times gotten very, very heavily involved in something called policy-based lending, that is, that all loans

received from the World Bank are so tied up with policy conditionalities, that it becomes very difficult swiftly to execute the loans.

We had the most enormous difficulties executing the last two projects, one as you know the TVET project if we were not careful, would have required us to impose fees at the University of the West Indies. We changed that. Also the road maintenance project, Sir, was tied up in a lot of conditionalities that made it very, very difficult for us to swiftly execute the disbursement of resources secured from the World Bank.

The point that I am coming to, is that the Government of Barbados has been very clear in our relationship with the Inter-American Development Bank, that if we are to borrow for project purposes, the Government will not accept a whole matrix of impossible conditionalities as the basis upon which we access the resources.

I am pleased to say, Sir, that that principle has been accepted by the Institution insofar as the EduTech loan which is the largest loan ever secured by the Government of Barbados and the loan for solid waste from the IDB have been free of policy conditionalities.

I am of the view, as in fact a lot of people who have come to review World Bank Policy say, that part of the failure of the World Bank in the last decade was the difficulty of reconciling policy-based lending of the Institution with the genuine development requirements of the countries receiving the financing.

So that while we are appreciative of the desire of the World Bank to continue a relationship, I just want the House to be aware, Sir, that we will be circumspect. We would wish to borrow for projects but Barbados will not wish to subject itself in the future to serious policy dictation from the World Bank or any other lending institution as preconditions for projects.

I really feel, Sir, that the international lending institutions should go back to their primary purposes. They were established to provide funds for development of countries. They were not established as policy policemen. That all of them, CDB, IDB, World Bank, if countries need to build roads, lend money to build roads, if countries need to build airports, lend money to build airports. This business about using the need to borrow as the basis for directing economies is a dispensation that ought to be halted.

The landscape of the countries of the Third World is now strewn with the wreckage of failed policies by assiduous technicians who have come to our countries and played God.

In fact, Sir, if it were my way, I would want to move a resolution before the international financial communities that all of their technicians should be required to live in the countries and to live under the same conditions as the people who have to be visited and be the subject of their policy recommendations.

You have sometimes staggering situations, Sir, where high-priced technicians living tax free commit Government to austerity programmes that not only impoverish societies but so reduce confidence that the societies sometimes become failed societies, Sir.

So we will look very circumspectly at any new programme with the World Bank on the condition that we are interested in borrowing for projects that can advance Barbados but are not interested in imposing on ourselves policy conditionalities that are out of whack in our time, our place and our circumstances.

May I also finish by saying, Sir, that there is an initiative that the World Bank has been good enough to take on board having to do with the special circumstances of small states.

You are aware that the Commonwealth has been championing small states vulnerability issues as relevant and worthy of international support. The World Bank and the Commonwealth as a result of a mission that the Prime Minister of Barbados in that capacity was fortunate to lead established a task force to investigate the vulnerability of small states to work toward designing a vulnerability index to be used in preference to capital considerations as the basis for classification of countries but more importantly, to be able to devise a new set of policies to be followed by the international institutions and the WTO. That would accord small vulnerable societies, special and differential treatment in the same way the forty-four LDC's that fall within the UN classification of LDC's are now entitled to special and differential treatment in the fora of the WTO, World Bank and other places.

The task force has been meeting, Sir, and has had a number of papers prepared. A lot of work has been done to develop a new vulnerability index.

-The World Bank has put its policies on the table for scrutiny with a view to having those policies reconfigured to make them more comfortable to the circumstances of small countries.

It is envisioned that at the Commonwealth Ministers of Finance Meeting this year, the task force report will formally be prepared and presented. 4.30 p.m.

It is further hoped that at the World Bank Meeting this year the Task Force on Small States will submit a formal set of recommendations for adoption by the international community.

I do not have to tell the House, Sir, that Barbados has a special interest in this particular issue. While we have done well in terms of our social and economic development, Barbados remains a very vulnerable society. Our vulnerability is no different from that of societies that are poorer than ourselves.

One major disaster involving a nuclear shipment through the Caribbean region will devastate the economies to the point where we could have our progress retarded by a generation. So Barbados is in step with small island states and even small landlocked island states in having the international community accept the need to treat the vulnerability of small states as an issue of legitimacy in itself, one that should be taken into account in the international determination of who should get what and the policies to be applied in relation to developing states.

We would rather want to set any new relationship with the World Bank within the context of the evolving work of small states and a new policy framework for small states arising from the Task Force Report rather than subscribe to the old World Bank policies of the past.

