THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, 15th March, 1999

Pursuant to die adjournment, die House of Assembly rftet at 11.20 a.m. on Monday, March 15,1999.

PRESENT

His Honour I, A. ROETT, B.A,, Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour J. M. EDGfflLL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., MA., LL.B.
RL Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, KA., Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TOLL, Q.C., M.A.
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)
Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.) LEC (Minister of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)
Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)
Hon. G. A, CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. R. D. MARSHALL
Hon. 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
Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Attorney-General and Home Affairs)
Mr. D. T. GILL
Mr. N. A. LYNCH
Hon. A. P. WOOD (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Hon. R. R. FARLEY (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 Tuesday, March 9, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, March 9,1999, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to inform this Honourable House of a message from His Excellency the Governor-General.

His Excellency the Governor-General to the Honourable the House of Assembly:

"His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that he will be unable to perform the functions of Governor-General during the period March 11 to 25, 1999.

His Excellency further has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that under the provisions of section 30 of the Constitution the Governor-General acting on the advice of the Prime Minister has appointed His Honour Senator Sir Fred Gollop, K.A. to be Governor-General's Deputy during the period March 11 to 25, 1999." Signed, the Governor-General.

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 rest 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.

ORDER NO. 1 - THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Constitution of Barbados at section 108(1) requires that the Minister of Finance shall before the end of each Financial Year cause to be prepared Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for public services during the succeeding year and shall have those estimates laid in this Honourable House. That constitutional duty, Sir, has been exercised already.

The Constitution also requires at section 109(1) that that said Minister of Finance shall in respect of each financial year and at the earliest convenient moment before the commencement of that financial year introduce into this House of Assembly an Appropriation Bill containing under appropriate heads for the several services required the aggregated sums that are proposed to be expended during the financial year.

We are therefore, Mr. Speaker, about to embark on a debate under section 109(1) of the Constitution to debate the Appropriation Bill which will provide the basis for expenditure by Government departments for the next financial year and enshrine the precept of the power of Parliament and Parliament alone to exercise prior approval of all expenditures from the Consolidated Fund.

Sir, this is a new Parliament and I feel that one has to start on this lofty tone because the exercise on which we are embarked is one of the few aspects of public policy which is required as a constitutional necessity and in future years, I do hope that I will be able to consolidate the two processes which together now constitute the budgetary season.

In this part of the season, Sir, we approve the expenditure and at some time in the course of the year tradition has established that the Minister of Finance of Barbados will come to the House with budgetary proposals to determine and indicate how any shortfalls in revenue are to be met. Essentially, however, Sir, they are one and the same process and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that under your direction the Standing Orders of this House can be suitably amended for us to have one and only one shot at the Budget during the course of the financial year. Mr. Speaker, I want to establish that point because what we are dealing with here today, Sir, is the Government's budget. The Government's estimates of its revenues for the coming year and Government estimates as to how those revenues will be spent and to the extent that there is a shortfall in Government's estimates as to how the shortfall between its revenue and expenditure will be met.

I therefore want to urge both sides of this House, and I have to urge, because this is a matter of which I do not have control to amend the Standing Orders of this Parliament to enable us to treat all aspects of Government budgetary exercises as one integral exercise rather than two as is now the case.

I want at the outset of the debate to suggest that this discussion today in this second reading speech on Government's budget for the year will take place at a very sensitive and a very delicate period in the economic evolution of Barbados. I therefore want to begin my presentation on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure by sharing with the House an economic perspective which should provide the framework within which these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are intended to be evaluated.

I want, however, at the outset to say that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure that are before this Honourable House for its prior approval are intended to establish the conditions for continued strong, stable and sustained economic growth and development in this nation. And the

House may ask me why in seeking to share an economic perspective with the House to provide a context within which the Estimates should be evaluated that I place a premium on the notion that these Estimates are intended to establish the conditions for strong, stable and sustained economic growth and development.

We have, Sir, to set these Estimates in the context of where Barbados stands economically in space and time. The latter half, perhaps most of the 1990s, will come to be regarded in Barbados' history as a period of great economic adjustment. The early 1990s witnessed the most severe economic depression ever recorded in this country's economic history. Since 1993, this country has been embarked on a multidimensional economic and financial program to restore the economic fortunes of Barbados, first of all, to set in train the process to bring about a full recovery from that debilitating economic depression and to set this country again on a course to sustained economic growth to enable us to realise our potential to become one of the world's premier developing countries and so to elevate ourselves to the status of one of the world's developing countries which is a vision that is shared by all those who have the interest of Barbados at heart. Between 1993 and 1998 there has been a sustained economic recovery from the recession of the early 1990s. This country realised six years of strong economic growth - 1998 was the sixth year of sustained economic recovery. There are aspects of that recovery that are entirely salutary. There are other aspects which I shall treat this morning that signals that we have to re-visit the mix of our policies to be able to be satisfied that the conditions for continued strong, stable and sustained economic growth will continue to obtain in this nation. 11.25a.m.

In 1998, the Barbados economy grew at almost 5%. We welcome it to the extent that it led to a substantial fall in the level of unemployment but you will recall that around 1996, this Government presented to this House a medium-term macroeconomic plan that said that in all of the circumstances, this economy, for us to be able to sustain growth, should be growing at a real rate of about 3%. With our population growing at less than 1% year per year, Barbados can achieve its major, social and economic goals including the abolition of poverty if we were on a sustained basis, over an extended period of our economic history, to realise a real economic growth of 3% per year. Sir, the economy therefore in 1998 grew at a rate faster than the rate that the Government had set as the sustainable rate of economic growth for this economy. We, who have the responsibility for the management of these emerging developing countries, have as much to be concerned when things are going bad and there is too little activity as we have, Sir, as to be concerned when things are going too well and when there is too much activity taking place in an economy.

I want to leave that first precept with the House, that a country can have economic problems when there is too little activity reflecting itself in economic recession or depression and either stagnating or falling employment. It can equally have economic problems induced if it is growing at too rapid a rate.

In the course of this debate, I will speak to the consequences of too rapid a rate of economic growth and the prescriptive measures that are necessary for us to bring this country back within the parameters of stable and sustainable economic development.

Sir, the 4.87% to 5% rate of growth was reflected in a number of important salutary developments. The unemployment rate fell to the lowest level since 1982. Last year the Barbadian public also benefitted from an extraordinary development. For the first time since Independence there was disinflation in this country. That is, rather than the general level of prices in Barbados rising, the general level of prices in this country fell by 1.2%. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, are better off, I suggest to you, when the general level of prices fall, in the same way that you are better off when your income is increased by a wage settlement. This country benefitted from that in large part because the full effects of the VAT adjustments were manifested in the economy.

The continued adjustment to the Common External Tariff led to a reduction in the top rate of the Customs Tariff from 30% to 25% and we beneffited from low rates of inflation in our major trading economies. For the first time, however, Sir, in eight years, and this is the price we paid, there was a lost of reserves amounting to $14.1 million. On the face of it, Sir, having regard to a number of very positive developments, a lost of $15 million in reserves in this economy should not be a matter that should evoke any considerable policy concern.

Why do I say that, Sir? Because since 1993, an effort has been put in place to systematically boost Barbados' foreign exchange reserves to the point where our foreign exchange reserves, even with the $ 14.1 million, were well in excess of the levels required or established by the international community as being required for economic security and safety; our reserves, Sir, rose to well over $550 million and there are still there today. We hold reserves equivalent to more than 12.5 weeks of imports. Our reserves lost of $14.1 million on the face of it do not indicate a major problem.

Secondly, it has to be set in the context of what we have been doing in terms of macroeconomic management. As you are aware, Sir, for the last three years, this administration has refrained from going to the market to

borrow commercially either to repay debt or to pay for imports or to help support Government's Capital Programme. We have been like a race horse, Sir- a free ride or without any whip. We have not been borrowing in order to boost reserves nor to pay debt, nor to buy imports, nor to support Government's Capital Expenditure.

In 1998, what happened simply was, in broad terms before I come on to the deeper analysis, Mr. Speaker, was that because the economy grew at a faster than sustainable and anticipated rate and in the context of a Government's deliberate decision not to borrow on the foreign capital market to meet foreign expenditures, the $14.1 million dip in reserves was, in fact, the price we paid for a very rapid rate of economic expansion.

Sir, I believe that one has to exercise a greater professional judgement than just look at the surface manifestations of movement in reserves in relation to economic growth to be able to understand what they tell us about where the economy stands in space and time and what prescriptive measures are necessary in order to bring the economy and put it on a sustainable economic path. This debate, Sir, will have to deal with these issues. What is this development telling us about the strength and sustainability of our economic growth path and what must we now do to keep that growth path sustainable and strong? Are there measures that are necessary? What should those measures constitute? How far should we go?

Mr. Speaker, I have refrained from speaking on the economy over the course of the last few months, listening to the wash of debate that has taken place. I really must say to this House, Sir, that the time has come when economics has to be treated as a registrable profession in the same way that law is.

Asides,

Rt. Hon. O. ^S. ARTHUR: That pharmacist is - engineering is, that medicine is. Because you hear a lot of discourse on economics and financial matters in this society and in all societies merely because it is a matter that so affects the ordinary man in the street that everybody who is affected has this view that they are experts and that there are no scientific analyses that should be invoked to deal with economic issues.

You hear, Sir, a level of charlatanism and voodooism about economic issues that suggest, Sir, that we should put in place a system for registering economists so that some too, Sir, should be charged for economic malpractice when they espouse views that cannot bear scrutiny and which collide dangerously with known and tested laws.

Sir, there are few things in economics that are true and are testable. Where those few things that are true and testable are the subject of controversy, professional economists have a responsibility to go to the discipline and do not get caught up in the sweep of popular nonsense that passes for economic analysis. 11.35p.m.

I speak, Sir, from the vantage point of 25 years of practise in die vineyard in many countries. I do not criticise people when they speak about my discipline because everybody has the right to speak about their discipline. But there is a need for us very often to begin to understand some of the fundamental laws of economics because unless we understand them, we will know what to do when the problems arise..

Sir, there has been no area that has been the subject of more voodoo economics and shadowism than what causes a payment problem.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There are and I will show the House one today, Sir.

When does a payment problem arises, what causes it to and how we should deal with it?

Sir, there is no real mystery to it if you would begin by recognising that for every act of expenditure there must be a source of funds and that in order to spend you must either earn or have credit. And, that you can only therefore have a payment problem if over a sustained period of time you are spending more than you are earning.

It should also follow, Mr. Speaker, that it has therefore equally to be true that like, you, you can only have a payment problem, if over an extended period of time you are spending more than you are earning and credit is being created in your favour. It should be true intuitively that all payments difficulties must coincide with periods of credit creation. You can only spend more than you are earning if you have credit being created in your favour. And as it is with you, Mr. Speaker, so it is with the economy, that every time there is a payment problem - an external payment problem, it arises from excessive credit creation. That is a truth that cannot be controverted.

Sir, I will just illustrate to you how the popular analysis of the problem distorts the issue. There is feeling that if the sugar industry was to earn $100 million in one year and then earn $60 million in the next year that that in and of itself will cause a balance of payments problem. That is not true. If the sugar industry earns $ 100 million in foreign exchange in one

year, it will pay out $100 million in foreign exchange. If it earns $60 million in the next year, it will pay out $60 million in income and there will only be $60 million in spending power. But you only have a payment problem if in the second year, to maintain the spending power of sugar workers $40 million of credit is created for the benefit of the sugar industry. This means that you have $100 million in spending power of which the $40 million will come from credit in circumstances in which you earn $40 million or $60 million in foreign exchange. So all payment difficulties begin in monetary imbalances arising from domestic creditation.

From as far back as 1957, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a gentleman called Mr. Pollack and we now have a monetary Economist in the House who will speak to these issues, Sir, the Pollack model established the relationship between payment difficulties and domestic credit creations. Sir, those of you who followed my career will remember the error that I invoked when in 1982, I published a paper on our then balance of payment difficulties when I said that the problem was caused by excessive domestic credit creation in favour of the Government.

Typically in most developing countries, Mr. Speaker, balances of payment problems arise because the Governments spend far more than they earn in revenue. It goes to the Central Bank which it controls and says, "create more money for me, extend credit in my favour", it adds to domestic spending power and Government's addition to domestic spending power caused by its access to printing money by the Central Bank is typically the most important source of payment disequilibria in countries such as ourselves.

And, every instance, Mr. Speaker, in Barbados' history where there has been a payments imbalance leading to a substantial loss of reserves generally, it has been because of domestic credit creation caused by the Government exceeding its revenue to such an extent that it had to rely on the Central Bank's printing of money to support this expenditure.

Sir, I would urge all young Members of the House to get familiar with this document called the Economic and Financial Statistics of the Central Bank and I am referring to the January 1999 edition, which is the latest and I will show you what I mean.

Between December 1989 and 1991, domestic credit in favour of the Government rose from $262 million to $525 million. So there was a virtual doubling of domestic credit of the creation of spending power in the form not of income but of credit to the Government and that domestic credit creation between 1989 and 1991 - that $250 million of injection of spending power supported by the Central Bank's printing of money, because that is where it came from, is what caused the collapse in the reserves.

There is a table where the Monetary Survey is based upon one of the immutable laws of economics that the money supplied must always be equal to the net domestic credit and the net foreign assets, because new money comes into circulation only from two courses, by the creation of credit or from the earning of foreign exchange. When someone earns foreign exchange, they bring the foreign exchange into the country. They deposit it into the Central Bank and domestic currency is created. Or, if domestic credit is created, monetary resources are also created. This table in the monetary survey establishes one of the few things that is true in economics that the total amount of money in an economy must equal to the net domestic assets of the Central Bank, the net domestic credit to the economy and its net foreign assets. And therefore anything that causes net domestic credit to rise faster than the monies supplied will cause a corresponding reduction in the reserves. And, it is the business of the Pollack model that has been used in financial programming of serious economies and in every instance we can be sure that two rapid a rate of credit creation will put pressure on a country's foreign exchange reserves.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...The Honourable Member for St. John has a better intuitive understanding of these issues because he knows what it is to try to help to bring back an economy out of recession and how to manage a financial programme.

Sir, I would urge the House, if they want to understand what is happening to the Barbados economy now and what we must do for the future, to refer to pages 38 and 39 of the Economic and Financial Statistics under that table called the Monetary Survey, which captures one of the few things in economics that happens to be true. And what you will see, is that for the last two years in the first year total domestic credit grew, but the issue is what estate of the society caused the increase in domestic credit, was it the Government or was it the private sector? And, on that, Sir, hangs the tail.

Between December 1996 and the end of 1997 domestic credit to the private sector, and hear me quite carefully, grew from $1.5 billion to $1 923 billion - an amount of $338 million. And, in the second year that is the year between December 1997 and November 1998 domestic credit to our private sector grew from $1 923 000 000 to $2 216 000 000. So in one year there was an increase in domestic credit to the private sector by $338 million in the second year by $293 million. So that in two years the private sector had access to an increase of domestic credit of well over $600 million. 11.45a.m.

In December 1996 net domestic credit to the Government stood at $643 million. By November 1998 the net domestic credit to Government had fallen to $640.3 million.

So that we have therefore, if we understand what I am telling you, the information to draw the contrast between the factors which caused pressure on our reserves in the past, factors which are putting pressure on our reserves today.

Our former problems were caused by rapid expansion of the State, financed entirely by domestic credit creation leading to a depletion in reserves. But the overwhelming evidence here, Mr. Speaker, is that over the course of the last two years there has been in fact a contraction of domestic credit to the State but a massive expansion of domestic credit to the private sector and that that, Mr. Speaker, is the biggest pressure on our reserves.

Sir, read the numbers also in conjunction with Table 2, the Central Bank assets. Ordinarily you would believe, Sir, that you have a balance of payments problem when the Central Government is borrowing from the Central Bank causing it to print money and that new addition to spending power caused by the Central Bank credit to government is putting pressure on the reserves.

The facts, Mr. Speaker, are otherwise in this instance. But whereas, I will refer you, Sir, to Table A2 which shows that, Sir, at the end of December of 1998 Central Bank advances to government were zero.

We had no ways and means with the Central Bank. But the Central Bank has extended $32 million of credit to the financial sector. So what is happening in this country, Sir, is simply this: You had an expansion of private activity over the course of the last two years. That expansion of private activity has been faster than the growth of domestic income and it has been financed in part by the expansion of domestic credit to the private sector.

It has introduced its own tightening of liquidity in the banking system, creating circumstances under which the Central Bank now has to make advances to the banking sector for the banking sector to on-lend to the private sector and I suggest to you, Sir, that the same effect on the economy takes place when the Central Bank lends to banks and lends to the private sector as takes place when the Central Bank lends directly to Government.

You are supporting domestic activity by recourse to high-powered credit and in every instance that will put pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves.

So I want to be clear, Sir, because I heard a statement saying that Central Government mismanagement of its finances is causing this problem, Sir. Not true.

The analysis will scientifically show you, that there has been a burst of private activity in this country. That that burst in private activity has been in many respects fueled by an extraordinary increase in domestic credit to the private sector and that that is what is putting pressure on our reserves.

The other issue, Mr. Chairman, that the Economist will go to, is that increase in credit to the private sector a good thing or a bad thing, such that you should move to put draconian controls on it.

I say to the House, Sir, that the judgement on that issue is not yet in because when again you look at the assets and I go now to Table Bl, the assets of the commercial banks.

What does the composition of domestic credit tell you about the relationship between credit today and the building of productive capacity tomorrow.

It is telling you, Sir, that we have to be careful about how we judge it, because a lot of the credit being extended today is going to the tourism sector to build capacity for tomorrow's purposes.

A lot of it is going in construction and within the construction sector there is a lot of credit going to build villas many of which have been designated to go into the tourism pool to be able to create productive capacity for future generations.

So that, Sir, the evidence is still mixed. If all of this credit was going only for personal consumption then the explosion of credit to the private sector would be problematical entirely.

But when you analyze, Sir, what has been happening, it is very salutary. And I want to cite the numbers for the benefit of the House, Mr. Chairman, that the tourism industry in particular has benefitted from the - Table B5, Sir, and this will show you that between January of 1998 and November of 1998, domestic credit through the banking system to tourism increased from $183 million to $258 million in a year.

You will find no year in our recent history where there has been such a substantial increase in credit to tourism but this is entirely salutary. If foreign exchange reserves are being drawn down today to create foreign exchange capacity for the future one should treat it differently from if foreign exchange reserves today were being drawn purely to finance immediate personal consumption expenditure.

As I said, Sir, the numbers are such that the jury is not yet in as regard the issue as to whether we should now be moving swiftly to put a clamp on private credit creation.

Also, Mr. Chairman, Sir, construction has been benefiting. Between the end of 1996, Sir, and November 1997 private sector credit for construction has risen $80 million, Sir, to $97 million.

But, Sir, I am very mindful of the fact as well that credit for personal purposes in the last year rose from $732 million to $876 million and therefore there is an element of our balance of payments problem which is being caused in part by private over consumption and that we would be remiss in presenting the full analysis were we not to recognise that there is a mix of consumption and investment in the private sector that is putting pressure on our reserves.

The issue, however, Sir, is to remove now or how fast we remove what are the other countercyclical measures that we can utilize, if we continue to treasure private sector activity as the engine of our economic growth.

Sir, I really must stress this point early in the term because there is a mythology in economics across the world that all public expenditure is bad and all private expenditure is good.

I want to repeat that, Sir, we are now involved in a new global economy in which there is a ruling paradigm that the State should disengage from performing an essential strategic role in the economy, leave everything to the private sector because all private activity is good, public spending is bad.

What this set of circumstances to which I have shared the facts with the House would ask us to evaluate carefully is whether we should not now be carefully looking at the balance and the mix of private expenditure in this country with a view to making sure that the future growth of that private sector is more coincidental with national economic objectives. Because it may not necessarily be true in the context of a small open economy that all private expenditure is necessarily good. 11.55a.m.

Sir, I want to say to the House that the Government, and I want to be very pointed about what I say, Sir, that the Government welcomes the surge in private investment particularly as it relates to investment for purposes that will expand this country' s foreign exchange generating capacities on a permanent basis. We welcome that, but we recognise the need to be very careful in the extent to which we support further expansion of private consumption expenditure, particularly private consumption expenditure financed by domestic credit creation because private consumption financed by credit creation is as damaging to a small open economy as public consumption is financed by that same private creation. That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that we are at a very delicate and very sensitive period in our economic management.

I want, Sir, quickly to set what we are seeking to achieve in Barbados in the context of what is happening in the world. I am satisfied that there are early signs that unbridled liberalisation across the world and an uncritical dependence on *laissez faire* capitalism is facing an early crisis of unprecedented proportions which suggest to us that the ruling paradigm of liberalisation has carefully to be approached.

I am not surprised that the economic problems associated with globalisation have occurred in those countries which have dismantled every form of control, eschewed the notion of managing markets and have relied entirely upon the free interplay of so-called market forces as the only factor that is now to operate in the management of international economic activity.

We have had countries, Mr. Speaker, in this international economy from the Mexican crisis of the early 1980s seeing the devastation that can be caused to small developing countries from too liberal an attitude towards capital controls.