Members on the Other Side would specially note the excruciating difficulties that were posed in treating with the World Bank among all international lending institutions. They have a theology that was more binding than the Christian faith is to practising Christians. It warns us, Sir, that even though there is this determination to go forward with them we must exercise circumspection and not rush into a relationship mainly because there seems now to be a new dispensation on the part of some elements in the institution.

This organ, as I said, Sir, will allow Barbados to live up to the moral obligation that we must live up to since our circumstances allow us to help the poorest of the poor. It allows us also, as I said, to provide some funds that can be of assistance to the poorest of the poor within the region. It will allow Barbadian companies as well to be able to bid for contracts and consultancies under the auspices of the IDA.

It is in that context, Sir, that I am pleased to recommend this legislation to the House, and beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 5 and the Schedule were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the International Development Association (Membership of Barbados) Act, 1999.

ORDER NO. 5 - THE PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, in the course of this decade, Barbados has had two major reforms, first of all of the direct tax system and secondly of the indirect tax system. I would want to suggest to the House that the next major area of tax reform must be for us to undertake a major reform of the taxes on property.

I think the House can agree that the property taxation legislation has remained in an archaic state for some time and we do need to bring our treatment of land and property and the taxation of the same into line with modern practice. In preparation for that this House, and quite properly so, constituted a select committee. The recommendations of that select committee on land taxation and property are before us and have been before Government for consideration.

I give the House the promise, Sir, that in a Budgetary presentation that will be made a little earlier than I have been making them in recent years the question of the recommendations of that select committee will constitute an important dimension.

This legislation before the House, therefore, Sir, is not anticipating any of the recommendations arising from that select committee. We will have the opportunity, perhaps, within the next two months, as I have said, to go into that as part of a general effort to reform taxation and legislation pertaining to property in this country.

What is before the House are simple amendments to the Act to give effect to proposals that were announced in a previous Budget, first to ensure that the limit below which no property transfer tax is charged on the transfer of the shares is increased from \$25 000 to \$50 000 and secondly, to allow full exemption of property transfer tax where there is no change in the ultimate beneficial ownership of the property on condition that if the beneficial ownership changes within five years the original transaction will become taxable. This is what these two amendments seek to accomplish at this time.

I am serving notice to the House and giving the Members of the Opposition early notice that we feel that having overhauled the indirect tax system, Barbados now must look seriously at the taxation and legislation of property as the next major area that warrants serious investigation. We are in a position to have benefitted from the wider views of the society and we will be proceeding to make those adjustments in due course.

These should have been here before, Mr. Speaker, but the Ministry of Finance has been administering its affairs as if this legislation has been in place since 1997. The commencement, however, therefore will be 1997 because that was the intention when they were announced at the time.

I beg, with those caveats and explanations, to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will not be long on this. When I was Minister of Finance, Property Transfer Tax yielded about \$17 million and now it is estimated this year to be \$22 million. I did not have the luxury of dealing in a significant way with the property transfer tax but I must say that I have never heard an argument advanced which convinced me that there is any desirability at all for the incidence of Property Transfer Tax. It is not a capital gains tax because if you buy land today and it does not appreciate in value and you sell it the next week you still pay property transfer tax. So it is in fact a penalty.

To my mind, there was never a reason at the time when it was introduced for there to be a deterrent against selling property. There are enough Barbadians who are property holders and the property markets are much more fluid and I really feel that there have also been ingenious ways for people who, assuming that you believe that foreign companies should be subject to those taxes, have been able to get around them and thousands of alternatives can be put

in place and have been put in place to avoid it. So there is really no useful purpose to a property transfer tax and even the exceptions which the Minister has identified which are quite laudable and which have been problems - matrimonial transfers, transfers of shares when the beneficial owners have not changed etc., shares traded on the floor of the exchange or whatever - those are valid exceptions but they are no more compelling than the case of the man who buys land this week, finds he cannot service his mortgage and has to sell the house two weeks later and then has to pay a transfer tax even though the property value has not increased. So it is in fact a penalty.

The second point that I want to make to end that point is to say that I am in favour of a complete overhaul of the property transfer tax. My recollection is that the Select Committee on Ownership of Land had in fact recommended extending the ambit of the transfer tax for the purpose of dealing with purchases by foreigners of land in Barbados. I do not agree with that method. I think there are many other ways to do that. You can zone land. You can have direct statements of what areas of land should be available for foreign purchase. That is my view but I do not think property transfer tax achieves that because they go through the back door, get Barbadians to front for them, still have access to the land and find ways around it. Therefore I think the property transfer tax should be phased out, and the sooner that we can get to phasing it out and replacing it with some other tax if necessary on capital gains.