The Mexican crisis of the early 1980s was caused by private capital flowing in for speculative purposes reaping its profits and facing threats of flowing back out leaving a deep balance of payments hole.

The international community has to understand, Sir, that when people bet on the New York Stock Exchange and people withdraw from the Stock Exchange in New York, there might be a dip in the Dow Jones but there is no balance of payment difficulties. When people bring money into our countries to bet on stocks, realise profits are there and then pull them back out, or face threats and pull them back out, the effect of that on our economies is entirely different from that of the U.S. Stock Exchange.

Those who continue to bombard us in IMF reports year by year that we have to relax all capital controls in order to allow capital to surge in here with the possibility of surging out do not understand how our capital market limitations restrain us from being able to compare ourselves with the United States and how very vastly different are capital transactions in the form of their impact on our balance of payment from those where countries have closed financial systems and well-developed capital markets.

I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that we are beginning to see the difficulties that will be imposed on small societies by the practice of the complete eradication of exchange controls. This is a matter that we have the most enormous debate within the Commonwealth because the reality is that among the developing countries Barbados practices exchange controls. Bahamas practices exchange controls. Chile practices exchange controls and some of the most successful countries in the developing world are those that continue to use exchange controls not to block transactions, Sir, but to monitor the surge in and the surge out in support of the national economy.

We are constantly being bombarded with this new theology that you must just relax them as if the effects on our system are not different because you are paying out in foreign exchange and you are paying out the profits of speculation in the foreign exchange. We therefore have to be careful how fast we embrace those new tenets, Sir.

It is also true, Mr. Speaker, that the world economy of today and tomorrow is going to be one that will enjoin Barbados to be very disciplined in how we proceed. The world economy has been such that the decline in the economies of East Asia and the problems of Brazil have all contributed to a massive collapse in commodity prices.

Oil prices have gone down, Sir, and with them the prices of steel, aluminium and whatever else. It has now started to be a factor that will affect the function of Caribbean economies because the truth is that the Trinidad economy has been a substantial pool of growth in the Caribbean for the last few years, but the Trinidad economy is now facing a very stern test because its oil revenues have so declined that Government's finances are in a very disorderly state and a lot of the investments that Trinidad was anticipating to make, based upon aluminium production, steel production and methanol production have been jeopardised because of the collapse of the world's commodity prices arising from the contagious effects of problems in East Asia and wherever else.

I make the point, Sir, to come to the larger issue that a substantial part of the Caribbean economy in this year and in the immediate years will be under great stress. Jamaica has its problem with its financial sector. That is not different from that of East Asia except that while the international lending community has found a way to prop up the East Asian financial sector, they have not come to the aid of Jamaica, and Jamaica's economy will continue to be in difficulties.

The Trinidad economy is now in new difficulties. The Guyanese economy for a number of reasons is on the loose if the movement in its exchange rate is to be taken seriously and to that, of course, is now added this very distressing challenge to the economies of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States that ensues from the totally unenlightened position taken by the United States Government on the matter of bananas.

The banana regime of the European Union banana regime has only two years to go. It expires in the year 2002 and the countries of the OECS have put in place new marketing and distribution arrangements that are intended to enable them to make the industry more competitive but they do need that period to make the transition to a new arrangement.

It really is distressing that you can have a situation where you can have this most unbelievable international controversy over a banana regime that only affects 2% of the world trade in bananas, and people should be ashamed that the economic prospects of such small farmers, not just small economies, could be put at such risks over nothing that I put as higher than a matter of campaign financing. But this, Sir, is the new way of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am coming to is this, that we have had the benefit in this economy of a surge in private activity, part investment part consumption, that has driven our growth. It has been supported in part by an expansion in domestic credit. The rate of growth in domestic credit in support of the private sector has been faster than the growth in the money supply and it has been the factor that has put the pressure on the foreign exchange reserves. The issue now will be if we will seek to dampen private spending in the Barbados economy.

When I move into the financial presentation of Government's financial position for the year, the House will understand why we have chosen the policies that are embodied in the Estimates.

I also want to say to the House, Mr. Speaker, that these Estimates and the performance of Barbados' economy for the next year, and few years will be set in the context of new and unprecedented difficulties in the international economy. It behoves us in such a context not to be extravagant in terms of our expectation on our policies and programmes but to be careful and prudent to make sure that what we do are both sustainable and fit within the contours of the evolving regional and international economic setting within which our own performance will work itself out. 12.05p.m.

Sir, it is in that context, therefore, that I want to go to my next issue to discuss Government's finances as set out and projected last year and has been realised and then move to what we propose for the next financial year, how we will

finance them, discuss the policies that are embodied in them and put all of that within the context of where we are in terms of space and time, where we should be and what we should do to be where we should be.

Last March, Sir, we came to this House and we asked Parliament to approve Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of this nature. We thought that revenue was going to be $1 540 000 000, expenditure would amount to $1 537 000 000 and we asked the House to approve capital expenditures of $325 000 000, a total deficit of $322.9 million.

Early in the year, Sir, and picking up the trend of what was happening, Government recognised that continued expansion of Government expenditure to the extent contemplated by the capital programme would have added so substantially to domestic purchasing power that when taken in conjunction with the burst of private activity would have put even more pressure on the reserves.

Sir, the House will remember that last September on the eve of a general election I came to the House and said let us begin to secure the future of this country by putting a cap on how fast Government capital expenditure would grow.. Sir, I can still remember that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy shook his head, I hope in bewilderment, because he is not familiar from his side with Ministers of Finance on the eve of an election - and there was only one - and the Honourable Member for St. John then had the opportunity to know the election was coming but there was a member who used to be in here from St. Michael South a former Prime Minister who once came to say that he was not going to do anything that was going to cause his party to commit political suicide and that was when the domestic credit to the Government in 1990 was rising at a rate to put pressure on the reserves.

We recognised, Sir, that it was not the Government. It was the private sector expansion of its own activities that was putting pressure on our reserves, that if the Government supported expenditure to the extent contemplated that it would have added to the pressure. Responsibly, therefore, we decided to secure the future of the country by putting a cap on capital expenditures and decided to curtail the fiscal situation such that, given what we were facing, it did not add to the country's difficulties.

Sir, the numbers now that we have before us, and I want the House to compare that our revenue for the year is scheduled to do a little bit better than we anticipated, that rather than a revenue of $1 540 000 000 that we now anticipate revenue of $1 559 000 000. This is not because of the VAT. VAT has stabilised. Other social revenues other than the VAT experienced it.

Revenue is now projected for the year ending March 31 to be a little bit better, $19 million better than we projected last March. Credit expenditures, we had said that we were going to spend $1 537 000 000 in current expenditures with supplementaries. We now anticipate spending $1 541 000 000. So revenue is $19 million more and current expenditure $4 million more but the key is capital.

The House voted $325 million in approved capital expenditure but we anticipate spending only $243 million. The House will remember that in order to keep the economy stable I said that I was going to set a cap on capital expenditure at $280 million but the $243 million is in fact in recognition of the fact that anything we do to ratchet up domestic spending power at this time could not be in the best interests of the Barbados economy.

There was a process of fiscal restraint in the last fiscal year to the point where the overall fiscal deficit is likely to be almost $100 million less than the House approved when last the House had the opportunity to approve Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in this country.

Sir, you do not get credit for these things but I have to say that you will hardly find in the experience of countries such as ourselves that in the midst of an election season, and I want to stress this point, Sir, a Government in the interest of the national economy would exercise this degree of fiscal restraint and discipline in the interest of the national economy.

Sir, it is because we have to be sensitive as to where we are in time and space in this economy and there are a large number of things...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy from his seat mutters the traditional, conventional wisdom that if the private sector is doing it there is no need for the Government to be doing it. Sir, we know that there are so many things in the society that the private sector is disinclined to do that falls so legitimately to the state. The question of low income housing, the question of transport, the matter of education and health. The notion that this Government or any enlightened Government in Barbados is going to disengage from having an economic and social role to play and to leave it to the private sector is a fallacy which I am sad to say is deeply embedded in the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and is as dangerous as the embedded chip that is going to cause the Y2K problems in some private sectors as his own.

Sir, we have to deal with economic management issues that this debate poses but there is also a philosophical view.

The Government of Barbados cannot and should not disengage from a responsible role in the economy in terms of creating a climate conducive to productive investment but also in maintaining satisfactory levels of expenditure for social and economic purposes that can lift productivity, protect the safety net and widen the scope of opportunities available to the Barbadian public.

I am not going to be part of a process that says that the collapse of the role of the state is something that we should contemplate. The state however should be responsible, and we were being responsible in the 1998-99 fiscal year because in recognition of the burst in private activity that was putting pressure on the reserves the Government made the determination that it was for us to limit the extent to which we would add to the country's economic problems and that, Sir, provides the background against which I present the projected financial outturn to the House.

The financial outturn for the year ending March 31, 1999 was in fact an outturn that would suggest that we would incur a fiscal deficit that was almost $100 million less than we anticipated, that the deficit is now projected at 1.4% of GDP in circumstances where we feel that we can go as far as 2'/2% but if we have too high a level of private activity then you make the adjustment. That is sound policy and it was such that would allow us to get on with the job without putting Barbados' best interest at risk.

Sir, the reserves did not fall by $ 100 million. If we had a $100 million loss in reserves we would have had a crisis but the reserves fell by $ 15 million, and I come to my second point, that the key to managing small economies is not just the policies that you use but the time at which you use them. In 1989 when this whole thing was evolving, month by month, myself and a former Member for St. Michael South Central came to this House and drew Government's attention to the fact that we were beginning to see pressure on Barbados' reserves and that the Government should move early to deal with the problem but the situation was allowed to fester, Sir, and the result is now history. The facts are that the combination of policies used to correct policies cannot be disassociated from the timing of the context within which those policies are introduced. It behoves us, therefore, Mr. Speaker, to begin to give contemplation as to the mix of private and public policies that will suffice to ensure that Barbados continues on a course of strong and sustainable growth. 12.15p.m.

Sir, the Government is satisfied that a lot of the activity taking place, particularly in tourism investment will redound to Barbados' long term interest. We will not introduce policies to curb or to change that. Our activity in 1999 will, however, coincide with a peculiar set of developments in this economy, namely, that for the first time since Independence this country will have to operate without the benefit of foreign exchange earnings from both Sandy Lane and the Hilton Hotel. The Hilton Hotel is going to come out of foreign exchange earning capabilities in a few months time together with Welcome Inn Hotel. The danger will be for us to misunderstand what that means to the domestic economy. There will still be continued activity in the country because the investment in construction activity will continue to keep the country going but the mix will be such that while you have the same level of economic activity - 3% growth, you will have a reduced capacity to earn foreign exchange because 400 rooms will go out of production all in the same year. Sir, I do not think that the country quite appreciates the extent of the challenge it forces upon us but that is the reality.

I do not believe also, Sir, that the country should want to continue to defer the investments that have to be made. The Hilton peninsula is the most important major location for future foreign exchange earnings in this country. I hope every successive administration will support it. The Needhams Point Incorporated has been created as a separate entity because with the closure of Mobil most of the important up-market investments in Barbados' tourism for the next generation will be in that area. We have the opportunity now, Sir, to virtually start from scratch and to optimise the use of the only peninsula of tourism worth in Barbados.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. John's building is irrationally located. There is no reason why there should be a law office in that area that represents Barbados most important source of foreign exchange earnings for the next generation.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is on a peninsula and you have the wonderful opportunity that you can build hotels that have unrestricted views of the sea. That is what a peninsula presents you with. We now have the opportunity to rationalise how that peninsula is used.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Everybody would agree that the Hilton makes .uneconomic use of our scarce land. It is badly located and most of the land in the area is used for car parking on the beach. The cost of refurbishing the Hilton is greater than if we were to lick it down and build from scratch. All of the studies have been done. We have committed the resources to Needhams Point Incorporated but

we have to get on with the business of rationally developing our capacities on that peninsula where such a vast potential for Barbados' future development is located.

We have, Sir, also private proposals for development around the Island Inn's property using part of the old Mobil site. I had meetings on Friday afternoon with all of the properties involved. We will not close off access of the public to the beach. In fact, Sir, the investment will lead to a building of a new beach facility that is even better than what we have there. There will be a new entrance. The entrance straight down to the Holiday Inn by Pebbles will be maintained. We will have an additional entrance as well and new beach facilities but that area cries out for private investment and we have a very good private investment that we will approve.

Over the course of the next 20 years major investments will take place once the Hilton is completed leading up to the Drill Hall to optimise that area's potential as Barbados most attractive location for tourism investment. It is close to beaches, it is close to an urban center, it is close to our major historic and heritage sites. You have no other location in the Caribbean that has that strategic value of being located close to your urban center, close to your best beaches and close to your heritage assets. Barbados must now begin that long march to make optimum use of that.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: And it is in St. Michael South.

Sir, the process of beginning that 25 year investment programme to fully rationalise the use of the Needhams peninsula and the Drill Hall area has started and we must start it now. It means that in this year the foreign exchange earning capabilities will dip a bit although the level of activity in the country will be sustained because we will replace construction with tourism activity and the foreign exchange earning capabilities of the two are different. Sir, this is part of the difficulty in managing economies. That the same rate of economic growth can be accompanied by such a drastic difference in composition of output that you have a different balance of payment effect and the policies that you should pursue should therefore be different.

That brings me, Mr. Speaker, to the contemplation of Government's revenue and expenditure for the next year. Government does not expect any major surprises with its revenue. In fact, the revenue is anticipated to grow by 4.5%. The economy growing by 3%, revenue growing by 4.5% - that bears a conservative relationship to revenue. The main revenue difference this year will be twofold. The House is aware, Mr. Speaker, that in compliance with our CARICOM obligations, beginning on April 1st, we will again reduce the top rate of consumption of Customs tariffs and import duties from 25% to 20%. If I may elaborate on that, Sir.

Under the Common External Policies adopted by CARICOM since 1989 a programme was set in train that every year reduced the common external tariff from 45% where it was then to 20% where it is stabilised. The last phase of that reduction in the common external tariff will take place in Barbados on April 1st. The point is, Sir, that extra regional imports in Barbados will become cheaper beginning April 1st - marginally so, by the drop in the common external tariff- the top rate from 25% to 20%.

It does not affect agriculture to the same extent because the structuring of the common external tariff was designed to exclude agriculture and a number of high valued commodity earners from its strictures but for many consumer goods from extra regional sources there will be that decline.

The House is also aware that this administration inherited the surtax regime from the previous administration. Under new rules of international trade, a country that has non-tariff barriers can convert those non-tariff barriers into tariffs on the understanding that they phase them out over a period of time. And I want to speak to the new Minister of Agriculture. Canada converted its non tariff barriers on agricultural imports into tariffs of 230% to give Canada's agricultural production a chance to be able to function in circumstances where import restrictions and licences were removed. 12.25 p.m.

If we are going to go into this new age, Sir, of liberalization and we remove any non tariff barriers like licences imposed on agricultural imports, Sir, I would expect that we would impose high tariffs on extra regional imports and use the proceeds to go to the Agricultural Development Trust to be able to enable us to support domestic agriculture.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is what other countries are doing - that we convert non tariff barriers to tariffs and in our instance, if we are going to have...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Because, in the next LOME of international trade negotiations where agriculture is going to be on the table, the pressure is going to be on all of us to remove non tariff barriers to trade and agricultural goods and we are going to have to do what Canada did. For a period have high tariffs on extra regional imports that we phase out but use the proceeds to help support our domestic

agricultural production. I do not think, Sir, that anybody could find that at all disadvantageous to this economy.

But, the point I am coming to is that a surcharge of 100% was introduced to replace the removal of licenses imposed under the previous administration on the understanding that our programme for its removal was going to be put in place.

The domestic manufacturing sector pleading with us that the rate at which the surtax was to be removed was too quick and that we took their advice. Manufacturing said it needed more time to be able to transform itself to become internationally competitive and therefore, Sir, we changed the rate at which the surtax was going to be phased out as set by the previous administration, such that the rate is going to drop from 75% to 35% on April 1st of this year and will be phased out entirely next year. All those persons who in the general elections were calling for us to remove the VAT on baby products, clothing, diapers and pampers failed to remember that the reason why the costs of these things are high in Barbados is not because of the VAT but because of 100% surtax or luxury tax which was imposed upon them.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: You all cannot have it both ways. You cannot want me to remove the VAT and then quarrel with the removal on the surtax, because the consumers will benefit more from the reduction of the surtax from 75% to 35% which will take place from April 1 st rather than the removal of the VAT. And I want to stress the point, Sir, the reason why a wide category of commodities purchased in this country was high was because a surtax was provided to provide some element of protection for local producers producing similar things on the understanding that over the period where that surtax was going to be in existence, local producers will get their house in order to be better able to compete once the surtax goes.

In 1997, Sir, in dealing with this measure, I indicated to the House and to the country that the Government was not going to budge from the new schedule that we set ourselves and that those who wanted indefinites, baby products and diapers and a wide range of clothing, shirts and T-shirts, those goods coming from extra regional sources now carry a surtax and that was imposed because, as I said the licensing system was abolished and without licenses domestic production would have gone out.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: I am not misleading the House at all, Sir. And that is how the rules of international trade apply, that if you remove a non tariff barrier you would impose a tariff for a while.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not double taxing, Sir. I am not the person who introduced the tax. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants to get himself involved again in matters that are too high for him. He does not understand the relationship between fiscal policy and international trade issues, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He has not yet spoken, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member, Sir, is giving the impression that he did not double tax when he introduced a 15% VAT, when already he has placed a case that a previous Government had introduced a special tax. What he should tell the House, Sir, is that he, the Honourable Member, already had a tax in place and he went on to introduce another tax when there was no need for that other tax because there was a tax already.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that was a speech that was by the peace of God, it surpasses all understanding. It is not a point of order. You did not respond to it to say whether it was a point of order or not, but it a speech that surpasses all understanding.

Sir, the reality is twofold, that the VAT replaced consumption taxes and import duties on similar commodities which rates ran well in excess of the rate of the VAT to begin with. And, the reality is that the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet as late as July 1994 having done all of its duties on the structure for VAT that it had spent taxpayers' money for two years when it was introduced was fully convinced of the need to introduce a VAT on those same things including a VAT on food.

Therefore I really must, in this particular issue say to the House that if we want relief and expect relief from the high prices on baby products, clothing and so on, let us proceed to do what we had set in train to remove in two stages the 74% surtax on those commodities. Because, any reasonable mind would immediately understand that the removal of the 75% surtax on baby products is going to be more beneficial to the consumer than the removal of 15% VAT. But that is perhaps too simple for the convoluted mind of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to understand.

Regarding the question, Sir, of destroying jobs, the Democratic Labour Party administration had a programme in place for the phasing out of the protection that was more

rapid than the one that we had put in place for an amended programme for evaluation. We have provided protection for the local manufacturing sector for a longer period than contemplated by the Democratic Labour Party. So, on all grounds - on fiscal grounds, on grounds of stabilising production and employment, Sir, this administration has been enlightened and progressive and in front of the curve.

But if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, as I suspect he does, you know he has this strange way, Sir, he quarrelled with us for putting a landfill in St. Andrew because he wanted it to be in the middle of St. Lucy.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Physical Development Plan for approval for the Democratic Labour Party called for a landfill in Lamberts and he quarrelled about Greenland because he wants a landfill in the centre of his constituency, Sir.

But he loved the notion of a 75% surtax on diapers and pampers and only in his mind does the notion that you are better off if a 15% tax is removed than if a 75% surtax is removed in this entire country and not forgetting that clearly, Sir, if you remove a 75% tax on a commodity it should be more beneficial to the consumer than removing a 15% tax. But that is too simple for the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who delves in matters, as Psalm 131 would say that his eyes are lofty and his heart is haughty and he exercises himself in great matters and things that are too high for him.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No. We are going to have to take him seriously, because in the last House he was a sports model and he got away because our focus was distracted by having to deal with more substantive presentations but he is going to feel the full weight this term, Sir. His back is broad and he is my relative and he can be sure that I will know how far to go in these matters. But there is an essential issue here that the Barbadian productive sectors have to understand that we are not in a position to invent the world as we would love it to be. 12.35p.m.

We have to live in the world as it exists and Governments (and we now had a case of two successive Governments) have put in place protective mechanisms to give all domestic producers a chance to react to the phasing in of new rules of international trade.

Our local producers cannot continue to believe that we can continue to manage this economy by reliance on policy systems that are absolutely in defiance of the new rules of international trade.

It should have behoved those producers, Sir, to have put in place the mechanisms of production to become more competitive when they enjoyed the protection of a surtax on the understanding that they would have to make adjustments because the Government made no secret of the fact that the surtax was going to be phased out over a period of time.

We are not catching them by surprise, Sir, and I am not going to easily, therefore, tolerate the Honourable Member for St. Lucy playing mischief with this issue by crying false tears on behalf Of people who were told by his side that the surtax is temporary, it will be phased out, and it is to be your wall of protection only for a while but do not look for it as an everlasting shield and buckler. That is what this issue is about.

But the point I am making to the House, Sir, is that our calculation of revenue has been set in the context of one having to phase out the surtax. We recognise that it will be a fiscal effect.