We have one capital gains tax which is applied selectively, the development duty which is applied almost in a heinous way, in my view, because it is so draconian in its impact and again people wait for ten years, do not sell their property but enter into an agreement that once the ten years have passed they sell it and are not subject to land development duty.

There are a variety of reasons why this area needs to be overhauled and regrettably the Select Committee did not to my mind address some of those critical issues. I have not paid too much attention to it. My colleague on this Side who happened to be a member of the Committee said he did not agree with the Committee. He told the House that.

There is something I think that needed to be addressed that was not addressed and I think that perhaps the Committee did not have the benefit of looking at the broader policy implications.

The second point that needs to be made is that the property transfer tax may in itself be a tax which under the WTO will have to be abolished because it is discriminatory. First of all, it should be abolished right now for CARICOM citizens who purchase land in Barbados because it is grossly

unfair that Barbadians can go into countries where there are no restrictions whatsoever as members of CARICOM and purchase property but the same reciprocity is not applicable here. They are treated as foreigners. Even a Caribbean person is treated as a foreigner for the purpose of the Property Transfer Tax Act. I think that is something we should quickly deal with and if it can be done in the next Budget I would be very happy because I would give it my fullest support.

I was going on to say that the property transfer tax may also offend against the provisions of the GATT and WTO requirements and again it is going to be something that is going to need refining and changing and what we need to do is to look at the whole property transfer tax scenario and use other methods to deal with some of these problems that we identify here.

There is no problem with it now. Enough of our land has been alienated, I think we have allowed a free for all situation. It is about time that instead of selecting John Moore Bar or Morgan Lewis let us designate those areas of Barbados where that land remains available only to Barbadians for all time. It can be done. There is nothing wrong with doing it. Countries which have had high levels of foreign investment - Bermuda is doing it. I notice St. Kitts designated an entire area for hotel development. In a sense, the Special Development Areas offer good tax concessions. But it does not differentiate between foreign investment and local investment.

Let us therefore go a step further and look at those areas of land in Barbados which we are going to say must have majority ownership by Barbadians or total ownership by Barbadians for development to take place. As I said, I do not think the Property Transfer Tax Act as it stands has any effect whatsoever in relation to foreign purchasing.

I agree that this is an area that needs a thorough - going reform. I think the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto in a sense spoke to this issue of foreign ownership in a different way. We did not speak to the transfer tax but as I said, I believe I have said in this Chamber when I was Minister of Finance, I think that the only reason why we did not make those adjustments then was because \$17 million in that context was a lot of money in 1994,

If you are shifting the areas in which you are collecting the bulk of your taxes and you know something is coming at you it is better to look at the alternatives to taxation such as the property transfer tax as soon as possible.

I look forward, assuming that the Budget will focus on these issues, to dealing with the alternative not just by way

of taxation but by way of land policy which seeks to deal with what was clearly the underlying intention, though not achieve it in the property transfer tax. We support the abolition of that tax and its replacement by a capital gains tax and also at looking at the issues of land development in a broad area. 4.50 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would say from the outset that I do not support the property transfer tax. The reason I cannot support the property transfer tax is because this tax was introduced not by the Democratic Labour Party. This tax was introduced to make sure that certain things that were happening were corrected.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We have found a situation in this country where certain people were allowed to come into this country, buy land at high prices and push up the price of land belonging to poor people. The end result of that, Sir, is that poor people were called upon to pay out large sums of money in land taxes and when they have in turn to sell their properties they were faced with another bill, the property transfer tax bill. I am saying, Sir, that because of that particular policy poor people were expensed because you were trying to correct a problem that had nothing to do with poor people. We find a situation today where poor people have to pay two taxes, one, the increase in land taxes and also the cost of property transfer taxes whenever they get rid of their property.