Sir, there will both be a fiscal effect from the removal of the surtax but the Government hopes, Sir, that there will not be a major production effect in terms of our lost of competitiveness of our domestic manufacturers. They have been given every chance to put their house in order.

The other effect on revenue this year obviously, Sir, would be the reverse tax credit which has been written into law and will be now a permanent feature of our fiscal system for years to come.

I would think, Sir, that the House, when it constitutes itself into its various Special Committees and just as it called for a Special Committee on international relations - the House had a Special Committee on Land Tax that show that the House meeting on fiscal matters can render wonderful advice and we might need to have a standing committee on fiscal affairs.

The House through its Standing Committee may want to give advice as to how the reverse tax credit mechanism can be improved as we go along.

There are working poor and there are working poor in Barbados. There are working poor who work five days a week. But the worst of the working poor, Sir, are to be found among the agricultural workers, who because of the financial state of the agricultural sector in general cannot be guaranteed a five-day week. Even if you were to put it on paper, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that in many instances the producing enterprises cannot guarantee it.

We will have to look as to how we use that tax credit which is not a gimmick, Sir, it is based on precepts that people who are below the income tax threshold and are not contributing to income tax are contributing to the indirect tax system and that you should give them back part of it, but that we should look to restructure it to capture the differences among the working poor. Those who are not in the public sector but who are working for two and three days a week are in the worst position in this country. I hope that this House could come up with a formula, Sir, to address that aspect of poverty in the country. I hope that there is no divide on it about gimmickry. It is a serious problem.

To ask a person to live and raise a family on two and three days a week income, Sir, is not something that modern Barbados should tolerate.

But at the same time to force the agricultural sector to pay in circumstances when they are facing declining revenue is also a difficulty as well and we have an obligation, Sir, to help. That is why this year we will be introducing an agriculture development trust as a promise in my last budget, because we do need to make sure that the sector as a whole but the working poor in agriculture who constitutes in many respects the most disadvantaged of this society are made to feel that they are sharing in the prosperity of this country.

But those, Sir, are the major revenue issues having regard therefore to the decline in revenue that will come from the reduction of the top rate of import duties from 25% to 20% and from the phasing out of the surtax beginning in April by its reduction from 75% to 35%. We do not anticipate that revenue this year will grow at more than 4.5% and these are conservative estimates. As the House knows, the Government generally must use the most conservative estimates in these matters.

We anticipate therefore, Sir, that a 4% increase in Government revenues proceeds, the revenue rising from $1 559 000 000. A 4% growth is a 3% real growth, is not excessive, and if we do the linear analysis it is not great. But the Estimates of Revenue we are working with, Sir, is $1 630000000.

On the expenditure side, Mr. Speaker, Government expects that its current expenditure will rise from $1 540 000 000 to $1 655 000 000, a 7.4% increase.

I must be at pains to explain to the House what are the causes of this projected increase in expenditure.

This 7% increase in expenditure, Sir, in circumstances where inflation is expected to remain very low does not reflect on the current side any abandonment by the Government of its precepts of financial disciplines.

The facts are, Sir, that two, and two items alone account for the bulk of this expenditure. Our debt service is due to rise from $429 000 000 in the last financial year to $483 000 000. This in many respects will be due to our repaying the bankers' trust loan of US$30 000 000 in December.

The bankers' trust, the Honourable Member for St. John and I are both jointly responsible for this, Sir. He went out and laid the framework for it, to take it in two tranches. He took in the first section and we took in the second section. The happy circumstances of this are, that over the course of the last four years we paid back the IMF. The bankers' trust loan was the only foreign loan that we raised. By the end of this year we would have paid back that as well. So that this spike in our debt service is not going to be a major difficulty. We have managed to reduce Barbados' foreign debt by almost $200 000 000 over the course of the last four years. With a further reduction of this debt it will mean that with the IMF repayments out of the way and the bankers' trust repayment out of the way and our not having raised the foreign commercial loans in the last three years that for the next three years we will have an easier debt profile than that that we have now and that which we have now is a good debt profile.

But I have to let the House know, Sir, that in this year there will be a spike in the debt repayment to the extent that we have in December to find that $60 000 000 loan plus interest to repay the bankers' trust and that explains the 12.6% increase in the debt service.

Wages and salaries, Mr. Speaker. This year in advance of a wage increase and the repayment of the 8% are set to rise from $508 000 000 to $553 000 000, a 9% increase.
12.45 p.m.

I want to repeat that, Sir. Wages and salaries in advance of any adjustments are scheduled to rise from $508 000 000 to $553 000 000. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is because of our bringing to account all facets of the casual employment. A number of persons were employed under the Current Expenditure Vote but a large number were employed on capital projects, the Scotland District, Subsidiary Road Projects.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is a very important point, Sir. What we have done is that by establishing the casual posts we have brought these to account on the understanding that the expansion of the public sector by the taking on of casuals will be constrained. At the end of 1997 casual employment in the public sector of Barbados came to an end.

The Bill was passed such that if because of the fact that you had to introduce legislation you had retired during the course of 1998, you were entitled to the benefits accruing to public officers even though you would have left as a casual employee as if the legislation had been in place, but the specific policy was that casual employment came to an end as of December 31, 1997 and any other persons coming on for capital projects will have to be given specific contracts telling them that they will be employed for a specific period of time and that you know from the outset what are the terms of your relationship to the public sector.

Every year we have a debushing programme at NCC where people are brought on for a specific time on the understanding that when the debushing is ended that the employment is ended. The Honourable Member for St. John will know, Mr. Speaker, about the way in which in 1991 the indiscriminate growth of casual employment over the course of the years had started to provide its own fiscal difficulty because whereas you have to create temporary posts and permanent posts, casual employment can just expand without the prior approval or knowledge either of the Ministry of Finance or the House. If the House is to keep comprehensive control of the growth of public expenditure, particularly the expenditure of the Government's payroll, the decision of Government to establish all existing casual posts and to put a strain on it is one that has utterly to be respected.

I stress the point, Sir, that there will be an increase in Government's current expenditure this year due entirely to two inescapable items, the payment for staff and the payment of debt service. But the House will observe that Government proposes to continue its financial restraint by making sure that it keeps under control the purchase of goods and services. Purchase of Goods and Services are projected in the next financial year to rise only from $171 million to $177.8 million or by 3.8%.

The greatest control we expect to exercise next year is in the area of transfers - Subsidies, Grants to Individuals, Grants to Statutory Boards, Non-Profit Organisations, Retiring Benefits and the like. That whole category of public expenditure, Sir, called Transfers, Subsidies, Grants, Subscriptions and so on amounted to $400 million in 1998/99 and we expect it to rise to only $402 million, or by 0.5% in the next financial year. In the last year, Sir, it rose by only $1.9 million which on an expenditure of $40 million was no big increase either.

May I say, however, Sir, that even though we are controlling transfers that the Government will be maintaining and expanding its contributions to both the Urban and the Rural Development Commission in keeping with the policy so wonderfully well stated in our Throne Speech. The House will see that in both instances the subvention to the two institutions, Sir, have been expanded.

The House is also aware that over the course of the last two years subsidies to the Transport Board have grown at a most alarming rate. In the financial year, 1996-97 I think we gave subsidies of about $31 million to the Transport Board and in the year ending at the end of March 31,1999 the Transport Board has already had two supplementals. We would expect that the Transport Board's future affairs must be based more exactly and nearly on its capacity to pay rather than continue to look every year to the Consolidated Fund. A case will have to be advanced if an adjustment is to be made and a process of consultation that would have to be gone through.

Sir, I look forward to the day when we do have a Fair Trading Commission where all these institutions will have to open up all of their accounts, practices and their standards for public scrutiny. The Transport Board might be the least offended, Sir, but the Water Authority has to justify its rates upon the basis of service and standards.

The National Petroleum Corporation and the National Housing Corporation which are asset rate, Sir, must be able to go and explain to the public what it is doing with its money. I welcome the coming into existence of the Fair Trading Commission on January 1, in the year 2000 because all of these issues pertaining to the setting of tariffs by State institutions and monopolies should be taken out of public controversy. We should present the facts to the public because the public is paying for them whether the public wants to acknowledge it is paying for them or not. Thirty-one million dollars out of the Consolidated Fund to cover the deficit of the Transport Board in a financial year takes some doing and it just cannot continue. This is the reality. That explains the spike on the current side.

On the capital side, Sir, and this is where I have to be elaborate, there are a number of projects for which foreign financing has already been secured for which we must proceed with the activity for two reasons that if you have local spending but is supported by foreign currency, the impact on the foreign reserves balances out. Also, Sir, as the Honourable Member for St. John knows, one of the major costs that can accrue to Government is where you have a loan that you are committed to, you are not disbursing it, and you have to pay commitment fees.

In many respects we have found ourselves in the position where commitment fees had been such that when added to repayment to the institutions there was a net outflow from our countries to the institutions because the combination of commitment fees would heap again, the execution of projects when added to repayment of previous loans put us in a position where the inflow was less than the outflow.

We have a number of very substantial projects that matter for which foreign funding has already been secured and those foreign-funded projects will constitute the core of Government's capital projects for this year.

Some, Sir, are like EduTech. Both the CDS and the IDE have already come on board in financing for EduTech. The Airport expansion - our airport reached its capacity, I think, about 10 to 15 years earlier than planned and at peak hours our airport now is a mess, and we just simply have to do it.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants a Stepney airport in St. Lucy. I will only tell him what I told the people for St. Lucy when I had the chance to speak to them in St. Lucy that I would wish he would come to the House and ask for a few house spots because I can give him those, but the airport, Sir, he has to wait a little while for that. With the very best will in the world he cannot get both the landfill set as his most defunct wish for St. Lucy and the international airport at one and the same time so he will have to wait, but ask for a few house spots and you will have access to those, but not the airport. 12.55p.m.

The point is that our airport has reached capacity and it has to be expanded and provision is made this year for us to proceed with the expansion of the airport, again with foreign funding. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Solid Waste Management Programme is at a stage where we have satisfactorily built Greenland, have tested it and now we must proceed to build the other aspects of the solid waste programme. To proceed with that, foreign financing has already been secured.

We are pressing on with the sewerage scheme and $28 million of this will go to the sewerage project.

The Bridgetown Road Project, members will recognise that Hindsbury Road is in a bad state, Belleville is in a bad state and it is not that we are indifferent, Sir. All of these roads are intended to be done under the Bridgetown Road Project for which funding has already been secured and we will have to press on with those.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for St. John will be pleased to hear that we will press on this year with both the Consett Bay and the Skeete's Bay Fishing Projects for which foreign financing has already been secured. Sir, we were proposing to do one phase but we will now do both because it makes sense to do both.

We will also this year start the work on the Cheapside Market for which there is Chinese financing and the Ministry of Finance will press on with the tax administration and expenditure control project.

Before I break for lunch I would want to stress that point, Sir. One of the inescapable capital expenditures we have to incur is to deal this year with the Y2K problem. It is not something that we can do next year. We have had a committee in place now for two years and it has done systematic inventories of all Government departments and I am pleased to be able to report to the House that the critical institutions like the airport and so on not only have been made Y2K compliant but we have also put in contingency facilities in case they fail.

In every instance where we have been able to determine that Government departments and enterprises are not Y2K compliant we are providing resources in this year's estimates to deal with this and it is reflecting itself in Plant, Equipment and Furniture. Again this is a one-shot spike in capital expenditures that simply cannot be avoided and we will have to find the funds to do this, although I am pleased to report to Parliament that the World Bank has now introduced facilities that would enable countries to do so.

The Central Bank has also been working with financial institutions to make sure that they are Y2K compliant and a Permanent Secretary Special Assignment has been appointed to make sure that all efforts are coordinated between the public and the private sector such that Barbados does not face any chaos from not dealing with this problem this year.

Both the private and the public sector should ensure themselves that they are ready and every system has been tested by July. We are- making every effort to satisfy ourselves that the public sector- is ready, Sir. But I am not satisfied that all aspects of the private sector will be ready and the Government has offered to assist, particularly the small business sector, in putting in place the facilities to be Y2K compliant.

Sir, I believe that is a reasonable point at which I can pause. I do not anticipate taking the House much longer but I must talk about how we will finance this year's Estimates and to talk about a few other issues and if the Leader of the House would seek to suspend the House at this point I will yield for that suspension.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I imagine that I have covered the substantive issues raised by these Estimates but it falls to me to deal with another issue of crucial importance if the House is to take an informed decision as to the direction on which we are embarked financially.

I was speaking to the issue of capital expenditure to indicate that in the year ending March this year we will spend less on the capital account than we spent in the year ending March 1998. A year ago we spent $257 million for capital purposes and the year ending March this year, Sir, we will spend $243 million and in the years to come we will have somewhat of an expansion of capital investment insofar that capital expenditure will increase to $318 million.

Sir, as I said already, much of this increase is because we have to give effect to a number of large projects all foreign funded which are vital to support the continued social and economic development of this country because if not carried forward it will see us incurring commitment fees of the kind that I want to avoid.

Too much of our financial resources are devoted to meeting commitment fees rather than meeting real activity. Therefore I wish to point out that even though we are going to start projects we will not be executing them on the scale initially envisioned. For example, Sir, EduTech, the first year, was intended to cost about $50 million and could have gone higher than $50 million but in the light of the reserve position we plan to spend only $35 million.

The airport expansion project schedule suggested that we should be spending $50 million. This year I think we will be spending about $28 million. The South Coast Sewerage Project and similar projects we are seeking to phase the projects so that the capital programme taken together with the current does not put us in a position where the overall fiscal deficit is more than 1.5% of GDP this year. I want to stress that point.

Government's financial policy this year is predicated to support a deficit of 1.5% of GDP. The House will recognise that I had hitherto said that we could go up to 2.5% without doing irreparable damage to the economy so that the 1.5% takes into account the fact that there are wage settlements and other wage related issues that still have to be brought to account. Therefore we have gone out as far as we can go with these Estimates in advance of making allowance for wage increases. The policy is after you net off amortisation which is larger than last year and net off income of net enterprises, the fiscal deficit is intended to be no more than 1.5% of GDP and that compares to a deficit of 1.4% of GDP for the last fiscal year.

Sir, whether Government is in a fiscal expansionary stance or not is dependent upon the relative size of the fiscal deficit as a proportion of GDP and this deficit suggests that Government is stabilising the economy rather than seeking to make an expansion of public expenditure part of the general expansion of the economy.

It is not our judgment, Sir, that there should be expansion this year and I have explained the ratio of deficit to GDP that guides the fiscal policy. The key again is the manner in which the deficit is supposed to be financed. In that respect, I would urge the House to go to Table 10 of the Memorandum: Summary of Government Operations and Financing at the very front of the Estimates of Expenditure. Last year, the deficit was met largely from domestic financing but we propose this year that in view of the fact that domestic credit creation has already started to put pressure on our foreign reserves that the bulk of Government financing of its deficit should come from foreign resources. Hence you will see, Sir, that Government is making provision for the next financial year to reduce its dependence on local financial institutions for funding to support its overall activities to the extent where the domestic financing which amounted to $199 million two financial years ago, $184 million in the year to end in March is projected to be decreased to $125 million in the next financial year. 2.10p.m.

Government proposes therefore to reduce its dependence upon the domestic financial sector to support the overall fiscal position. This is understandable if we follow through on the initial analysis that domestic credit creation had started to create a problem with the reserves and therefore Government this year should not stimulate domestic credit creation if we want to keep the economy growing at a stable rate.

By contrast, Sir, whereas last year we raised only $40 million in net foreign financing to support Government's fiscal position, this year it is proposed that we should raise $219 million in foreign financing. Of that amount, it is projected that $114 million will be in the form of project loans. I have already indicated the major project that will attract that financing and this year we propose to go back to the market to arrange $105 million in commercial financing. Government in the next financial year will use foreign

financing to the extent of $219 million of which $114 million will be project Joans and a loan to be raised on the foreign capital market in the amount of at least $ 105 million.

Sir, the policy here is that we want to raise by way of a foreign commercial loan an amount that is enough to cover the foreign amortisation. The House will remember that 1 earlier said that this year we will face a situation where the repayment of the foreign debt will feature a spike in the rise from $429 million to $483 million. As you can see, Sir, within that $483 million of debt service, amortisation will rise from $182 million to $282 million or by $99 million. Foreign amortisation itself is going to rise from $66 million to $105 million. We will go therefore to the policy where we will raise a foreign loan equivalent to the amount of amortisation so that the debt strategy will be that we will not therefore increase the commercial component of foreign debt. We will raise as a loan an amount equal to that which we shall repay. That, Sir, will cushion any effects of this capital programme but it also has to be seen in the context of the fact, as I have said earlier, that three major hotels will be out of operations this year. Not because of market circumstances but because of their investment programme.

I therefore feel if we are going to support a 3% growth in the economy that there is a need for an inflow of foreign resources. I want to say to the House and I would like the support of the Opposition on this matter. Sir, that before the end of the week the Ministry of Finance should be in a position to bring to the House the relevant Resolution to support the raising of this loan. The House will rest after the Estimates and come back in April. The matter is delicate and as the House is aware the international capital market is virtually closed to new sovereign debt. Barbados has maintained relationships with institutions and our name is still good in the market and there are at least two institutions that have provided us with competitive bids *which* we are now evaluating and we will be bringing to the House by the end of the week an amount to allow us to raise that loan, Sir,

I think it is necessary principally because, as I have said, in this year three major hotels will be out of operation and even though we will have the benefit of the activity in terms of construction activity, we will not have the access to the foreign exchange that they generally create and it is necessary for us in such circumstances as a short term measure to support a pool of foreign exchange available to the country by raising this loan. I would imagine therefore., Sir, that the amount should be about U.S. $75 million that would allow us to cover the amortization and meet any shortfalls that arise from the operations in-the tourism industry.

Broadly, Mr. Speaker, those cover the main financial issues that these Estimates are intended to reflect. We are operating a stable deficit at about 1.5% of GDP leaving a little bit in hand to bring wage settlements to account. We are seeking to finance the deficit differently this year in view of the fact that, as I have said, domestic credit has started to play not havoc but create problems for balance of payments. If we proceed with this fiscal programme, Sir, I can give the House the assurance that once we stay on this programme that we can realise a 3% growth without any attendant balance of payments fall-out. In fact, if we were to raise foreign financing of $219 million that should contribute to an increase of the reserves. The Central Bank of Barbados projections are that the dip in reserves last year of $14 million will be countermanded by a surplus this year based upon private capital inflows as well as these official borrowings for both project and for commercial purposes.

This series of scenarios that I have painted, Sir, in relation to the size of the deficit, the level of expenditure, the composition of expenditure and the composition of financing of expenditure and its mix as between local and foreign, are all part of a broader economic and financial programme to support the stable, continued and sustained growth of the Barbados economy at a rate of 3% per year without inducing any additional balance of payment problems. It is in that context, Sir, that I commend them to the House.

Before I close, I should want to speak to one contentious issue, Mr. Speaker. This economy has come far based upon the dint of efforts of the people in the society as a whole over the course of the last virtually seven years. I do not, Mr. Speaker, propose to do anything to return Barbados to any dismal past. Sometime in the foreseeable future I would love to pass on the responsibility of managing this economy to somebody else but pass over an economy that is as strong...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Or stronger than the economy that I inherited. It does not behove us at all ever to put this economy back in a hole because we know better. I know what has had to be required to bring it back and to keep it stable.

The Government is genuine in its determination to pay decent wages, Mr. Speaker, but in all our doings the management of any addition to domestic spending * power must continue to be the benchmark that guides us in determining whether policies are good or bad. There is no point, in circumstances where domestic spending is growing too quickly for us to be unleashing massive increases in purchasing power not supported by foreign resources on this economy at this time.

I am in a position to speak to an increase in capital expenditures because the increase in capital expenditures

will be supported by foreign resources and hence there will be no damaging effect on that spending on the domestic economy. I am not going to contemplate pumping $60 million or more in increased discretionary wages into the economy by a one shot re-injection of the 8%.

Sir, when you look at the situation that would be a contemplation of a form of economic bedlam that would render the injection not worthwhile because the same Minister of Finance who would have injected it in defence of the economy would very soon have to come and take it back out. 2.20p.m.

Our domestic economy at this stage cannot support a substantial increase in domestic spending unsupported by the generation of foreign resources. It would spell the course to disaster and it was for that reason, Sir, that while recognising the moral responsibility to repay, I made it clear from the outset that it would have to be on terms agreed to and negotiated.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. John inviting me in his siren song in this connection to pay it back before Christmas. I heard him clearly, but I knew that he would not have done it himself if he had to assume the arrangement officer. That was an election gimmick. I was not going for the intention of gimmicks at all, because, our intention is that the economy is growing fast enough now for us at some stage to make amends to those who shouldered the disproportionate part of the burden.

But in making the repayment we have still to be conscious of the need to protect the overall national interest. We would look, Sir, to pay back as soon as practicable, but also to let people exercise the option to either take it back as cash or as part of investment instruments as they so wish. And we will honour the obligation but do so in a manner that does not damage the national economy.

I cannot imagine that people would want us to damage the economy merely for a short term...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:.. .and I did not say as a matter of short term political gains, Sir, because had I done so, I would have said that I was going to give back the 8% before the election campaign. But I was very clear that it would be given back on terms to be negotiated and agreed to and the Government stands ready, Mr. Speaker, to honour that.

The other matter I want to deal with is this business of partial regrading and I must speak to it. Institutions are now using or seeking to use the business of partial and total regrading as a back hand way of paying themselves substantial wage increases and we are having a number of them that are very acute. In some instances as has happened unfortunately in the Sugar Industry and that is what caused most of the problems, the supervisory and management staff entered into a regrading exercise. Of course their management is seeking to regrade itself, management does not at all resist any overtures of the Union. So it is as if there is a coincidence of the interest of the management and unions when the management is regrading itself.

So what happened then, Sir, was that the management and supervisory staff was regrading and obviously an argument arose as to what happens to the people at the bottom and that they too had to be regraded. That is what happened with the BAMC case and people will pay because when management regrades itself, it is not as careful about the enterprises and shareholders' interests as when it is dealing with the regrading for people at the bottom. We are now having a similar call for regrading of the supervisors at the Sanitation Department. You can be sure that if you were to regrade only supervisors alone, then people would call for a regrading of others.

We recently had a regrading at the Central Bank that started the other way around where people at the bottom got a very substantial regrading that narrowed the differential between the people at the bottom and the middle and the up management. And, distorted relativity such that a case was put to me that I had to look to, to correct the anomalies that had been introduced in the structure of the Central Bank payments. And, these are the dangers of having these partial icgradings.

I am trying to resist them, Sir, because regradmgs are not intended to be pay increases. The Public Health Inspectors of Barbados represent the clear case where a regrading is absolutely justified. The reason is that the functions of a health inspector have changed since the posts were last established. They have become more complex in the sense that a public health inspector now has to be involved in inspecting food and a whole range of other things. Also, the qualifications for the jobs have changed because they now require certificate training at the Community College. So that you have a post called the same post, but the functions and the requirements are different. Clearly, Sir, that stands as a case that must be regraded and we are prepared to regrade that because the relativities between the Public Health Inspector and people doing similar jobs now cannot compare with what they were before. But there are many sections of the public sector where institutions want to have these partial regradings that will trigger other regradmgs and that will throw the payroll entirely out of sensible recognition if we want those payrolls to be viewed in the context of fiscal prudence.

I have given very clear instructions to the Ministry of the Civil Service not to support the call for partial regradings

of institutions which depend almost exclusively or entirely on the public purse, Sir. Let us have a comprehensive regrading so that you will not create so many problems which when added together eventually will destabilise public finances by the sheer weight of the accumulation of the disorder over time.

There will be a comprehensive regrading in the public sector over the course of the next few years, Sir. In many respects, Sir, and the other side would not like to hear this, a large part of the difficulties of the early 1990s and the Honourable Member for St. John must bear this in mind, were caused by that partial regrading of the public sector in 1989. At a time when the reserves were going down they had to pump $30 million in high power spending straight into the economy that you had to print Central Bank's money to support. It had that immediate effect on the economy, but it has had an enduring effect and it has changed every relativity in the system and has riddled it with such anomalies that require a comprehensive regrading, but let us do it properly.

I say that because the Government is being bombarded with this request for partial regradings at institutions that do not bear a relationship to the overall situation. I have made it clear that institutions should not treat regradings as wage increase exercises. They ought not to be retroactive. A regrading should be for sometime in the future and there should not be partial regrading and regrading exercises should not be settled outside the context of the institution's capacity to pay.

We also have a situation as far as regradings are concerned where wage rigidity is the norm. In a real regrading exercise some should remain and others should lose. But what happens in Barbados as you know, Mr. Speaker, is that because nobody ever dare reduces anybody' s salaries, the posts that are to be regraded upward are regraded upward, but those that should be down graded are allowed to remain where they are where the wage range is concerned. All these matters have to be addressed in order for us to keep on a stable and steady course.

My further point, Mr. Speaker, is to say that we are about to officially enter a period of transition for the Barbados economy. I spoke earlier of the fact that the OECS countries had a two-year period within which to make a transition from being banana economies to something else. There will be seldom in our future economic development where it is going to be as clear that there is a window of transition which transitions will have to be made. And, I come back to the argument that I advanced when last this House met that negotiations have started for a new post LOME Four relationship with Europe and those negotiations will take place between now and the year 2005. Negotiations are continuing for a free trade area of the Americas and that will come into existence in the year 2005. Later this year a new round of multilateral negotiations under the WTO auspices involving agriculture, a wide range of services, Government procurement, labour standards, environmental standards and the like will begin.

So that the structure and functioning of the economy of the future will be decided by the negotiations beginning this year and which will last for the next five years. 2.30p.m.

Our economy must perceive itself as therefore having a five-year breathing space, within, which every practicable measure must be made to make such transitions as to enable us to function within the context of that drastically changed world.

The provisions of the Free Trade Area of the Americas will be probably phased in between the year 2005 and 2020. The negotiations that we are involved in today will determine the structure of the economy in the year 2020. It is as far reaching as that, Sir. This is not the time, Mr. Speaker, for the domestic private sector to be calling for higher levels of protectionism. This cannot be the time, Sir.

This has to be the time when the accent must be on increasing productivity, increasing competitiveness and adjusting to the new realities of doing business in the international business arena, Sir. These are the times when those matters should be in the forefront, not just of the Government, but in the forefront of the planning of the private sector of Barbados.

This is not wishful thinking, Mr. Speaker. As I said, very often you speak in terms of a watershed in international activity and coming to a turning point but as I have said in a number of speeches, this is one stage in which you are absolutely sure that there is that window of opportunity within which a transition has to be made.

We will have, Sir, throughout the course of this five-year period to conceive of everything that we do in all of our economic and financial discourses. We have to conceive of everything that we do as making a contribution to Barbados getting it right in this window of transition such that we evolve and emerge in the post 2005 period as a small economy that is capable of succeeding in that new international dispensation.

I will come to it, Sir, in almost every one of my speeches in much the same way that in the Roman Senate as a Member made himself legendary by the speech that Carthage must be destroyed.

Barbados must simply master these international negotiations, but the private sector must get on board with us. Two years ago, Sir, I offered concessions to the private sector to spur them to engage in international tax expertise and the like. They have been slow, Sir.

But I anticipate that we are going to be overwhelmed as a Parliament with request for us to reverse the GET introduction and to reverse the surtax. The Government is prepared to make the fiscal adjustment, Sir, in reducing revenues but it cannot be in Barbados' interest for us to continue to keep those walls of protectionism which are temporarily in place.

I want to use today's opportunity, Sir, just to impress upon this House, how very strategic our work is going to have to be in all the financial and economic planning that we support, because Barbados will never ever be the same again after the year 2005 and we have that opportunity and a responsibility as a Parliament to prepare the way for it.

In a sense therefore, Sir, this Parliament promises to be one of the most historic Parliaments in the history of the country. Because there will hardly be a Parliament in this country's history that has at its outset a programme, whose parameters are as clear but as are far-reaching. I want to suggest to the House, Sir, that these Estimates have been designed with a view to help us to begin to contribute to that programme.

I want to let the House know, Sir, that all my further actions will be designed to further contribute to that. As I said, Sir, someday in the future I could relieve this knowing that I would have contributed to doing everything that is required of me to make the way clear for the stability of this country taking it into the future, Sir.

It is in the context, Sir, of a clear perspective as to where we are in time and space, but with a clear vision as to where we are going, Sir, that I commend the Estimates of Expenditure 1999-2000 to this Parliament.

I respectfully beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. SPEAKER vacated the Chair which was assumed by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The 1999-2000 Estimates debate has begun on an interesting note and I presume that in view of the fact that there are persons on that side who would be participating in the debate for the first time that they would use this second reading to make their maiden presentation to this House and by the time the Minister of Finance gets back to me, he would have forgotten what I said.

Even if he did remember what I said as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would agree with me, his first comment would be that nothing I said in this debate came into contact with the Estimates at all since that has been his traditional criticism.

So I am going to start on the Estimates and give Honourable Members on the other side some guidance to going through the early part so that your second reading speeches will not merely be a repetition of what the Honourable Member for St. Peter said. For those who have not heard, I will be able to enjoy their contributions.

Now, first of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side, we have already indicated that we would like to facilitate any arrangements in which the Estimates debate and the Budget debate are collapsed into one debate.

He said that and I very much regret that this is not something that we were not able to do a long time ago because it again will help Members in the analysis of the Estimates, particularly to have an idea where the Minister of Finance is going to use the Budget as a tool to assist him in financing the deficit, in putting forward the policies of the Government and in setting the stage for the entire fiscal year.

When the Budget comes later in the year, it is often characterized more as a mopping up operation to borrow a phrase from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Therefore, you do not get a chance to match the objectives of the Budget against the actual Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue and you do not see the economic picture as clearly from all vantage points.

But as I say, there are some things that we agreed on and I am glad to see that -the Honourable Member for St. Peter has extended the period for which the economic recovery in Barbados was predicated right back to 1993.

He used to grudgingly, before the last elections start at 1994. This is the first time I have heard him go as far back as 1993. But the facts are there, that the framework and the operational aspects of the restructuring programme began as far back as 1993 and some of the issues that we are debating now, in fact cross and to some extent show they have formed much of the discussions as far back as 1993.

For example, we are talking about the impact of the GET. This was a very critical issue in the restructuring programme back in 1993. My own view is that the Barbadian private sector because of its approach to issues of international trade would have taken an inordinate period of time to get itself ready as has happened. 2.40 p.m.

Therefore, in a sense, our ambitious programme to implement the surtax and have it removed in a very short period of time was merely an attempt to demonstrate to the private sector in Barbados that it was necessary for them to do the things that needed to be done very quickly and to get an advance on changes in the world economic and trading system, and also that Barbados should it need to continue to extend any facilities by the international financial institutions would essentially have been compliant with the trends that form part of their orthodoxy. But we except that there are things that need to be done.

Perhaps, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, in like manner, could go as far back to 1992 to meetings of the CGCED in which bananas, even before the US objection which may have a lot to do with campaign financing, you may be right about that, but even before that objection, attempts were being made to get the countries of the Eastern Caribbean to begin the process of diversification into a wide range of areas in some of which Barbados was able to provide them with some technical advice.

For example, in financial services and so on we did offer to assist them in that process but, again, it has taken until this event in circumstances in which the larger powers of the world are doing battle over something that in a sense in real terms is so minuscule as to not even warrant their attention, and now we are faced with a situation in the entire Caribbean region which, perhaps, could have been avoided had those economies not maintained the level of dependence over a longer period of time than was desirable for them.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, that is also one of the problems and, of course, again in 1992 having regard to what happened in Barbados, one of the countries which was a guiding light to the Eastern Caribbean being in an IMF programme many of those Ministers of Finance were simply terrified about the prospects of their having to enter similar economic arrangements.

By 1993 the Honourable Member for St. Peter has come to the House and indicated that to sustain this economic recovery it is necessary for the Government to revisit its mix of policies. I assume that is what the Budget will do because I am not sure, and it would be a valid criticism even coming from non-economists like myself, that he has not yet clearly indicated what are the right mix of policies and the extent to which the macroeconomic fundamentals need to be adjusted one way or the other to sustain the level of economic development. So I look forward eagerly to the Budget debate, or to his response in which, perhaps, in more clarity he will deal with that.

To my friends on the Other Side who are mere simpletons like me in economic issues, having only done Economics 101, or even lesser courses than that, perhaps one should not...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I though that one was mainly a gem so I wanted to hear it but I will ask you later.

Perhaps, what one needs to do then is to look at the entire debate, not exclusively from the point of view of an economist in which it is very easy for you to fall into some very traditional traps, in my view, of strictly defining the role of the private sector and the public sector, and perhaps adopt less orthodox approaches and come to the realisation that a lot has changed in Barbados since 1992 that renders many of those classifications irrelevant, for example, the role that the Social Partnership has played in blurring, not the ultimate political responsibility, but the overall responsibility for economic management in the country. Though we at the end of the day are accountable to the voters of Barbados, those social contracts or social partnerships have been a way of seeding significant responsibility by Government to both the trade union movement and the private sector.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, tradeoffs. I do not deny that but the point is that it does blur the old straight-jacketed characterisations of the private sector, of the public sector and of labour when it comes to the table and otherwise.

Apart from that, to give another example. The Honourable Member for St. Peter speaks of the level of import cover or the reserves as being adequate in the context of what the international community feels is acceptable. But many of those definitions or paradigms would have been designed at a time when exchange controls in the world and certainly in relation to most developing countries, would have been the norm.

With many of those things being dismantled, the international financial institutions need to tell us whether even the level of import cover that Barbados has today could isolate it or the entire Caribbean region from the activities of international financiers who can sit in New York, as happened, the Honourable Member for St. Peter said in Mexico, and shift significant investment, speculative by and large, from one region in the world to another overnight. And that is why even the traditional definitions which the international institutions would have come to 20 years ago, even 15 years ago, are not now relevant, or as relevant, in a world in which barriers have been dismantled so significantly.

They are not even relevant in the context of Barbados so I am not even sure that I agree, or I could agree at face value that the level of import cover is adequate because economists are probably going to have to sit and revisit that issue again because Governments do not themselves collectively, through the international institutions or otherwise, have the ability to influence significantly those kinds of decisions as they did 15 to 20 years ago. Even the leavers that are left in the hand of the Central Bank and the Minister of Finance in Barbados are not as effective as would have been in the hands of a Minister of Finance when we went from the Currency Board into the new arrangements.

Those things do not exist now and, therefore, as I say, economists also need to revisit these kinds of issues and to that extent I would say that economists are still relevant. The Honourable Member for St. Peter should not be in any way inhibited by, as I say, the criticism of simpletons like myself. I only think of these things because, like the outstanding pianist in Barbados, Andre Daniel, I can think of so many of them, I am self taught in that regard, or self failure in that regard, depending on your interpretation.

I think that needs to be said because it is important not to compartmentalise these things in this way less people believe automatically that there is a comfort zone that exists when, in fact, it may not exist and circumstances have changed. 2.50p.m.

I listened very carefully to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter about Government spending and the capital works programme. He did not ask his colleagues to turn to page 58 of the yellow book but he would know that as prudent as he has been in relation to capital expenditure this would still be the second highest level of capital expenditure in real terms in the history of Barbados. If you do not want to look in real terms, do a ten-year comparison and go back to the period of 1990-1991 when we probably last had a level of expenditure on capital works that exceeded $200 million and there were some others - $191 million and that kind of thing.

There was still a robust capital works programme and if it did not come out as anticipated it is only because it is always difficult for Government to execute fully a capital works programme. Even when the Minister of Finance tells you that he is cutting the capital works programme by $50 million and looks for specific projects to stop, on this side we were always well aware that the rest of the capital programme could never be fully executed in a fiscal year because even when we were pushing back in 1994 to get the capital works programme up to support the level of growth we could only get it to $109 million at a time when the systems were in place and the efficiency of the Ministry of Finance, without the comfort level that exists now, was much higher. In other words, with very little room to manoeuvre they were pushing to get that capital works programme fully executed and I suspect it probably came in at about 50%, if not, certainly less than that.

The difference is that a lot of this capital works programme would have been on very small projects which could be very quickly executed and I wish the Honourable Member for St. Andrew could have had the roads paved in Society, St. John, a project which was started after 18 months. The construction company Brathwaite cannot get it paved. That is why I can explain and excuse the Government for not reaching the full level of the capital works programme.

You can look at it. In 1996-97- $220 million; 1997-98 - $253.9 million; 1998-99 - $243.1 million and this year the Government has a very ambitious programme of capital expenditure of $318 489 067, again a very large component of which I assume is going to be foreign funded institutional lending and so on and will probably be under executed in the same way; but this is the reality of it.

Do not assume that because you see that figure there that Government is going to be able even with all of that money available that it is going to be able to get a capital works programme fully executed.

These are points that I think members need to be aware of and the public needs to be aware of and you do not expect the Minister of Finance to say these things because he would not want to do anything to lessen the impact of estimates which have been conceived against the background of what the Minister perceives to be the need for caution and nothing too ambitious.

The other point which is worth mentioning is the point which the Honourable Member for St. Peter made about the mythology that in some quarters, particularly in the international financial institutions which are very much guided by the approach of the persons who head them and finance them that all private expenditure is good and all Government public spending is bad.

Again, if you compartmentalise expenditure into private expenditure and public spending as related only to Government, to my mind, you fall into a trap of not seeing the economy as a whole. Again I am saying that some of the investments which the Government of Barbados is undertaking, as I understand, it over the next few months in a sense will be financed not only from Government's budget but some are financed entirely off of Government's budget with a significant component of private sector financing whether by way of share participation, equity participation by Barbadians or whatever. I refer to projects like the Hilton project, which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter mentioned. I have heard only in passing, comments about other projects in which obviously there is going to be a partnership or some kind of joint venture even though that may not be strictly speaking the correct term between Government and the private sector. Therefore those kinds of approaches emanating from the international institutions do not help, particularly where there is a very constructive engagement in small economies between private sector and between Government,

I think those are some of the key points that I wanted to make about the Estimates and we have looked at each of the Heads and we hope to get into a debate on the Heads this year. Again, there is not a lot which needs to be said about the information which the Minister has provided in relation to Government's fiscal operations. Again, not a lot has changed in the past few years and there is nothing ambitious or particularly noteworthy about the Estimates m that regard and perhaps that reflects the level of comfort which the Government feels about the overall external situation and its ability to carry out a programme.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in whom much trust apparently is vested has said accept his word that these Estimates reflect a programme which the Government can comfortably execute over the next fiscal year. That, in itself, I suppose has been the view of every Minister of Finance.

In 1990 when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South introduced the Estimates in 1989 he would have adopted the same approach to the Estimates but there are so many factors which can change in a very short period of time. No doubt the Finance Minister in Malaysia and in Indonesia and in Thailand and in many of those other Asian economies which we have been taught to be part of the international institutions orthodoxy have performed a miracle, no doubt when they constructed their budgets at the beginning of the fiscal year in which they experienced market crashes and devaluations and so on they felt it was possible for them to execute a programme.

I am not saying Barbados is in a similar position because there is a lot that is different about the Barbados economy and those other economies but I still think that it is very important for us to recognise that things can change very quickly and that it will take a lot more than the faith of the Minister of Finance to ensure that this programme is executed.

Let me get now to the overall impression that I have of this year's Estimates and the approach of the Barbados Labour Party to the management of the Barbados economy and its mandate since the 1999 election.

Let us not fool ourselves that despite all of our economic achievements, and we made many achievements in the past 8 years, that we have achieved all that we cm achieve in relation to the Barbados economy and in relation to meeting the aspirations of our citizens, because there are still many areas of grave concern to us, many of these will focus on social policy aspects, on the threat of changes in the world economic system but more importantly there are some concerns that we have about the Barbados economy and its capacity to realise the dream of future generations of Barbadians. 3.00p.m.

Somehow I get the impression that the Honourable Member for St. Peter in view of what happened between 1994 and 1999 and the way in which he has been able to essentially out fires and deal in a very pragmatic way with what appears to be small social problems that may affect the country, small political problems, small economic problems, may have induced in the Barbados Labour Party a comfort level, which to my mind is not in the best interest of the country at this time. The small fires may have been put out

and the small things may have been done but at the same time Government cannot appear to be so flexible and unpredictable. It is Tony Blair who is the author of that phrase, of his own philosophy, of what is called, "permanent revisionism". As long as you have goals whatever means you use to achieve those goals is unimportant. Government needs to be flexible and find new ways every day to meet the aspirations of its people.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You are running and every little voice you hear from every corner you are looking back to hear what they are saying and seeking to implement those decisions to appease people.

This is a very useful exercise to have gone into after 1994 when all you are interested in doing is ensuring that you do everything, the opposite to what the Democratic Labour Party did or every unpopular thing that the Democratic Labour Party did, you do the opposite to that. There is nothing wrong with that because that is, as I have said, the art of pragmatism and some people would even say, opportunism. That is fine. I would expect any Government coming to office after 1994 to focus on that. There must be a point in the life of this Government when one is able to pin it down to some defined and very clear policy objectives which are going to chart the country into the future. It is not that you repeat it more than once; it is that what you say can be interpreted to be a vision or a fixed set of goals that you want to achieve for the country.

In 1994, the Democratic Labour Party said, yes, we would like to see Barbados as a developed country by the year 2000. I heard that again in the 1999 General Election campaign but this time, I heard it from the Barbados Labour Party. Now, that is a desirable goal but that is such a broad goal that one is not able to pin down any particular overall strategy and initiative. The Government must not get caught up as does the modern leader of the world in attaching large labels to what in essence may be small activities. I could give an example of that. I would say that unless you are going to invest the Ministry of Social Transformation with both the powers and the resources to really transform Barbados socially, it does not make sense to attach a label to the activities of that Ministry which in itself may create both impressions or may create aspirations which may be higher.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H.THOMPSON: The Honourable Member says test me. I would be very happy if it is achieved. Do not assume that I would be unhappy if it is achieved because my goal in politics is that as long as I can see something that is happening that is positive, it will get our support. In the political context very often one has to make a decision that there are initiatives that one is going to support because they are overall in the interest of the economy, in the interest of the society, in the interest of the state as a whole. We do not have that problem. I would be very happy if it does it. I only give that as an example because that is new. There has never been a Ministry of Social Transformation before. But if all you are going to do is give the Minister that collection of departments which has existed for the past twenty years with a budget and ask him just to oversee what other Ministers were overseeing before, then we will not achieve social transformation and it is no point giving it that label.