We have a situation in this country where we have to ask ourselves whether property transfer tax is still of any use and we also have to find out, Mr. Speaker, when is the Government going to keep its promise to relieve the poor people in this country of that tax called the land tax, because land taxes have been increased and the people that it has affected are those at the lower end of the market.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has a way of speaking in a manner that fraudulently misrepresents the fact, Sir. You cannot say that the land tax on poor people has been increased when in point of fact on the last occasion the land tax rate was reduced in favour of the poor and as a result of that reduction people on the lower end are paying less. Sir, because it is such a drastic misrepresentation of the fact, it must be required that those remarks that are untruthful are withdrawn and struck from the record. It is contrary to the facts, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have always asked Members not to ask the Chair to make a judgement on veracity. There are certain facts that are before the House and you make a

contrary statement to what has been done in this House. The Member is rightfully asking you to withdraw the words.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, Sir, I cannot because I am going to prove to the House why I will not withdraw the words.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is a matter of fact verified by the records of this House that on the last occasion that there was a triennial review the land tax rate was so reduced that persons ended up paying less land tax because the rate of reduction was greater than the rate of increase of land values. It is, therefore, a dangerous and mischievous distortion of the facts for the records of this House today to reflect the fact that this Government has been increasing people's land taxes. It is not true. If it is not true, Sir, it must not fall from the lips of an Honourable Member to make it true only by reason of his fiction and his inventions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I am asking you to withdraw the statement.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I withdraw that statement, Sir, but I will go on to say this that the Honourable Member for St. Peter will not trap me like how he trapped an Honourable Member on a call-in programme.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: A future Honourable Member.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is within my knowledge, confirmed by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that he is proposing to resign and let a former Member for St. Michael East contest a by-election in St. Lucy. He must not anticipate the will of the people in St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Peter wants to leave politics early, I have no intention of leaving politics early. I have a role to play in this country and I will continue to play that role. If the Honourable Member wants to duck out early, let him do that. I am saying, Sir, that I will not allow anybody in this Parliament to mislead anybody in this Parliament. As I have said before, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is well known for that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just be parliamentary, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Peter chooses his words well. Is that good enough,

Sir? Where he is capable of telling someone who has said that the Treasury of the country gained because of importation of sugar and because the person said, Sir, that the money was placed in the Consolidated Fund....

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are now a very experienced Member of this House and there is no need for me to direct you to the rules of relevancy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I was just using the tactics of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. Sir, I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has increased the land values by revaluing the poor people's land in this country. I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Peter through the Land Tax Department....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The laws of Barbados provide for a triennial review of the values of land. It is not a law that was introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. It has been on the books ever since there has been a land tax. For it now to appear in Hansard again because 100 years from now people will pick up the Hansard and will not know that the Member for St. Lucy was a sportsman and they will treat him as a serious person. They will see that the Honourable Member for St. Peter introduced this process of value. I ask that those things be withdrawn because they are misleading and false.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, could you say exactly what you want to say? I am sure you did not mean that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is responsible for that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Peter has the responsibility in this Parliament for bringing the necessary legislation to this Parliament to stop the Land Tax Department from increasing values whenever they want. I am saying....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Am I to understand that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, speaking on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party, is saying that the value of land in Barbados must be made by fiat of a Minister of Finance to remain static in perpetuity? His Leader is speaking in terms of capital gains which is recognising that the value of land can increase. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying that this Minister of Finance should make them remain static. Sir, the Opposition is small enough that at least there should be a little cohesion. You cannot have in the same debate such a contrasting set of representation from the same Opposition.

Sir, I would want to suggest that the Leader of the Opposition may want to appoint a Whip and that he would have to appoint himself as the Whip to bring order. What we

have here is bedlam and disorder in a two-man Opposition where one person is saying there must be a capital gains tax and the next person is saying that land values should remain constant and static. I beg you, Sir, to ask the Opposition to make up its mind where it really stands in this issue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if one takes up the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party one would see a commitment from the Honourable Member for St. Peter on land taxes. I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter would do the House well if he reads that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, what makes it worse is that the Honourable Member is always telling this House that a Manifesto is a social contract. Today, when we were dealing with another matter he took up this Manifesto to prove his point that it is an election pledge....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Again the Member is imputing to me some very improper motives. He is imputing duplicity to me. The Barbados Labour Party Manifesto commits the Party to reduce the rate of land tax. We did that in 1996 and we will do it, Sir, again. That is why I said that in the next Budget there will be a set of proposals to restructure taxes on property in the country. There has been no breach of Manifesto pledge by this Administration in the previous term and there will be none in this term. 5.00p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: In 1991, Mr. Speaker, the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party gave a pledge that any property under \$150 000 will not bear any taxes, but I will move on, Sir. For the simple reason, Sir, I am saying...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have it right here and I have 1991 in my head, so I do not need your Manifesto. I know them well. I have studied you since 1984. Sir, I am saying that the land prices in this country have not been dictated by Government. They have been dictated by foreign elements who came into this country and who have pushed the prices up to such a level that they have forced people to sell their common piece of land and I am saying that we need to have a change and I expect the Honourable Member for St. Peter to find a land tax policy that will help the poor people in this country.