The Government must be careful, as I have said, unless it is willing to devise and put before the people of Barbados that grand vision and strategy to take this country a step forward that it does not fall into that trap which I am noticing, internationally....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. He is making a very valid point which would be a very important stricture were it not for the fact that a report which I will label the Roett/Joseph Report to transform the social sector has already been prepared and it is to become the subject for the work of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Sir. We have not just created a Ministry, there is a report with 110 different recommendations. This is the last year in which the House will see the Ministry's budget in the form in which it sees it. He should take that into account, Sir, because that exists and has already been the subject of our discussion as a Party.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Fair enough and I assume that Hopefully during the Estimates we will get a chance to discuss that. That is just one area and do not forget there has not been a new Minister of Community Development or Social Services in Barbados who has not had the benefit of recommendations similar to those in the Roett Report because when I became Minister of Community Development, I discovered that for the previous ten years that all of those agencies had been meeting the same way to come up with a way to rationalise social services. That is something different to social transformation.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point that I want to make is that the Government has said, this is its objective. We need to pin the Government down for the purposes of accountability. We also need to be able to identify what institutions are going to undertake the social transformation in Barbados. That is one area and there may be many others. There is the area of the Fair Trading Commission.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Just not in those areas. I am still waiting to see the energy policy. Government must be held accountable to some set of objectives in relation to the energy policy. It is not what the Honourable Member for St. Peter talks about rate of return and so on because if I had the great fortune that he had to have been able to close that chapter of Barbados' history, I would have closed it too. That is well known. It is* what was to happen in the energy sector post Mobil. I do not know - I do not think the public of Barbados yet knows what the post Mobil scenario will be in relation to the energy in Barbados. For example, the Democratic Labour Party felt very strongly, my recollection is that it was documented, but the Honourable Member for St. Peter only goes to certain files. He does not go to the files he should be going for and I remember in a debate in this Chamber in 1995 he attacked me for writing my own Cabinet papers. I used to write them myself because it was necessary for me to reduce in writing and refine what my policy as Minister was. I am not waiting for anybody. It may go down the line for people to refine it and look at it... 3.10p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But, the staff to my mind cannot deal with those first principles, and if you are dealing with a new area of policy, it is better for the Minister to start the ball rolling.

Others may look at it and may change their views but I would think and clarify that in my mind. We came to a very firm determination then about the energy sector in Barbados and the fact that the rate of return which Mobil was enjoying consistently as a result of the guarantees that the Government gave it that on its relinquishing of that arrangement, that that is an area of economic activity which should be in the hands of Barbadians. The rate of return was sufficiently high to make it an extremely attractive investment for the average citizen. I was hoping that as part of the new economic arrangement in Barbados, we would have seen an energy policy in Barbados that would have seen the importation and distribution of those products as an area of activity with large participation.

I am not talking about the Government because there is a difference again which I think needs to be made. The Government can promote a brand new public company, list it on the Securities Exchange of Barbados in which the citizens of this country can invest, just as they were able to invest in CIBC and in the Life of Barbados recently. This to my mind would have been an area of activity that would have even more significant economic returns.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, maybe, but there are some companies that start from scratch.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would like to know what the Government's energy policy is in that regard.

So what we are seeing then from Government is this approach in which these labels are being attached, but the flesh of the policies which are being implemented is not being brought to the attention of this Chamber for the kind of debate and discussion which I think is necessary. Therefore, what the Government is asking us to do is to allow them to lead us by faith, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter ended his speech, but what we need are the nuts and bolts and we also need to know what the Government's overall vision is.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these Estimates do not reveal the extent to which Government's poverty programme in Barbados has been designed, that there are certain clear objectives in relation to that policy and that these are the institutions that are going to implement it. And, the reason why that is important and it would be helpful to the Minister too, is because you can only judge the Minister's success if he tells you what his objectives are.

Citizens of Barbados who want to benefit from the programme can only feel that they are being fairly and justly treated if the Minister from the outset invests in the institutions that are going to carry out that programme, values of fairness to all - values in which public service is genuinely going to be given and so on.

The House must be aware of these things and what is happening in my view, Sir, is that the Minister in relation to these Estimates, would have given us a broad sweep of policies. And during the course of the year money is often provided by the House, some is provided in the Estimates too, but we do not have that important background from either the Ministers and their presentations or from the Government as part of its grand design of what its strategy and vision are to take Barbados into the 21st Century.

We agreed, though reluctantly, to a youth policy which would have seen some young people called 'Youth Commissioners'...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...But unleashed on the public, no terms of reference, no design of a youth programme so you could see how those people...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is using pejorative language. To say "unleashed on the public", Sir, is to really speak of public

officers with a sense of misapprobation, which I do not think is worthy of this debate. To unleash something on the public is a pejorative concept that collides with the Standing Orders that restrict us from speaking in that pejorative way.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please continue.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Again, the Opposition only had eight Members, now we only have two, but that does not mean that we will speak less or that our voices will not resonate as strongly. We would have gone along on the basis of faith that there was a new policy in place to see these Youth Commissioners taking over part of the role and responsibility that once were vested in the Community Development Department of undertaking a survey of the needs of the youths in this country and then moving ahead.

I, in the last Estimates spoke to the Minister, I am going to speak to her again about the Youth Commissioner in St. John. Something in my view has to be done about the way in which these policies are brought to the House and introduced without the public of Barbados being given an idea how they have been conceptualised and the way in which these institutions are going to work for their benefit.

So the Government of Barbados now by 1999 during these Estimates Debates has acted as if on 20th January, 1999 all it got was an oil change and that nothing else would have propelled the Minister of Finance to come to this Chamber today...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said that all you think happened on the 20th January 1999 is that the Government got an oil change. It was like a car pulling up in a service station and all it got was an oil change.

But with increased horsepower you have more responsibilities because you have a speed limit.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do not mind that. It is the bicycle that can negotiate the short corners and the alleyways and you can stay off the highway and avoid the dangers.

But anyway the point I want to make is that the Government would need to understand that we are moving into an era in which there are going to be significant changes which will affect all Barbadians and this debate is a serious debate. You are moving into the year 2000 and the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that this is going to be a unique challenge, or a window of transition for the people of this country.

So what are the broad key points that these Estimates should look at? The Minister of Finance should have given us a very clear indication of the extent to which he perceives global markets and the global culture as a whole are going to have a direct impact on the Barbados economy with an indication of specific policies and institutions which he is going to put in place to deal with these issues.

I will give you an example of the shortcomings of the Minister's address in that regard. While he may have looked at very selective areas, one of the greatest challenges, I reiterate, to the global culture and the global marketplace is going to come from its impact on workers. And a Government that has not yet started to address that problem, and I do not know why the Government has not actively addressed it - and we had a debate about it already at CBC during the election and I indicated how strongly I felt. It is nothing to do with what the Unions signed as part of their international obligations because this question of labour mobility which again is part of the orthodoxy of the international institutions, and which is going to characterize the labour force, post, even now, the full onrush of global trading and the global culture. 3.20p.m.

It is something we have to look at. It impacts on the obligation of the employer to fund things like pensions, health benefits, unemployment benefits and severance, because invariably labour is going to be rented from a pool.

If you have a skill, it does not mean that you are going to trace a project from start to finish. The particular skill that you have will be purchased, brought to bear on the production process in some way and then you will go back into that pool, like milking cows on a morning, when you extracted all the milk the cow goes back and fortunately there is a farmer who takes care of the cow and feeds him and does that.

In the global culture, many professions, many unskilled workers and skilled workers are going to be thrown openly to the vicissitudes of the marketplace.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is it. We talk about that. The probability of severance is going to be needed to take care of that. The way in which you are going to be able to design a health programme for every worker irrespective of whether he has a contractual relationship with an employer that has some permanence to it.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well I hope we do. But I want you as the Leader, this is my charge to the Honourable

Member for St. Peter, not to look at globalization only from the perspective of the private sector. Traditional that is, traditional. Because we also talk about it as if the private sector today is what it was ten years ago.

But I assume that some of the measures which the Government introduced, some of them would have created some new entrance into the private sector who are now using different skills and who are organizing differently to how there were ten years ago.

Everything is changing, and therefore what I was looking forward to in this Estimates debate as a result of the mandate - not of the oil change, the overhaul, the increased horsepower as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said - was a very clear indication of how Government feels globalization is going to affect all aspects of our lives. The Attorney General now has a big headache. If he had a task force on crime which would have told him some of the causes of crime, I am certain they must have told him, that access to images on television can have a very perverting influence on our young people.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, that in it should have had a good influence on them, as they would have seen a leader taking a serious matter and dealing with it. But I know the Honourable Attorney General must know the impact foreign cultures has on us. Accessibility to all the different television channels and forms of violence on television and so on is having an impact on our younger people.

How is it, that the Government of Barbados in 1999 sees us dealing with many of these challenges which are going to come from the global market but more importantly from the global culture?

These things can be done in a very simple way. I cannot tell the Honourable Member for St. Peter how to do it. But I still think that one must have a broad all encompassing view of the impact of it. Money moving around the globe in the wink of an eye as I said. Is the Barbados Minister of Finance, who no matter who he is, has always enjoyed a certain respectability in the international forum, working with other nations in the world, smaller countries like ours to ensure that the international financial institutions have abdicated their responsibility to provide aid and assistance to developing countries?

Since they are not doing that the least they could do is provide for countries like ours a super structure which could deal with those international financiers who are moving money swiftly from one part of the globe to the other.

In other words, a new role for the international institutions in helping protect and provide information to small developing countries about trends that are occurring and influencing decision makers, people who move large sums of money throughout the globe into how they can avoid causing chaos in small countries such as ours.

These are some of the things that I think this debate should focus on. The Honourable Member for St. Peter would certainly receive the support of the Opposition had his presentation today, focus significantly on the broad vision and on the broad sweep of those ideas.

The second point relates to the technological advances. I know that the budget for Edutech as the Honourable Member for St. Peter said has been cut. But it is still necessary in a debate such as this.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well the amounts that will be available. The point is that the resources available for the project are not what was anticipated, which means that in a sense that would retard the pace at which the Ministry of Education and Barbados as a whole is able to get on stream a project which has the potential if properly managed and executed to provide the high quality of education that young people need in Barbados and not just young but I mean even in terms of retraining persons in the work force all ready to cope with the demands of technological change.

Now, even though you could phase these projects to make sure that they are implemented in an effective manner, we are running up against time constraints in projects such as these and it is important for Government, assuming as I say that the project is effectively designed or rather I should put it another way.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You have heard me cursing EduTech. I have never addressed the issue of EduTech yet, I am addressing the question of high quality education for our citizens.

If you call it EduTech, you can call it Computech. You can call it Owentech if you want. I am talking about the concept.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well I do not know because I have not addressed my mind to that aspect of it and there are Members who may have information that I do not have.

I am talking about the need for high quality education which includes technological education for the citizens of Barbados particularly our young citizens.

Therefore, that is very important and the Government needs to my mind as part of its design and discussion of the 1999 Estimates, to tell us what some of those key elements are of the programme and the extent to which it is going to assist Barbadians in coping with these major technological advances that are occurring throughout the world.

The Government needs to do that, I do not think that it has been effectively done, if it is part of that vision that the Government has for Barbadians. It is important for another reason. We have invested a lot of money in our young people. We have increased their aspirations but the kind of jobs that the Barbados economy is providing at this time do not meet those aspirations.

Any Government in office in 1999 must be concerned to provide the good sustainable jobs that I assume are part of the move towards full employment and that meet the aspirations of our young people.

There is no point training young people to the level of secondary education and giving them technical and other skills and then telling them that what we expect is a ten-year construction boom in which their input will be at the level of a labourer on a construction site.

I am not saying that work of any kind is not good, because I started at age 11 sweeping floors in Furniture Ltd., so I do not encourage young people to feel that they should not work and start somewhere. 3.30p.m.

You do not start at the top in anything and despite your qualifications during the Great Depression, during the World Wars people had to accept tasks that were below their ability. At that age not many people would give you a job but I wanted to work. All my brothers were out working and I did not want to stay home alone. You went to work where you wanted to work.

What I am saying though is that Government needs to identify where those good sustainable jobs are going to come from to match the investment in terms of education which is being put in and we need to hear from the Honourable Member for St. Peter and from his Government on the extent to which the investment in EduTech in advanced technological changing of any type is going to be matched by an economy that is producing the kinds of jobs in which our young people are meeting their aspirations. That is why I made the point at the beginning that we have achieved a lot but we have not done everything that needs to be done. There is still a need for that kind of focus if not you will find a situation where, apart from those who refuse to take those jobs in the construction sector and remain on the street corners you will find a high level of disaffection and so on in the work place.

The third point which is very important, and which Members on that Side obviously recognise is important because they now have a Family Services Section in the Ministry of Social Transformation which is a very important section, I hope the Minister will invest that section with the priority and focus that it needs because, despite what we may feel, the changes that are taking place in relation to the family are also having a very profound effect on the Barbadian society, and on the world, so let us start.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I know you implemented what you heard. You attacked it and then implemented it which is a typical strategy that the Honourable Member for St. Peter adopts so that when he introduces it people will say well he did not introduce what you were talking about because he did not like that, He has a better version. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I am certain, would have bene fitted even if slightly from a little of my tuition on the subject and he can bring that to bear on the issue for the next few years.

Let us not fool ourselves that this represents one of the greatest challenges. It does. I have heard it in here when in one debate we talked about the changing role of women in society and the Honourable Member for the City said; "That is nothing new. When she grew up her mother was working too." But it is new because when her mother was out to work she may have had a grandmother, or an aunt, or an uncle, or somebody as part of the extended family with whom she could comfortably leave her children who would impart the kinds of values as part of the family system everybody acknowledged were important. In this day and age parents do not have that kind of benefit.

Many of us have moved away from the villages in which our families originated leaving relatives behind in conditions worse than the conditions that we live in. Many may not want to take their children back to those conditions. That often happens but, worse than that, that entire element of dislocation into the new Heights, Terraces and so on in Barbados has created a form of community alienation. All of this is impacting in terms of the kind of young people that society is producing. Therefore, the Government needs not just to tell us, as I say, that it has established this Ministry, but we need to have an idea of the extent to which its policy design and the institutions which are going to carry out the policies can really reform and help in family relationships in promoting the extended family and non-traditional aspects of family relationships.

I say that for the benefit of my friend for St. Michael East who we had a little discussion on that and I have never ever promoted one form of family relationship, neither in nuclear, in wedlock nor out of wedlock. A man who may have no blood relation may find that a particular family lends the kind of support and identity to him that is necessary, and people find comfort and succour in a whole range of social relationships. We, need to promote all of them that we view are healthy and helpful. That is not to say, as the Head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Barbados has said and written in a recent book, I cannot remember the name of it, a lot of copies were burnt up in a fire, that it is not important to, in a sense, design a model arrangement in which fathers recognise their responsibility, mothers recognise their responsibility, children recognise their responsibility, and they also know on the corresponding side what their rights are.

I think the Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social Transformation invested as would the Democratic Labour Party if it was elected on January 20, 1999 with the correct resources and policy design...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, we said establish a Ministry, I think it was of Family Affairs. I do not remember the expression.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I had to lay yours last time so you can lay mine. I will give you that opportunity.

It is very important because our children must not be raised in a value free environment.

The Government of Barbados can only execute a successful policy and philosophy if it is able to develop citizens who have a certain level of patriotism, who have certain values and who come from sound community or social arrangements. That is very important. Not enough has been done about it and I am saying that in the last four years, and even before that, not enough attention was being paid to this issue until you have a situation where, in a frenzied attempt to deal with the social problems that we faced, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has moved into a situation of almost retreat.

The issues of crime have to be fought at the level of their causes and the Government of Barbados needs to identify the causes of crime, the causes of deviance in Barbados...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Let it be recorded that the first Government which ever attempted to study the causes of crime scientifically was the Barbados Labour Party Government when we set up the Task Force on Crime Prevention in 1994. It has reported. It is working with Government Agencies and its recommendations are being implemented.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point taken. Continue, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But I said that you had a Task Force and you did a study. I never said you needed to study them. What you need to do is to deal with the causes of crime, not study them. You have the report there. I know you had people, as I understand it, who were designing some nice advertisements at about the time of the election but they found our advertisements were more powerful and they put that on hold for the time being.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let me warn the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that we have to be extremely careful because not only at the level of propaganda by the Barbados Labour Party, but beyond that, at a very real level, the young people in Barbados interpret anti-crime and anti-violence messages to be anti-young people messages. Therefore, Sir, opportunists in the Barbados Labour Party went out during the last election campaign and told the young people that because we said we felt strongly, as I assume you do. about drug pushers, because we said we felt strongly about sex offenders, because we felt strongly about these things, that we were going to lock up young people. That was spread on the ground, not officially. 3.40p.m.

The point is that it is a very serious matter and it was spread on the ground that our anti-crime message was an attempt to lock up young people for smoking herb and that kind of thing and we were stopping them from liming on the streets and encouraging police brutality. A lot of that was said. I do not know the origin of it. It could have been a skillfully designed campaign.

What your task force on crime needs to look at, and I urge the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member For St. Thomas to recognise that an anti-crime message in itself is often viewed by young people as being antagonistic to them. So we have to go even deeper and find out why they feel that their basic activities, just basic liming and so on, that they feel the society views that as criminal and try as we move on to ensure the integration of more of our young people into responsible roles in the community, -including the responsible roles in the family, responsible roles in the country and the level of patriotism because, as I said, no Government can execute a programme in Barbados which your young aspirants view as antagonistic to their interests and the only way to get them back on board

is to involve the society in a process of reintroducing the important values in young people.

When we started the Youth Service we started with a very strong component of values and they may very well be there but that only captured two hundred or so young people. There needs to be a way to get more of that.

The fourth point that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to address, and I am very surprised that he did not, is, in view of the constitutional report, and I am not asking him to prejudge the will of the House in relation to new legislation or whatever will come on board but, obviously that Constitution Commission and the Barbados Labour Party seem to have been suggesting to the public of Barbados that in accordance with international trends, in accordance with those views generally, that there is a need for a change in politics and by that I mean where communities can do more to solve their own problems at the one end and at the other end that Governments are going to be more involved in international cooperation on broader issues and those two new perspectives are going to tax Government resources and Government's ability.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to tell us how the Government of Barbados, short of reintroducing local government is going to introduce measures that communities in Barbados can be re-empowered. The reason why this is important, and again one of the failings to my mind of initiatives such as the Youth Commissioners and some of the other initiatives is that their objective should be to get out there and build much stronger communities but the people in Barbados who are doing that are the police. They are doing more than anybody else. I maintain that and that is why it is not only Public Health Inspectors. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter should recognise this. The role of policemen in Barbados has changed significantly and they have more community responsibility.

I had to call the Station Sergeant at District "C" recently to ask him. I do not want anybody with a gun.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When I am not at community events like football the fellows get a bit rowdy. I cannot call the Community Development Department because they say they finish work at 4.30 and go home. I cannot call on the Youth Commissioners and I will have to talk with the Honourable Member about that. He does not feel that it is his responsibility. Who do I call on in my community to just put in a little presence?

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ... You may be able to call yours but I will explain to the Minister why I cannot call the one in St. John. So I had to call District "C" and ask the Police Force because organising the football team is a good idea if the police will get on a bicycle and just pass through because despite that same point that I made to you about the view of young people in relation to an anti-crime and an anti-violence message at the end of the day they still do have respect for the police community programme whether it is the Police force or whether the neighbourhood watches or programmes like that.

The Government of Barbados has had four years to introduce the kind of measures either through the Youth Department or through the Community Development Department to get community development workers out there at the times when communities need them and that is after 4.30 involved in the activities, extra-curricula and others which communities are involved in.

I am thoroughly dissatisfied and I want to know what is in these Estimates to reintroduce a greater level of involvement by the Government of Barbados in building community programmes and in helping people come to a solution to the community problems that they face. The Democratic Labour Party felt very strongly and it formed part of our manifesto pledges that we would involve every conceivable agency. Do not underestimate its importance because it would be a significant saving to Government if it caii get vibrant communities going again without re-intrcducing local government. It can be done and at a fraction of the cost of putting in place a local government superstructure in Barbados. That is the first point.