I have said in this Parliament already that there are certain people especially people on tenancies who I honestly feel should not pay taxes. My argument for that, Sir, is that

they would have worked hard enough in the fields in this country already so that there is no need to extract that particular tax from them. I have no problem with that statement and that is why I feel that property transfer tax should be abolished. I honestly feel so, because it affects poor people more than anybody else. The Honourable Member for St. Peter would agree with me, because he knows that his constituents, whenever they have to sell a small portion of land, are affected by the Property Transfer Tax. That is why, Sir, I would support any measure coming from the Honourable Member for St. Peter that relieves the poor people of this burden.

I thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, whenever the Honourable Member for St. Lucy gets up in this House and pontificates on land and foreign ownership, I have to remind myself, Sir, that in a district in St. James called Mount Standfast there was a small business that used to be operated under the name of St. Elmo's Bar and Grocery, and it was owned by a person, not unknown, but who shall remain unnamed, who has sought to develop for himself the championship image of the person in this country who speaks out most strongly against Barbadian small men, and small black men for selling their land and property to people from New York and elsewhere, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is giving the impression that he knows of somebody who has sold land to somebody who was from New York.

I do not know of anybody in this House who owns land in Mount Standfast. I do not know of anybody in this House who sold a business...

Mr. SPEAKER: This is who still owns or who owned?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Who owned. ...to any foreigner. I know of nobody.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I was just beginning at Mount Standfast in the North and then come to the South. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Sir, is a finely balanced person, because he has a chip I think, on both shoulders, but he also has no sense of discrimination between selling land in the North to foreigners and selling land in the South to foreigners and I do not take him seriously in this House. When he came to the House and talked about how Barbadians are selling their birthright in selling their land to foreigners, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, is quite aware that what he is saying is

not true and those words should be struck from the record. The Honourable Member knows, Sir.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member knows that the gentleman is very much Barbadian. He sat on a plane with him. They shared pleasantries together and he knows where he was born in Barbados. So I do not expect the Right Honourable Prime Minister who knows the facts, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: This plane was coming to or going from Barbados?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It was coming to Barbados. I do not expect the Right Honourable Prime Minister who knows the facts to be misled by his Back Bench. I expect the Honourable Member on the front to at least lead his Back Bench, but then, you can get that from a Party in confusion.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very pleased that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has entered into the record of the House that it is a matter of fact, that on an aircraft coming from the United States of America, a gentleman who was then resident in the United States of America told me that he was going to Barbados to conclude a deal for the purchase of a piece of land in Mount Standfast, St. James. He also went on to tell me what a foolish fellow the person was who was selling him that land. He was really shocked that you would have people in Barbados, Sir, who did not understand the value of what they possess, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: That person is not in here.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Of course not.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, because I have never owned land outside of St. Lucy, except in St. Thomas. And the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would tell you that the only piece of land I own outside of St. Lucy, is at No. 12 Welches Terrace. So anybody who could come in here and allow a foreigner to tell him that I sold a piece of land that belongs to a lady by the name Ms. Foster, that person would have to be misleading the House, Sir, and everything pertaining to that should be struck from the record.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would proceed with the debate, but I want to say to the House that

the foreign investor did not tell me that it was the Honourable Member from St. Lucy. He just told me that it was a foolish fellow.

Asides,

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Can we proceed, Sir. The House is not divided on the need as I said for us soon to get into the third major tax reform in this country. We have had reform of taxes on income and we have had reform of taxes on goods and services. We must now carry out a comprehensive restructuring and reform of all taxes and legislation affecting property.

Sir, this concerns not only the property transfer tax, but the stamp duty as well as the land tax. The Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, at page 38 says that we will radically restructure taxes affecting land and other property. I am telling the House, Sir, that we regard this commitment as binding. It is a commitment that will involve a lot of interesting and very difficult work. The tax and legislation pertaining to property is far more convoluted and difficult than the simple taxation affecting goods and services and income.