The second point is that governments like the Government of Barbados at another level in terms of politics are going to be involved more and more in international cooperation with small states like ours. It is a scenario that never existed before. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to tell us more about the resources that have been committed by his government to this new approach to politics in the next decade as is likely to occur.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Barbados Labour Party...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I will talk to the Minister about it. You are not going to sidetrack me on that. I have documented it. The last Estimates we had this debate and the Minister did promise to summon the persons and speak to them, so she and I will have words because I assume she is accounting to the Chamber for that function.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Barbados Labour Party would have done, despite what the Right Honourable

Member for St. Peter said, what was necessary to win the last election. It had a very ambitious capital works programme. It did spend money - don't fool yourself - on a very significant level of expenditure on capital works in the past two years which meant that when the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he did not have elections on his mind he actually had election on his mind even earlier than we thought he had them on his mind. He had a substantial capital works programme over the past two fiscal .years in Barbados. It had been skillful in its timing of the elections before many of these significant issues that we should be debating today have come onto the agenda. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has the luxury after an election... 3.50p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:... after an election of discussing with this Chamber those threats to the economic future of Barbados which, as I have said, he does not have to worry about the impact of those words on his election fortune. The timing has been skilful. The point is that that does not mean the matters do not need to be dealt with. They still need to be dealt with and the Government has been very adroit in neutralising the Opposition in some cases to its policies or the Opposition generally - the intellectual thinkers in Barbados.

What next? This is the question that we are asking in this debate. The Government cannot simply continue patching holes and plastering sores and stitching up wounds. It has to put before the people of Barbados that larger design and it has to deal with some of these significant issues which we on this Side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have raised. What therefore, can the Honourable Member for St. Peter tell me are the core values of his administration? When he sits down with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West what will he tell him are the philosophical underpinnings of this administration? I hope he will get a chance to address that in this debate. Sir, even though that should come from the leader. What are the values that the Members of this Chamber share on how power in Barbados should be used? That is another question which the Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to ask. What project is Barbados as a country on in 1999? What is this project that we are on and that we are working towards and in that regard what direction are we heading in? That cannot just come from telling us how we are going to manage the next fiscal year. It still needs for the Government of Barbados to tell us what is its medium term strategy. That is where the Honourable Member for St. Peter could have spent a little more time identify ing what the right mix of...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, he may do it in the Budget but I still feel that it would have been good to do it now because it will help those new Members of the Chamber and the people of Barbados which is more important, to understand how we are going to forge ahead. How are we going to achieve that project? More importantly, what are the threats to the achievement of that project? How will we know when we have reached where we are going if we do not know the direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which we are going? Simply because we have economic stability and have achieved eight successive years of economic growth, what next for Barbados?

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what will happen when we get there? What does the average Barbadian...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to tell us because he has a mandate. What should the average Barbadian feel like when we have reached that project?

That brings me to deal with a couple of very important issues some of which were raised by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. They were only raised but not thoroughly dealt with because of maybe time constraints. The first one is the question of state intervention and the extent to which state intervention is going to achieve the goals that the Government has set out, even the limited goals that it has set out in the particular Budget debate. What does these Estimates say about the role of the traditional private sector in Barbados. Once again, I ask the question. To what extent can the Honourable Member for St. Peter rely on those traditional notions of the definition and role of the private sector in Barbados?

We just had a debate in here a week ago in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter outlined incentives which were put in place to benefit the people of Barbados as a whole in preparing the country for the onslaught on Russia, I should say, of globalised trade, the removal I assume, of all the barriers to trade *etcetera.* Those incentives were not met with the kind of reaction that was desirable. This is the same problem that the Democratic Labour Party, in my view, had in 1986 and it has been a consistent problem in relation to dealing with the traditional private sector in Barbados. All of those incentives have a cost. In a sense the incentives themselves represent a form of state intervention which the Government needs to cost and let the public know what kinds of benefits and opportunities have been presented to those in the private sector in whose future the creation of jobs and expansion of enterprises and so on is entrusted. That to my mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very very important.

The second point is the issue of full employment. Again, Sir, in recent times we have been hearing a lot about full employment. We did not hear anything about it today.

The last time I heard about it was in Antigua in a general election. It seems that is only something you hear about at election time. Outside of election time, the issue of full employment assumes less significance. The point is that the Government of Barbados has never yet - this Government has never yet identified what its job creation strategy for Barbados is. Never has it laid a document or produced a document, never has it put together a clear statement and vision on how it will achieve its job creation strategy in Barbados. Full employment in our view must mean sustainable good jobs.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter retreating from what I would consider to be the best definition of full employment just before the election while addressing the private sector or the architects of Barbados, in which he said that he intends to sustain the construction boom in Barbados for ten years at least. He can see it going on for ten years...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Whatever it was - ten years. I want to know whether the theories of full employment as enunciated by the Barbados Labour Party hinge only on an extension of that construction boom over the next ten years.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, I cannot stop the Government. You have 25 people to speak next and Iwant to hear from somebody on that Side what the elements of that full employment policy are and where the details of that full employment strategy can be found. It is very important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it cannot be implemented on a business as usual approach. It cannot be implemented by a Government that feels, as I have said, that it only went into a service station to get an oil change. It has to be a project because I will go even further than that. Other than when we were in the programme with the international institution in which we put out a medium term economic strategy and identified clearly where we felt jobs would be created. There was a debate about it. To a large extent whether you dispute that what we thought would have happened, happened or not, the point is that we laid on the table our perspectives on how those jobs would be created.

It was the first time - this is a fact - in the economic history of Barbados that an actual job strategy was identified. You may...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir, the Member is misleading the House. In 1986 immediately after the Democratic Labour Party's victory, there was a Task Force on employment that did in fact create a document that was laid in this House. He is misrepresenting by saying that he was the first person as Minister of Finance to ever produce a document. Also, Sir, in 1996 this administration laid a medium term economic framework as a document of this House and in that document you will see clearly outlined the elements of Government's employment strategies. In both Manifestos the matter is spoken to at great length. He is misleading the House with his facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Also, Sir, in 1988 this administration laid a medium term economic framework as a document of this House and in that document, Sir, you will see clearly outlined the elements of the Government's employment strategy and in both Manifestoes, Sir, the matter is spoken to at great length, so he is misleading the House with his facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. 4.00 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, one of the first debates that took place in here was a clash between the Honourable Member for St. Peter and the then young Member for St. John.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We both agreed that the Task Force unemployment in 1986 was not worth the paper that it was written on.

Asides.

Mr D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not a hypocrite. If you want me to reiterate what I said, I said it then and I stand by it now. It created some enemies for me among older respected Barbadians and some of them hold it against me. But the point is that I took the opportunity to read it from cover to cover. That was not a job strategy and in 1996, yes, the Government did publish a medium term economy strategy and what I am saying is as a component of the 1993 plan was what ended up being a part that one could detach, which eventually was designated, 'The 5-4-3 Plan'. Now people may have pooh- poohed it, but the point is that you were able to detach from that medium term economic strategy being planned.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That was not any of that, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter can go and check the records and see. But all of that is irrelevant, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What is important is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter as a trained economist with a good team of economic advisors behind him, had an obligation in my view. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason why I said any Minister of Finance in the context of Barbados as we know

it today, in the context of the private sector of Barbados - the traditional private sector, needs to send very clear signals on how that Government is going to achieve its job strategy.

The Barbados Labour Party has adopted a strategy that once you lay the basic economic framework, there can be any outcome. In fact I would go as far as to say that the Honourable Member for'St. Peter hardly expected that we could have brought the unemployment rate in the third quarter of 1998 down to just under 12%.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John will remember, Sir, that I do not create these in the first instance on the pledge that by the pursuit of the correct policies that unemployment in this country, Sir, could be brought down to the negligible proportions.

Mr. D, J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter did believe that then and if you did not establish very clearly what your goal was, you can take credit for anything that happens thereafter. The point is that the Government never sat out - unless the Honourable Member for St. Peter is going to tell this House that he was so precise that he actually acknowledges that he did promise to create 30 000 jobs in Barbados, That will be precision, but he is not going to accept that, so let us not go for that. What I want to say is that I still think that for the purposes of economic planning...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, Sir, a lot of the statements that the Honourable Member for St. John seeks to enter into the record as facts, are not facts. This Government has outlined its employment strategies in its Manifesto and in its Budget.

In 1994 I outlined a framework for employment creation together with the relevant measures, Sir, in response to the Budget. I have done it over and over again and it is absolutely incorrect for the Honourable Member for St. John to say that this matter has never been addressed. It has been addressed over and over again in documents and in speeches.

I respectfully suggest to you that the Honourable Member is in breach of the rules of the House to the extent that he is misleading the House, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I think that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is in breach of the rules for concealing that plan, whether it was ambitious or not in all of this so-called documentation that he has brought to the House. Because, there will be nobody on that Side or on this Side since the Honourable Member became Minister of Finance who has ever accused him of bringing no unemployment plans.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I insist that it is in breach of the rules of the House for a Member to state that what has been done has not been done, because he is by that act, misleading the House.

His only employment creation plan as you will be aware, Sir, was in 1994 when he said that he had a bus fare and lunch money approach. Now, I dissociate from that entirely, but I have consistently brought to this House, documents representing Government's employment plans and it cannot now enter the same House of Assembly saying that the Government has never done so. That is misleading the House and I am asking you to rule.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your point has been taken. Could you please continue?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying and I repeat that the Government has not put before the people of Barbados its strategy for the creation of full employment.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter may have interpreted what he put before the House as a strategy for his own purposes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, because you talk about an issue does not mean that what you talk about, can be elevated to a strategy. Because you talk about an issue does not mean that it can be elevated...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to rise on a point of order, Sir. These Hansard records will reflect themselves as part of the history of this country and I will not have it written into Hansard that I was in this House when a Member said that I, as Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and as Head of Government has never brought to this House or elaborated a plan for employment creation. It is not true. He may want to say that he does not regard it in his mind as a plan that he thought should have been brought. That is a different issue. But it is inaccurate for that to be said, and these records are supposed to be serious. Ten and fifteen years from now, people who are riot here will pick up these things and unless they are controverted, that will become what is accepted as wisdom.

I am therefore asking, Sir, for the Honourable Member to recast what he is saying. He may, just like how we disagreed with what was contained in the Task Force report. A former Prime Minister who represented St. John felt that he brought to this House a plan for employment creation. He may want to put it in a different context, but I am speaking to the public record, it is not true to say that a plan for creating jobs has not been brought to this House. And, I would want the Honourable Member to respect the truth.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you rephrase what you said early on?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I have delivered myself of what my view is. The Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot tell me how to interpret a Budget that he has delivered in here. I put my own construction on it and my view is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has not yet been able to produce to this Chamber or to the people of Barbados a clear-cut strategy for the attainment of full employment in Barbados.

What has essentially happened is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter, like other previous Ministers of Finance - this is not new, boasts that he has read widely all of the speeches of the former Prime Minister Errol Barrow. 4.10p.m.

In 1971 the Democratic Labour Party outlined, Sir, a full employment strategy for Barbados and by 1975 the Government pointed out that because of the economic crisis, the fuel crisis and so on, it was unable to attain this full employment strategy.

Then we heard about full employment again in 1981 under the Barbados Labour Party Administration in which they said they had created twenty-five thousands jobs, but no twenty-five thousand jobs were created. I believe that when put to the test the Government then retreated from that idle boast.

Then, Sir, we started in 1994 and no sooner than the Government got into office, people were trying to mislead the Honourable Member for St. Peter that he had already created ten thousand jobs, but since there was no strategy in place, it was possible for anybody to fool you, that you had created ten thousand jobs. But if you had a designed programme for the creation of jobs with goals and objectives which the public of Barbados could look at and see and say this is what is attainable, nobody could have fooled the Minister of Finance that he had created ten thousand jobs in a year.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. My administration, Sir, in 1994 inherited a simple employment creation strategy that was enunciated on the Floor of this Parliament by the Honourable Member for St. John to the effect that the way towards dealing with it was by busfares and lunch money solution.

We have systematically put before this House, Sir, by a document, plans and strategies for the reduction of unemployment to its present level. The Member, Sir, is making statements that are untruthful and merely by representing them as his opinion does not stop them from being untruthful and misleading to the public records. So I am asking that those remarks should be withdrawn.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I ask you what statement were you referring to?

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: That this Government has never laid before this House, Sir, any plan for reduction of unemployment, Sir. That is not true. The fact that he does not agree with it, does not mean that it was not laid before the House, Sir.

It is like saying, Sir, that I have not laid the Estimates before Parliament, Sir. He may not agree with what is in the Estimates but he cannot say that they have not been laid.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Anyhow. Please continue Honourable Member.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, it is amazing that the Honourable Member for St. Peter can get up in this Chamber and argue that I am misleading the House by providing information that is not so. To support his argument, he is saying that the only thing I brought to the House was a plan to create jobs on the basis of busfare and lunch money.

When the Honourable Member for St. Peter was the person who attacked the plan which the Democratic Labour Party had known as the 5-4-3 plan in 1994 as part of the medium term economic strategy.

If you go back and read the strategy you will see that the 5-4-3 plan, a reduction by 5% points in the first year of the plan, by a further 4%, it is also in that plan you go and read the structural adjustment document.

Sir, that medium term economic strategy had a section written, by a former deputy governor of the Central Bank in which he pointed out how ten thousand jobs could be created, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the informatics sector alone in Barbados.

In the following reply to the budget the Honourable Member for St. Peter delivering himself of ten things that could be done immediately in the Barbados economy adopted the position that ten thousand jobs could be created in the informatics sector in accordance with the same document, I assume, that had been presented by the economist a former deputy governor of the Central Bank.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The governor, a Mr. Delisle Worrell, not writing in any DLP government giving a speech, Sir, referred to the potential for job creation in the informatics sector and in a speech in this House, I referred to his speech, not t6 any document reference, or of a reference such as that to which the Honourable Member for St. John is making allusion at this time. Therefore to suggest that I supported a DLP job plan, is to suggest, Sir, that I supported a fiction.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point has been taken. Could you please continue?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The speech which the deputy governor of the Central Bank made was completely consistent with his view documented in the same structural adjustment document. He wrote the entire section on informatics in the medium term economic strategy in which he pointed out that ten thousand jobs could be created in the informatics sector in Barbados. That was part of the job strategy which the Democratic Labour Party had identified.

So, Sir, even if you were to go as far as to accept the position by the Barbados Manufacturing Association that the giving of $5 000 000 in concessions to that sector in 1994 would have created fifteen thousand jobs as the then President of the Barbados Manufacturing Association said.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: At least he put a plan, even if he did not attain it. He put an unattainable plan before the public of Barbados because those concessions, those very small amounts of concessions, certainly did not create fifteen thousand jobs in the Barbados economy and probably did not even create a third of the jobs that he projected.

What we are simply saying, Sir, and I do not know why the Honourable Member for St. Peter is so hot under the collar on this subject, is that as an economic planner true to his profession, true to all he said about economics he has a duty and an obligation in my view, to set out before this Chamber how the Government is going to attain the objective of full employment in the Barbados economy and how the Government of Barbados is going to create good sustainable jobs without adopting a business as usual approach.

The next point, Sir, is the question of social cohesiveness which is a very important ingredient of the future of Barbados.

The Minister of Finance needs to understand that right after the General Elections, almost every single candidate for the Barbados Labour Party who was interviewed on television outlined that their major focus would be to start to deal with the problems of violence among young people in Barbados and the building of communities in Barbados.

Despite the fact that they pointed out that this would be their priority, and they were on our television sets so we would have heard them, the Minister of Finance...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. I have before me the medium term macro-economic strategy presented in this House in May, 1996 on page 13, Sir, Employment Generation, 5a, Sir, of Government's approach and Government's generation to be multifaceted in what are included - and it lists all the various qualities, Sir.

The Honourable Member therefore, must not go on record as saying to this House that we have never prepared a document to this House setting out an employment strategy by this Government, Sir. That is what I am trying to get across, Sir, this is misleading the record and all that reference, Sir, has to be withdrawn because people will in future pick up this debate and will not remember that this document exists and it sets out a strategy for employment creation, Sir, and I am serious about it.

The Member can say that he did not see it as a serious document but we presented it before this House, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please withdraw that part of what you said earlier on.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What is there to withdraw? Tell me what you want me to withdraw.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That this was never presented to this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What is it that he never presented, Sir, I do not know.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The employment strategy.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If the Honourable Member wish to be held to that document as an employment strategy, Sir, I withdraw it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Could you please proceed?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When the Honourable Member for St. Peter presented that medium term economic strategy it was as a result of parliamentary questions as well as questions by the Democratic Labour Party consistently about what the Government medium term economic strategy was. 4.20 p.m.

All that document does is outline in a very brief paragraph in each sector the policy that the Government is going to pursue. That is all it does. If the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter believes that is an employment strategy then we will never attain full employment in Barbados, we will never attain the good sustainable jobs that this economy needs and we certainly will not be functioning in an environment in which we are seeking to meet the aspirations of new entrants into the job market in this country. That is my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Therefore I could no

more consider that to be an economic strategy for the creation of jobs in Barbados than I could consider anything that the Honourable Member for St. Peter said today.

I say that the Government must have an obligation, assuming that it treats its mandate seriously, to tell this House what strategies it is going to put in place to create full employment in the Barbados economy.

Sir, it is not just a question of good sustainable jobs. It is beyond that. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about the low level of wages in the agricultural sector in Barbados. We had a debate nearly two years ago in which the then Leader of the Minority Opposition as he was called, the then Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, brought a Resolution in this Chamber calling for the introduction of a minimum wage across sectors in Barbados.

My recollection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that all three political parties agreed basically that the introduction of a minimum wage in Barbados was something that was desirable and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter appears to have forgotten that the three parties agreed to that. There seemed to be so many other pressing issues on the Government's,agenda and we are saying once again that the way to deal with the low wages in the agricultural sector is by the introduction... Not just the agricultural sector, in the informatic sector in Barbados there are workers who are going to work and going home on a Friday evening with less than $90 a week as a pay package. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter does not seem in my view to view the minimum wage as a serious solution to that particular problem.

If it is in the manifesto then it is something that in relation to this Estimates debate the Government as part of its overall strategy should outline.

I was not on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I moved on from that to the issue of social cohesiveness and I was mentioning that after the election almost every successful Barbados Labour Party candidate pointed out that their focus, consequent on the 1999 election, was going to be on the elimination of violence and crime among young people and the issue of building communities in Barbados.

Therefore, again, I wish to stress that the Government of Barbados, particularly in this Estimates debate, needs to be very clear in those policies which it is going to put in place to deal with the causes of crime in Barbados and to deal with the problems of violence among young people. That is very important and I think the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has an obligation now that the election debate has subsided to start to deal with those serious issues.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member earlier made reference to what was contained in the DLP structural adjustment strategy. This is a document of the House, Sir, and in no place in this structural adjustment strategy does it set out any matter pertaining to employment creation nor a 5-4-3 strategy. The 5-4-3 strategy was the DLP manifesto and that is why I am telling the Honourable Member that he must be careful about how he speaks. He does not mean it intentionally, I think, but it is in the manifesto not this document. A 5-4-3 strategy is not in this document.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is a structural adjustment document as I said. The section which dealt with jobs created in the informatics sector was written by the former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank and it is in that document that he sets out how 10 000 jobs can be created in the informatics sector. That is what the document is all about. That structural adjustment document sets it out clearly. The 5-4-3 plan is simply what one might call the culmination of all of the inputs from the strategy which arose from structural adjustment and what the Democratic Labour Party thought was possible leading into the 1994 general election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us make it very clear. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, despite his criticisms of that plan, would have found that in relation to the unemployment statistics in Barbados that the plan was quite feasible and in fact almost worked down to the last percentage point. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter sought to give the impression that we were basing it on the construction of the Julie 'N building and that kind of thing. We had a whole range of investments. At that time the Government had been able to attract the highest level of direct investments in the tourism sector up to that time and the Central Bank Report points it out very clearly.

I reiterate that that section of the structural adjustment document was prepared by the Deputy Governor and he indicated quite clearly what strategy the Government should use to attract that kind of business to Barbados, and the Government embarked on that strategy. Likewise, in that structural adjustment document you will find a section which dealt with the development of the duty-free sector in Barbados as a means of earning foreign exchange and the creation of jobs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Parry introduced the measures some of which were then criticised by the Barbados Labour Party and which they continue to criticise even though they are often able to benefit from those policies that were implemented and the Honourable Member wants to keep side-tracking me but it brings me very neatly onto the last point in this area that I want to make which is

that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, because of his being so wedded to those traditional definitions of the private sector and public sector that I earlier went into, needs to go on to make the point in this debate that as part of any government strategy to create jobs we agreed with him that you have to expand existing enterprises and create new enterprises but, over and above that, it is important for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter to make the point and reiterate since it is a point on which we share a common viewpoint that businesses in Barbados need to grow and expand to create jobs and that therefore nobody should feel afraid to say this and we do not mean traditional business when we say businesses must expand. We do not live in an era where people still believe that the only area of job creation and the only area of activity in which people's needs can be met is through the public sector. We have to all acknowledge that it is necessary for businesses to be successful.

There are some old politicians and some old economists who are afraid to say that. I think however, that as part of the economic discourse in Barbados that it needs to be made clear that businesses need to be successful to contribute to the economy, to contribute taxes, to create wealth and to generate jobs in our economy.