It is a matter, Sir, that we have to go into very circumspectly and with sound advice very comprehensively from the best practices obtained elsewhere. The property transfer tax in Barbados, Sir, is something that I have railed against even when I was a technician, Sir. It is one of those major deterrents to any serious investment in this country, so much so that it has now become almost standard that in order for us to get any investment of any sort we have as a matter of course, to agree up front, to waive property transfer tax. It is very, very penal. .5.10p.m.

It is a tax that falls on the value of the property rather than on the value of the income realized from the property or from any profit arising from an improvement in the value of the property itself.

We therefore have to move our taxation off property and land. But property extends beyond land, into a more modern dimension. I have said enough, Sir, as I said, to let the House be aware that income tax reform, having been completed, the VAT having been done, that the major reforms to be expected will be the radical restructuring of the taxes on land and property.

I take the point of the Member for St. John, that the Report of the Sub-committee is a little thin as a guide to real serious policy, Sir. We have to give detailed, and we are giving detailed consideration and analysis in the Ministry of Finance to the incidence of taxes on land and property, Sir.

Sir, we have to do comparative analysis as well. We have to bring our policies in line with modern practice and best practice. We have to approach this, Mr. Speaker, not just with an eye on its impact on the small man which is important. But recognise as I said, that our capacity to sustain economic growth and to maintain high levels of investment also require us to have a perspective on the taxation of property and land that is such that they facilitate investment rather than, as it presently serves, as a deterrent to investment.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the investment that has taken place in Barbados in the last decade would hardly have taken place were it not for the willingness of successive Ministers of Finance to waive property transfer tax.

Therefore, what we do by way of administrative practice we should now bring in to statute and that is the point, that the administration of the property transfer tax has already told the Minister of Finance and investors that if it were to be imposed, there will be no investment. Ministers are already waiving it. So we might just as well write that into law in large measure but with a substitute to capture capital gains and to make sure, Sir, that abuses of the system do not take place.

The House will obviously, also, when the time comes, want to discuss the question of land ownership. Taxation on land and ownership of land in Barbados are going to become very important and potentially contentious issues as we move more and more into a WTO compatible world, where as the Member for St. John rightly points out, Sir, it would become in conflict with WTO rules to maintain a discriminatory taxation regime that taxes land for nationals at a different rate from land for foreigners or that charges a different property transfer tax to locals as distinct from the foreigners.

Therefore, it would have been hoped in the past that a discriminatory tax regime would have benefitted local ownership in preference to foreign ownership. But once that is stripped away, Sir, we would have to find other non-tax methods of making sure that the ownership of land in Barbados does not become so heavily skewed in favour of foreigners that the people of this country will be like the children of Israel, Sir, singing Jehovah's land song in a strange land.

I would urge the Member for St. Lucy though, Sir, in these matters - I know he wants to set up himself as this champion of the small man, Sir - that the perspective of responsible Governments while capturing the concerns of the small man, which we must never ignore, is also to understand that the impact on investments, the impact on the macro-economy, the impact, Sir, on the sustainability of the

environmental matters and so on, have to be taken into account in any formula for devising policies in areas such as this.

If I may more seriously flaw the continuing contributions of the Member for St. Lucy, is that he has this feeling, that once he has said, the small black, he feels that he has said everything that needs to be said on complex issues.

But this issue of land ownership, taxation of land, is one that goes merely just beyond the role of the small black man in the society, Sir. It is that we have to be sensible about the framework within which we pose this issue to the benefit and the understanding of the people of Barbados in general.

I would want therefore, Sir, to urge him that the people of Barbados have heard him in his championship of the small black man. But that they do not believe it, Sir, and he does not, if to feed us in the House any longer with these tirades that flow generally, Sir, more from - I do not want to say they are caught between the heart and the head, Sir, because that would be a new definition to the difference between being caught between a rock and a hard place - but between his emotionalism, Sir,...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...every time he gets on the Floor, Sir, everything is just reduced to the most simplistic representation that unless it fits within his concept of what is necessary to the small black man it is not to be pursued.

The development, the articulation and the implementation of national policy in this country, must treat the issues of the small black man. But they must also treat the other issues because the national development, Sir, is more complex than that.

So, that I know, I am speaking, to the Member for St. Lucy from a point of view of friendship, that the numbers on the Other Side are few and therefore, Sir, one expects from him a fuller analysis than when he had eight other Members to help him pick up the deficiencies in his own analysis.

It is against that background that I should like to move, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: 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 Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1-4 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time,

passed and cited as the Property Transfer Tax (Amendment) Act, 1999.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do adjourn until Tuesday, 27th April, 1999 at 11.00a.m.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 5.20 p.m.

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