What we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a government which declines in my view to state very clearly what its policy is in relation to these issues for fear of being held to those policy objectives and this is part of the problem. Nor does the Government define very clearly the institutions which are going to execute whatever policies have been designed in the various areas for fear of being held to a standard of fairness to all in Barbados. For the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas the Manifesto is simply a list of executable policies. I am talking about the broad design of the strategy. The Manifesto seldom sets out what the broad design of the strategy is. 4.30p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yours does not either. If you look at areas like rural development, all you will see is a list of promises to put up more street lights and to build more roads. It does not deal with strategy for increasing rural enterprises in Barbados. It does not deal with a strategy to increase rural prosperity in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Check your Manifesto again. Anybody who reads it will see that it essentially amounts to a shopping list of promises in which the Government says it will make more resources available to businesses in the rural sector.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking about the design of an overall strategy for rural Barbados which is something completely different. I do not expect Manifestos to set that out. That is something that the Minister....

Hon. D. A .C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. Page 27 in the Manifesto. In addition to roads and street lights, we say this:

> "We will continue to provide loans from the Rural Enterprise Fund to assist small entrepreneurs in the development and expansion of their businesses with the objective of generating employment, earning foreign exchange and reducing the import bill.
>
> Undertake sustainable programmes to encourage young people into self-reliance.
>
> Act in concert with both governmental agencies and NGO's to carry out programmes for social and economic development of disadvantaged persons and depressed areas."

It goes beyond street lights and roads.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Honourable Member has done is confirm exactly what I was saying. I am glad that he was so specific as to confirm exactly what I was saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of issues that I think the Estimates need to address. I have listened to many debates in here, including one today in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter outlined new levels of accountability. On this occasion in his presentation, he outlined a new level of accountability, I cannot remember for which kinds of enterprises....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I did not make a note of it but there was accountability that he expected from entities like the Transport Board and he mentioned some others.

We do not oppose that but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel very strongly and I felt it when the Government brought legislation here and the Honourable Member was not in his seat at the time. He was not, I do not think, in Barbados. Legislation was brought to this House to permit the Government of Barbados to underwrite and guarantee loans made to private companies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even when those private companies are owned by Government or particularly where

those private companies are owned by Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problem with that as long as the legislation stipulated that the financial statement of those private companies would be made available to the House along with the Resolution. I say that for the same reason that we have a problem with statutory corporations. The same point that the Honourable Member for St. Peter made about the deficit, private companies in which Government...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That was what the legislation said. In this particular case, if it is a private company owned by Government, there is no requirement to make their audited statements available to the public. If it is a publicly listed company or if it is a public company, it has to have audited statements. In this case, this would be a private company in which Government owns all the shares. A good example would be the BAMC. The BAMC is 100% owned by Government but it is a private company. What I am saying is that on that occasion we approved a guarantee for the GEMS Project.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The House approved the guarantee. At that time I made the point and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will bear me out that attached to the Resolution should be the financials for that company because since it is not a publicly listed company, it is under no obligation. Therefore, this Chamber should not approve, in respect of any private company, a guarantee unless it saw those financials.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The reason why I am saying this is because the House did approve the guarantee in respect of GEMS and I am still not satisfied, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though that debenture may not be a charge on this year's Estimates or may not be provided for, I do not know, because it may be somewhere in there. Even though I see no evidence of expenditure directed at the GEMS Project in this years Estimates it may form or maybe required that Government has to make some resources available in one way or another to that company to assist it at some point in the future even in the medium term. What I am saying at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that we in this Chamber know very little about the GEMS Project. The GEMS Project is a major project. It is a project which takes significant amounts of hotel rooms in Barbados and may take more in the future and puts them into the hands of a company which, at this time, is substantially owned by the Government of Barbados. We would like to know what future ownership arrangements will be put in place, what is going to be the structure of the operations, what potential calls on Government resources are going to be made for its operations? Whether the debenture issue was successful or not? What is the level of Government's commitment to the GEMS Project? We need to know this. I have to accuse the Right Honourable Prime Minister in this particular debate of a sense of political negligence in not dealing more fully with a project of that significance. The Hilton is significant it is true.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The GEMS Project has been the subject of discussion in this House on more than one occasion. To say that the audited financial statements have never been laid in the House is true if only because there has never been audited financial statements before. It has been the subject of much debate in this House. The GEMS Project is one of the few projects where the financials are opened to the whole world. On the Board of the GEMS - I want to make this very clear - sits a former Deputy Prime Minister of the Democratic Labour Party who has access to all the information and a former Prime Minister from this Side. You can believe me when I tell you, Sir, that a Board in this country that has a composition drawn from across the Parties will never have a contract that is secret, an arrangement that is secret nor financial statements that can be secret.

I give the Member the assurance that I take the point of principle that where Government guarantees that a financial statement should be laid. I take that point, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I function at a different level. I would not pervert my relationship with the former Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados by asking him to provide me with information that came into his knowledge as a director of a company. That is not my approach. If the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is *sotto voce* advising me to adopt that approach, that was your undoing.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Therefore, if you are advising me to take that approach, you deserve that. I do not function like that. I am not going to start now. I assume that he was chosen because of his integrity not because he was to feed information to me and therefore the Democratic Labour Party would be compromised because he was chosen. I have never asked him. I do not intend to ask him. He never informed me that he was to become a Director and it is none of my business. All I am asking this Chamber to do is to re-assert the level of financial control that it has. No private company in Barbados is required to provide audited financial statements unless it is going to the bank for a loan. There is no requirement by law to do that. If it is going for a loan or

if it is going to an institution for some kind of facility, it may be required to do so. The institution will say, give us audited financial statements.

The average private company is not required. Because a company is owned by Government in terms of shares does not automatically make it public. It is owned by the Government but it is a company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act of Barbados and therefore to all intents and purposes, it is a private company. 4.40 p.m.

You have given that assurance and I accept it but I still have to say, that even based on the public statements which have been issued that there have been some changes in the format and arrangements for the GEMS Project which, since that debate - according to the information that has been made available...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: For example, we have never had a debate formally since questions were raised in here on the last occasion about the impact of the drop in the share price of the partner of the Government of Barbados in the Project. But even if there are not, the point is that the impression was given at some point that...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, Sir, the Canadian Company that is involved in the GEMS Project is not a partner of the Government. It does not have an equity position in the Government. It is a management company and it exists solely to provide a management service to GEMS in the same way that Booker Tate provides a management service to the BAMC which he set up. But it does not make Booker Tate an equity shareholder in it and the Honourable Member for St. John knows that. Therefore this speculation about the impact of share prices on the Government's part is intended to mislead the public and to confuse the issue. If there were in fact shareholders in the project and they were into financial problems that involved them having to pull out their shares, that is a different matter. But I can say this clearly, Sir, that they will continue the management contract that they had entered into because they are not withdrawing their management services from the Caribbean. They were proposing to set up an equity vehicle in the Caribbean and they have reneged from an equity involvement in the Project, but they are still involved in the project from a management point of view and nothing has changed.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your point is taken. Could you please proceed?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, I am glad you took the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I do not take it and the reason why I do not take it is because I used the word 'partner' specifically because I knew that there was no equity involvement. If it was a co-owner or a joint owner or in a joint venture with the Government of Barbados, then equity would arise. But the word 'partner'- you can have management partnerships, you can have a whole range of other informal arrangements which come under the rubric of the expression 'partner'.

Partnerships with Government may involve no financial commitment at all and that is why I said 'partner' and I maintain that in a very real sense, the Government and that private company...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is again misleading the House. He is discussing the relationship between the two companies in terms of a drop in the equity and the value of its equity and thus his discussion of a partnership was in the context of partnership based on equity relationships.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is how the matter arose, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am saying to the Honourable Member to say it in that context is deliberately misleading the House. There is no equity partnership between UniHost and the Government of Barbados in relation to the GEMS Project. UniHost's relationship to the GEMS Project stands in relationship to the project in the same way as Booker Tate stands in relationship to BAMC. It is selling the Government a service.

The sale of a service to the Government does not make it a partner in any respect and the notion of 'partner' has a precise meaning. If the Honourable Member for St. John does not understand it, he should ask a question. But if I sell a service to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas it does not make that he and I are partners and that is all that it is here, Sir. It is merely selling a service.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could you please proceed?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is getting himself all wrapped up. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas needs to give the Honourable Member for St. Peter a little bit of advice on issues such as this.

A 'partnership' under The Partnership Act is one thing. That does not exclude partners as in persons who are jointly involved in an enterprise, whether by way of equity or by way simply of another informal or formal arrangement which may, in some cases, involve one individual involved in an equity arrangement and another individual providing some kind of service.

Even if Booker Tate is in a relationship with the Barbados Sugar Industry in that way, and if Booker Tate was a publicly listed company on the London Stock Exchange and the share price of Booker Tate dropped dramatically and the Chief Executive Officer of Booker Tate in London resigned and the Barbados Government had a management contract with Booker Tate - as it does, there would be absolutely no problem with any Member of this Chamber or any member of the public, since public funds are invested in the sugar sector, asking a question about the future of the arrangement between the Sugar Company and its partner in the enterprise by way of management, Booker Tate.

Now, if it was a formal partnership, under The Partnership Act, the issue of equity would not arise. There would be the joint ownership so there would be no equity issues arising. I said from the outset that it was a private company. I said it was owned by the Government from the outset. I never said it was owned by the Government and somebody else. I am very clear in what I am saying. I am saying that the Government of Barbados has entered into a formal arrangement with a company which is in essence, in a kind of partnership with the Government of Barbados by way of providing management service, which is information now provided to this Chamber and that that company, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, has suffered a substantial reduction in its share values as a listed company in Canada.

Now, I am only asking - because when this question was asked of the Chief Executive Officer of Hotel Resorts Limited, when he was asked what impact the resignation of the Chief Executive Officer would have, and when he was asked what impact the reduction of the share price would have, he said he had been in touch with the people in Canada, but he did not ask those questions.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, they may have issued it now, but at the time when it happened, when the investors - in a sense, the taxpayers of Barbados because they invested in it by way of providing a guarantee would need to have the kind of comfort that would help them to feel comfortable about the project, that the investment of the taxpayers money in Barbados, as well as the project as a whole was worthwhile - the Government could not respond.

Now, the GEMS project is a significant investment. It is not small change in the context of the Government's operations.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, precisely, but nobody is denying that. You have an obligation to talk about that in the next item I was going to deal with which is the Sugar Industry, but I started at GEMS.

I firmly believe that since those financials were not provided and I have now brought that to the Honourable Member's attention. Give us an indication.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have not raised any suspicions about GEMS. I am telling you the facts as I know it. It is for you, as the Prime Minister of Barbados who is the person who is supposed to be accountable on these issues to explain, because so far the objectives to my mind have been fuzzy and the execution of the project has been hazy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, recently I was in New York and met with somebody from Prudential who told me that they stayed at the Savannah Hotel and it is a very competitive and of a high quality hotel. I was glad to hear that as a Barbadian.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not know if it is well run because I have not seen the financials, but when the Honourable Members on that side provide us with the financials we will know.

I want the Honourable Member for St. Peter to understand on this side and I have said this already, I do not know what impression he has about this side in the past, I am saying I take no pleasure out of seeing any enterprise in Barbados in financial or other difficulties. I want to see the project succeed as long as it is properly conceived and in the best interest of the people. 4.50 p.m.

Yes, that is not a problem. At the same time, and you see that is a point I did not know. I have always asked myself, where is the GEMS project getting the resources from to undertake the work that it is doing.

The Government of Barbados gave the company some money out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. If that is what is being used, at the end of the day they must still be some level of accountability in which the Government explains to the people of Barbados, this is the process.

That is all I am saying, and if the Honourable Member for St. Peter was on this side, as he was in 1993, when we started reform of the sugar industry, when we privatized, he wanted the accounts of the privatization. He wanted a list of all the transactions. He wanted all the tenders for consultancy services provided to the Chamber.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Most of those things were provided. I am saying in the same spirit of accountability, rather than let the GEMS project end up being a political football, in which a thousand rules come under the control of an operation to which*the people know very little, it is better to make the information available to the public. That is, the GEMS.

Sir, likewise the sugar industry. I was alarmed to hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter during the recent impasse between the sugar workers and the management company for the sugar industry make a statement that the BAMC management should not make commitments in relation to the operations of the sugar industry with other parties and then go to third parties to solve those commitments.

The Government at the end of the day is not a third party in the sugar industry. The Government of Barbados since it substantially owns the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, is a major player in the sugar industry. Beyond that ownership, there are millions and millions of dollars which have already been sunk into the sugar sector with the indebted plantations and at the same time the sugar industry has to function on the basis of the Government of Barbados giving an indication as to its sustainability and the sustainability of commercial agriculture in Barbados.

Sir, this Government has said that commercial agriculture on its present trend will be dead in the next ten years. That is what the Government publicly indicated.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, it said its present trend. That was the statement that was made. I do not know if that meant without support, if you say it, it does. At the end of the day the point is that a very clear signal has been sent that the Government of Barbados still has to be involved in the strategic planning of the sugar industry. It is thereupon not a third party.

Last September when we debated this issue, the Honourable Member for St. Peter indicated that there would have been a big meeting on the sugar industry to plan the future of sugar. Maybe it has, but the point is that at the end of the day based on the way in which the Honourable Member for St. Peter, responded to that issue, one got the impression that Government was either taking all of its hand off the levers or had taken them off in relation to the sugar sector. That really is not the case. Government has significant obligations to the sugar sector by way of capital.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I outlined what was Government's obligation to the industry, Sir, from a shareholder point of view. That a shareholder has a responsibility where an entity has a deficiency in its capacity to pay its creditors to do so, Sir, and that the Government had a responsibility to BAMC if it could not pay its debts to pay its debts.

These Estimates before the House include $19.5 million for the sugar industry. Government assumed its responsibility to the industry. I however, pointed out, Sir, that where the enterprise is set up as a commercial enterprise, it has an obligation to meet its payroll and that it should not deal with payroll issues as if they were shareholders' issues. There are operational issues. That is the point I am making, Sir.

At the end of the day if it gives rise to a debt sometime in the future, the shareholder will have to assume its responsibility.

But we must stop sending the signal in this country, that a private company must not look to its own revenue to pay its payroll, and that is the issue, Sir.

Its shareholders will have to recover its lost, which we are doing. But to ask the shareholders also to come in and pay its wages, is a different issue. I want the Member, Sir, to reflect on the two things, because it is at the heart of the issue.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your point is taken. Could you please proceed Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That point is not being disputed. That aspect as it relates to legal obligations to the sugar industry is not being disputed. But in a very real sense, companies have gone beyond the shareholder concept and modern approaches, not only to Government, but a modem approach to the corporate sector in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But that is not in dispute. The point is, that in a real sense the Government while it is not just a shareholder but it is a stakeholder as Government, in the future of the sugar sector.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Peter may have put a different interpretation on it. But the point is, do not let it go abroad that Government does not have a major stake and a major role in the sugar sector.

It is very very important to understand that. Because there will be no sugar sector in Barbados unless substantial resources from Government are made available and unless Government is involved in the substantial capital expenditure.

That point needs to be reiterated in the context of what recently happened. Again, since the Government is making $19 million available to the sugar sector this year, I thought the Honourable Member for St. Peter and by and large, since the sugar sector still remains one of the pillars of our economic development that the Honourable Member for St. Peter should have spent a little time indicating to the Chamber that it still features as a major aspect, as a contributor to economic growth and job creation in Barbados.

Can you imagine the message that may have been interpreted coming from the Government, if it is not fully and properly explained that the Government is a third party?

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well you have explained it now. But the point is that at the end of this exercise, the sugar industry is still important. It is important for rural prosperity. It is important ecologically to Barbados. It is an almost safe source of foreign exchange. A safe source of direct foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, the Government needs to understand that while it may not be financially viable, I make the distinction between that financial viability and its economic viability. It is economically viable in the context of Barbados as we know it today.

The Government needs to send a very clear signal that it has not abandoned the sugar industry, that it has not abandoned the agricultural sector in Barbados. Because one would fear, I would fear myself, for what could happen to parts of my own constituency were the production of sugar abandoned and that is something of great concern.

The other pillar on which Government's economic development rests is the international business and financial services sector. If there was an area in which one could describe the policies of the Barbados Labour Party Government as amounting essentially to no action, it would be in the area of international business.

When one looks at what had been happening in that sector despite all the talk by the Government, reports have been prepared. But, Sir, if you went to incorporate a company in the Registry in Barbados today, in the Corporate Registry, first of all - and I will speak to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East about it, - if your documents do not get lost, it is going to take more than a week to get that company incorporated. That is the Barbados Corporate Registry and something needs to be done about that. That is not just the only area. The number of registrations of IBC's, of foreign sales corporations and of other investment vehicles has essentially stagnated over the past two years.

There has been no significant growth in this area. This means, Sir, that the Government very much following the Canadian "centric" approach on which the sector developed is continuing in that trend. But the offshore sector in Barbados is going to be faced with significant competition all over the region. Ten years ago Barbados would have been one of the only territories in CARICOM in the single market, as proposed, which would have had an offshore section. Now Grenada has it. St. Vincent has it. St. Lucia has introduced legislation. Almost all of the territories are introducing legislation sometimes with more attractive incentives but, certainly, more aggressively than the way in which Barbados has been dealing with its offshore sector. That may very well be so but the point is, there is a lot of competition out there. That competition may lead some of them to go down a dubious path, that is true, but that does not mean that our sector does not need to have an injection of new energy. 5.00p.m.

One gets the impression that the previous Minister simply wasted time in the Ministry of International Business and failed to bring those substantial business skills which he always promises to the task.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I know you do not believe that. Do not let us get into that. I know you of all people do not believe that but the point is that something needs to be done to inject that sector with a new energy and a new vision. I hope the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, since the Honourable Member for St. Peter did not deal with it, would be able to point to the new initiatives which would be undertaken by the Government during the course of this fiscal year in this sector.

Hopefully, during the course of these Estimates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will get to some of the Heads but for fear of not getting to them, I am going to ask you to give me two minutes to do some constituency housekeeping because I think it is very necessary for me to remember...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: First of all, the Government of Barbados started Society Road. That tenantry road was started and, as I say, the contractor has not been able to finish it for 18 months. When I looked at the document which the Barbados Labour Party produced in this election, Promises

and Productive Partnership, I looked under Rural Development and there was not a single tenantry road in the constituency of St. John.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Peter did promise when the Rural Development Commission was announced in Barbados, that there would be fairness in the way in which those resources were being spread. That is a MTW project and, as the Honourable Member knows, originally funds had been provided under the World Bank Project for the resurfacing of that road as well as the road from St. John's Parish Church to the Police Station but there was a problem with the project and I think the new Government abandoned it and you explained why. There was some problem with it. It came up in the House. We debated it. That project came to a halt. But I am talking about tenantry roads. No tenantry roads were done by the Rural Development Commission at all in St. John.

I make an appeal that the Government please consider looking at the St. John Polyclinic. Even if the Government has to change its mind that it is to be a polyclinic, let us identify alternative uses for that polyclinic site. One floor of it could be used as a day nursery. It is three storeys and there are other things that can be done with it. I already communicated to the Ministry of Health on that. Even if you want to reduce the size of the operation because it has been said it is too big, well there are other arrangements that can be made but to say that you could convert that polyclinic into a primary school, as did my opponent in the last election, and that they were closing down the Society School, which is on the Massiah Street bus route, and moving the children to St, John's Primary School, would not make sense because you would have two primary schools right next to each other, the new Society and the existing St. John's Primary School. But I urge the Government to do something. Let us get a decision on that St. John Polyclinic. As it stands now it is an eyesore and something needs to be done.

It is not a polyclinic for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a polyclinic for people who pay taxes, for people who have health problems and every time the rain falls, the existing polyclinic is under water. As it stands now, when clients go to that polyclinic, the small St. John Polyclinic, everybody can hear them when they are doing their consultations with the health professionals.

Just the other day I was listening to a lady on the radio and I was almost certain she was talking about the St. John Polyclinic but the point is that...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, if you do not want the clinic, shut it down but make a decision. I do not mind your saying it should go to Six Roads. If that is the way it is to be done, let us end the saga. As long as I have breath in me and I feel that we need a new polyclinic, I will find somewhere to ensure that a new polyclinic will go there. It is as simple as that. Instead of that, the Honourable Members on that side have just left the building, as I say, as an eyesore and I think something should be done about it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I have before me the DLP's Development Plan and it shows the polyclinic programme was stopped in 1993, and this is the .planned expenditure for fiscal years 1994/95. Planned expenditure for 1994/95 - zero. Planned expenditure for 1995/96 - zero. Planned expenditure for 1996/97 - zero, on the polyclinic so that the Honourable Member for St. John has to tell the House as well that the Democratic Labour Party not only stopped the polyclinic programme but they did not contemplate spending a penny on the polyclinic programme in the three years afterwards and there would have been so much tremendous decay, Sir, that you would have had to do a comprehensive review as to whether the project was worth starting or not, but these are the facts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your point has been taken. Will you please proceed.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member needs to be a bit more cautious than that. I suggest that the Honourable Member goes to the Estimates of 1993/94 and in those Estimates he will see the sum of $ 1 million provided for work to resume on the St. John Polyclinic. The reason why is because in the midst of that fiscal year the Government of Barbados decided to divert that $ 1 million to purchase some equipment for the landfill at Arch Hall in St. Thomas. Go and check the record. Some kind of equipment called a compactor in our time, not in your time. Check the record. The then Minister of Health...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Financial Rules do not allow any Minister of Health to divert funds from a polyclinic to a landfill. That cannot possibly happen, Sir, so the Honourable Member for St. John has to be misleading the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary was brought and in those days it is well-known that we allowed supplementaries as long as savings could be identified. The saving of $ 1 million which was identified by not resuming work on the St. John Polyclinic was diverted to purchase equipment for the landfill. The then Minister of Health went up to Arch Hall and said that if he did not achieve a reduction in the smell within six months that he would resign. As a result of that, as Minister of Finance I had to approve. Those are the facts. I do not tell lies in here. The Honourable Member for St. James South can check the record on that. A supplementary was brought. 5.10p.m.

If Honourable Members on that side are saying that they do not wish to restart the polyclinic and they do not wish the polyclinic in St. John then they should make it very clear. If there are no plans to build any tenantry roads in St. John, well, then, say so. Fortunately, the Minister has asked me to identify the tenantry roads and I will do so and I hope the Minister will be more generous in providing some kind of infrastructural activity in the constituency of St. John.

Likewise, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North, I believe, has been pushing for completion of that house project at Clifton Hall in St. John. Again, that is a long standing project but I believe that there is also the opportunity to provide other house spots around that area and to see the area of Gall Hill in St. John as a major settlement centre for the people of Barbados and St. John too but I do not adopt those kinds of approaches. My own view is that it will benefit all of the people.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You need to check the record on that. It is all right for people to talk in the background but of the 60 lots up there the persons who are to get them were already identified in 1994. Letters were written to them and they know which lots they are going to get, therefore nobody can come now, as one person tried to say it was their project, because we all know that money was provided and the contract was signed with Rayside and these projects to my mind need to proceed.

I was also anxious to see in these Estimates whether the Government was going to complete the Foster Hall road which broke away because...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Fair enough. But if the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is going to encourage the investment by foreigners in the construction of a hotel and golf course at Bath it will mean that road will have to be repaired. These are very important projects and, as I say, I do not think that the constituency of St. John should be treated any differently to the rest of Barbados. Opportunities should be provided.

I know that work is being done but I am only reminding Honourable Members on this side that if you are going to have that kind of tourism development it means that you are going to have to improve the overall infrastructure in that area and the people of St. John, as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said, do deserve it because they contribute.

You can go into any tenantry in my constituency and you will see people who by dint of hard work have built houses larger than houses in the biggest of developments in Barbados and they get together on a weekend and build those houses. They are productive and hard working artisans and labourers and their children are entitled to the benefits of the investments of their parents returned by way of improved infrastructure. I would expect the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter to offer some direction to the relevant authorities, particularly in relation to the completion of work in those areas.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. From my knowledge of the Ministry of Health I thought I would check the Estimates of 1993-94 to determine if in fact monies had been included for the polyclinic at that time. Having reviewed those Estimates to see no provision was made in fact in the 1993-94 Estimates for the St. John Polyclinic, in fact, when I look at the 1993-94 Estimates as I do now I see that $784 000 was provided for medical equipment and furniture for the Black Rock Polyclinic but not for the St. John Polyclinic.

The Honourable Member must not mislead the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You have already corrected it. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter assured me it was the following year, 1994-95. It does not matter. The point is that it was provided. I am not arguing over what year it was provided and it is a reason why it did not start back. That should not inhibit the Government from making a decision on the future of the project.

If you do not want the project to go ahead, say so. If you think it is viable, let us get the project underway because the existing location of the St. John Polyclinic is a hazard in every sense of the word and something needs to be done about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in concluding, I think that the Honourable Member's presentation today, as I said, failed to rise to that level of vision which, coming out of the 1999 general election, in my view, should have been incumbent on him. Perhaps the Honourable Member, as I said, feels a sense of comfort about the way in which the Barbados economy has been performing as he said since 1993 and therefore fee^s that on an occasion such as this in a sense it is as much business as usual as it is a question of raising of a few concerns. My own view is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to be much bolder in seeking to tackle some of these issues and the Government needs to demonstrate that it is not running around simply patching holes and outing fires but that it has a greater commitment to fashioning and shaping a Barbados which is going to be able to stand up to those challenges, some of which were raised in this debate but some of which go even beyond this debate and will

challenge our best minds and our best thinkers and community workers and people in the church and working with young people and so on.

These Estimates should reflect that. I look forward very much to a debate that deals with some of those broad considerations in which Ministers can set objectives and goals and feel accountable to respond to those objectives and goals in which Ministers will feel that institutions and institutional building is going to be a necessary part of the reform in Barbados and that they will identify the institutions that are going to carry out the task, how those institutions will be resourced and what the vision is for those institutions to deliver those services in a manner that is fair to all Barbadians. That is what we are calling on the Government of Barbados at this time to do to see 1999 not as an oil change but as an overhaul to be grateful that it would receive such a significant mandate but not to waste that mandate because it is a mandate that the people gave the Government and would expect that those many threats and challenges which face them would be attended to.

I have never left my social engineering days. In fact, as I say, I would have had to learn all of the other skills that I have in politics in a self taught way. When I first left school - the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter knows this - I applied to Cave Hill and was accepted in the Economics Department. When I won a Barbados Exhibition greater heads than mine prevailed on me that I should do law because it was viewed as an independent profession. So when the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter as an economist once got up in here and in a sense bared his soul I said to myself and he may never know this, "There but for the grace of God go I."

Fortunately, he was able to turn that pressure into the things that he has achieved so far. Not everybody...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is the point. I will stick to what I have chosen and plod through that. Even in that, there are some things that every member of this House can do despite their professional training or educational background and the most important of them is to be able to have that vision of Barbados in the future and to attend the task of engineering those outcomes.

Our task on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I charge my fellow member with that but I know he is equal to the task, is to point out to the Government where it is not meeting the aspirations of the people, where problems may exist that need solutions, where threats may be on the horizon that it has not yet dealt with and that is what good Opposition politics is about. 5.20p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we take a position against the Government we believe that partisanship is healthy and that once that partisanship is based on principles that collide that we are entitled to take a different position to the Government on that issue. We will only take a different position where we feel that our principles and the principles of the Government do not coincide and where our policy objectives and the policy objectives of the Government do not coincide. That is the kind of Opposition politics that you can expect from us.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter in his attempt at introducing the politics of inclusion is not going to find that the politics of inclusion where our principles do not coincide is going to be very easy. We will fight to the end to ensure that those things that we think are necessary and desirable to take our country forward will be implemented.

Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.45 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 5.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate in the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for the year 1999/2000. If for no other reason other than the fact that it reflects a programme of activities that will take place at the end of the century, it would have been important for us to take stock as to where we stand today and indeed to determine where we have come from and where we intend to take this society and more particularly this economy. The reality for us over the course of the decade of the 1990's has been one that has seen both prosperity and one that has seen both suffering on the part of individuals and indeed entities within the economy. One may be forgiven indeed, therefore, for being suspect and prudent in terms of the planning of this country's economy and affairs because certainly it is the experience of that early period of the 1990s that would cause all of us to want to ensure that that would never be re-visited during the course of our lifetime.

Modern economic history in Barbados since Independence, unfortunately, however, has been repleted

with examples of three to five years of relatively economic prosperity followed by periods of decline usually occasioned by a rapid expansion in the economy as a result of increased credit as was indicated in the speech of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. This Government now as we did in 1994 when first elected, has committed itself to a programme that will not see fantastic economic growth followed by those periods of decline but indeed one that preferred the road of measured economic growth that can be sustainable, that can be enjoyed by the citizens of this country and that indeed will bring about real benefit in the improvement of the living standards as well as the wealth sharing of the people of Barbados.

We were clear in 1994 when we set out on that programme. Indeed, if one were only to look at the themes which were central to the budgetary initiatives of the Right Honourable Minister of Finance over the course of the last four and a half years one would have seen a set of themes that occupied a continuum and that clearly reflected a determination that sustainable economic growth was to be the legacy of this generation to future Barbadians. In 1995, in the very first Budget of this Government, the Right Honourable Minister of Finance announced then that we would be focussed on the consolidation of the recovery within the economy and that while there were glimpses of recovery in 1993 and 1994, there were not yet at a stage where there would bolster investment confidence in this country to the point that we needed to, in order to sustain the levels of economic growth that were necessary to improve the conditions of Barbados.

In 1996, his speech then reflected one that would focus on the creation of an environment in which savings and investments would be the order of the day, recognising clearly that unless the economy grew at a point to stimulate the levels of savings, that we could not in fact enjoy sustained economic development because you cannot continue to finance new activities within the economy, unless they came essentially from a growth in savings and investment within the economy for a prolonged period of time.

In 1997, we were faced with a task which had been started but not completed of ensuring that the indirect tax reform which would seem to be so central to the competitive nature of this country's economy that that could be implemented in a structured way that would see the least possible dislocation either to Government revenues or indeed to investment confidence in Barbados.

In 1998, the budgetary initiative reflected a commitment to bring about the building of capacity within the economy and indeed the need for institutional reform recognising that, unless you did these other things that we would not be able to meet the challenges as we moved into the new century. Challenges being faced not just within the domestic economy or the regional economy but by virtue of the forces of the advancements in technology, challenges being faced indeed in a global economic structure. One which, for the first time since the Bretton Woods agreement was seeking to restructure how countries related to one another and how countries traded with one another.

We therefore, Mr. Speaker, have in a sense, been dealing with the issues of the recovery of this economy and the sustainable growth of this economy in a structured and continued fashion that reflects an understanding of where we want to take the country and reflects a determination as I indicated earlier that if there be but one legacy of this generation to future Barbadians. It is a commitment to ensure that the dips and highs that previously were associated with our economic growth since Independence would be a thing of the past and indeed that we as a people have the confidence to so charter our own affairs, as to reflect a level of growth that could be maintained and that could translate itself into improvement of the quality of life of Barbadians.

What is interesting is, that all of this is being done in a global environment that, as I indicated earlier, no longer hold sacred those rules that would have provided succour for us in terms of preferential access to markets in terms of subsidies and quotas but one that, does not in fact, make any distinction among countries that previously existed or that might have reflected indeed, one might even argue, a sense of guilt from the colonial practices that many of the countries, the new emerging economies, could not otherwise succeed without the benefit of the assistance of their previous colonisers, who in large measure, occupied the developed countries of the world. 5.55p.m.

We no longer benefit from that kind of treatment and all of the signals over the course of the decade of the 90s have pointed us in the direction that requires us to be as competitive and as capable as surviving in a new world as a country which indeed has had other and far more benefits than ourselves over the course of this century.

We have also had to face the fact, Sir, that in spite of our size, although there are arguments and movements now to cause the interest of small island states to be treated in a separate and distinct manner in the discussion of global economic matters and international trade matters, that that disadvantage traditionally seen as size is one that in the context of the new global economy, may lead us to feel that we may not be successful in the determination to have sustainable economic growth.

I do not subscribe to those views, Mr. Speaker, because I truly believe that in the context of Barbados' future, many of the developments globally in terms of technology have

made the issue of size and geography irrelevant and that it is up to us to so reorder our affairs within the context of this economy and this society that we are capable of meeting the challenges globally in a new international economy.

To that extent, the measures, many of which were announced in last year's budget to deal with the building of capacity and to deal with matters of institutional reform, become even all the more critical as we seek to change how we do business and to make ourselves more competitive in order to meet whatever fate may befall us in the early 21st Century.

I also believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that these Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue coming at this juncture therefore must reflect that commitment to continued capacity building and to institutional reform, while at the same time getting correct the sound and the basic macroeconomic fundamentals which are so necessary to avoid any reversion into an economic slip as we have seen in our modern economic history.

The reality is that, listening to the Honourable Member for St. John who is the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, one would almost have thought that this was not a debate relating to the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue. And indeed the very short time that he spent engaging himself on matters pertaining to the financing arrangements of this country's Government, would indicate not only that perhaps he was in total agreement with the policies being pursued by this Government, but further, that he has no inclination to discuss matters pertaining to finance and economics, particularly since his Government's record when last in Government, is one of total disaster and one, certainly that eschewed the principles of sound macroeconomic fundamentals.

We stated in 1994 that we believed that we would run a deficit that would range between 1% and 2!/$_2$% of GDP. We have held faithful to that promise that we made then. These Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue this year come in at 1.5% of GDP at factor cost, recognising that before the end of this financial year we will have also to bring to brick a likely wage increase that now has to be negotiated between the public sector unions and the Government of this country.

We have also recognised that the desirability of maintaining a relative low interest rate regime is necessary to continue to encourage investment both at the private and public sector levels, while at the same time ensuring that the growth does not lead us to a situation which in fact we started to face in the course of last year of over heating within the economy because of the dangers that it will have on our foreign reserves.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these Estimates really and truly reinforce those commitments given in 1994 and carried out in each successive year thereafter to apply sound, macro-economic fundamentals. It is no magic and indeed one only has to be familiar with the same principles that govern application into the European Union, the single currency, in respect of the Maestrich Treaty to know that these are fundamentals that are now observed by most countries across the world. And indeed we will be ill advised if we were ever to move away from that.

Equally, we have also reflected in these Estimates, as we did in the last four and a half years a determination that we will not seek to expand credit from the Central Bank in order to finance Government's activities in the country. And indeed therefore, Table 10 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which clearly reflects how we anticipate the deficit to be financed, both in terms of foreign and local financing, is a reinforcement of those principles that we announced in 1994.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has already gone in today into long treatise on the whole question of the negative impact of extensive credit creation from the financing coming from a Central Bank to Government and indeed, has clearly expressed why this Government would certainly not follow the major mistakes made by the last Democratic Labour Party administration in 1989 and 1990 where they carried the overdraft of the Central Bank to over 1714% at that point in time.

So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we therefore start from the premise of ensuring that the programme which we will embark upon is not one that we have suddenly pulled out of the sky since the elections. It is not one that does not reflect the poor philosophy and policies of the Barbados Labour Party as has been the case in terms of the programmes which we implemented over the last four and one half years, but in fact reflects a continuum that says that we must be able to generate enough wealth in this country to provide for our sustainable growth. And that in the creation of that wealth there must be a determination that everyone who is capable of sharing should share and that we should look after the welfare of each and every citizen of this country.

Indeed, the Manifesto of 1999 clearly commits ourselves to a number of key things:

1. The establishment of a fully developed economy.
2. The creation of full employment.
3. The creation of Barbados, within the middle of the next decade as one of the smallest developed countries in the world.

4. **The eradication of poverty.**

5. The sharing and economic prosperity created in this country by all.

I believe, Sir, that those fundamentals will not change just simply because of an election. Therefore, for the Honourable Member for St. John to simply say that we seemed to be only effecting an oil change causes me to believe that he felt that we should come with a radically different programme and one indeed that does not reflect the confidence of the public of Barbados has so strongly shown in the programmes and policies and people of this administration. 6.05 p.m.

I am happy therefore, to be engaged in an exercise that reflects a continuance and I would certainly wish to say that many of those objectives outlined in the Right Honourable Member's speech in his budget in September of 1998 still stand for us to be able to effect during the course of the Financial Year 1999-2000.

The area of the competitiveness of this economy in terms of the institutions that governs the cost of utility and that governs the level of service rendered by utility companies to consumers of this country as well as the area of the interest of consumers in goods and services generally purchased in this country, is one that we must confront boldly and one in which we have already indicated that the establishment of a new Fair Trading Commission to be operational by the 1st of January 2000, we believe will go a long way towards ensuring that we can deal with this issue.

We recognise that the desirability of low energy prices is critical to making this economy competitive. And indeed, Sir, when the price of oil fell late last year as it did, we were in a position to pass on some of that cost onto the consumer and onto productive enterprises in this country, reflecting that determination that we should seek to reduce the cost of doing business so as to create a greater level of competitiveness of our economy in meeting the challenges within the region and globally.

Equally, Sir, we felt that the area of competitiveness would be affected by the capacity of enterprises to do things that were not necessarily related strictly to access to finance but were related to the technical capacity in order to effect changes within the business structures or to be able to meet the challenges within the particular sectors.

To that extent there has been a great deal of programmes dealing with the technical competence and capacity whether there be of small businesses or within the tourism sector or indeed, as indicated by the Prime Minister, even this year with a determination that we help them face even a basic difficulty, basic but fundamental difficulty such as facing the problem of the Y2K problem which can fundamentally affect the capacity of the business to do well as they move into the 21st century.

We recognise that many of them do not have that capacity and therefore to the extent that Government must provide the technical assistance and funding if necessary that we must be in a position to do that.

We also indicated then and are continuing on the process of the building of a strong capital market because we see that as one of the primary instruments to bring about economic enfranchisement in this country.

Barbadians have traditionally, invested first in a property, a house and land as their first major investment and while that continues to be the major investment for many Barbadians, we recognise that once the society and the economy grows enough to allow the majority to reach those goals that there must be opportunities for other areas of investment, legitimately so for Barbadians.

To that extent the development of a strong capital market properly regulated, reflecting levels of transparencies and fairness are necessary, so that the broad mass of Barbadians after a strong public education programme iriav start to invest their funds and may start to see the benefits of growth in strong capital markets.

There is always a risk of course of over-investing in those areas and indeed the crashes within the financial markets in the world and within the last year in South East Asia and other areas in emerging economies has clearly reflected for us that there must always be still a level of caution when approaching these types of investments that are speculative in nature and not necessarily driven by means of production.

The area of the social services, Sir, in terms of capacity building and institutional reform was a central plank.

We have not had major reform in our educational sector, in our health sector, in our social services sector for almost over forty years. If the people who lived in this country are to benefit from the advancements made generally at the macro level then it is absolutely necessary that they also benefit in fundamental ways within the health sector, within the educational sector and within the general area of social services.

What is therefore significant, is that in education since the introduction of free secondary and tertiary education and indeed the increase capacity that was reflected by the construction of many schools at the secondary level in the early '50's we have not really systematically set about to

address the issue of reform in the sector either in terms of how teachers teach or in terms of what we expect from the educational sector in terms of the training and education of Barbadians.

I was interested to hear the Honourable Member for St. John, speak to the issue of technological advances requiring of us a commitment and implementation of policies that would allow Barbadians to be able to meet the challenges as reflected in this new global economy. I can only say to you that the core policies, the core objectives rather behind the education sector enhancement programme more commonly known as EduTech reflects more than anything else a commitment to the provision of a sound general education to people. The reason for that is, is that we expect that persons will face far more changes in the course of the next two to three decades than they have even faced in the last two decades. To teach them to be technologically competent or literate will not of itself be enough. Because when the changes come around again in that form of technology then you will have persons whose skills are still outmoded.

But if you educate those persons, you will ensure that they have a sound general education, then you have the capacity to ensure that they are capable of retraining at any stage of their development, in any form of new advancements in technology that may come about. Therefore, EduTech is not about making children computer literate or teaching them how to use communications technology. It is about ensuring that we can improve the quality of education now delivered to our children. That they presence in a secondary school is not only by reason of a provision of the law in the Education Act which says that it is compulsory for them to attend school. But that it is because we are capable of delivering to them that sound basic education that would allow them to be retrained at any stage of their development.

In so recognising that that is our objective that we must change therefore what motivates us in terms of educating our children. We no longer must produce a population who simply can repeat by rote and who can learn off reams and reams of passages and papers and can repeat them verbatim.

What is required is a population who can see the information, can analyse it for themselves and can make proper judgment as to the use of that information or to the use of those skills in a society and an economy that is changing.

Equally, we recognise that to impart that level of education to young Barbadians without reinforcing it with a sense of values and a sense of who or what we want to create as young Barbadian people in this society would be counterproductive.

To that extent when we start to change how we teach in schools, we have determined that we must also change what we teach and in changing what we teach, a large part of that new change must be a reinforcement of our values, whether it is through the introduction of the new citizenship course that has nine or ten different modules ranging from the teaching of the Constitution right down to social and negotiating skills. Because a lot of young people simply do not know how to carry themselves or how to negotiate what they want, whether it is a job or whether it is in another human relationship of a romantic type or whatever.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. Those types of new courses must be introduced into the curriculum so that we can provide the reinforcement of a strong values background.

In the health sector, Sir, we have had the Haynes Commission on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital recognising that the manner in which we deliver health care in this country has to change with the realities that have obtained since the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital some forty years ago and that this reflects not only rehabilitation of buildings but indeed a rationalization of the delivery of the services.

More fundamentally, in the area of our social services, a report prepared by someone whom I believe, Mr. Speaker, you know very well, has also called into question whether the needs of our citizens are in fact being met by the Government in the Welfare, National Assistance Board or Child Care areas, or whether we do not need to have a more holistic approach to the delivery of benefits. Instead of simply handing out a benefit for somebody to get them through this month that we create an opportunity where those persons can assume responsibility for their lives, assume responsibility for their earnings, assume responsibility for their families and change their level of dependence on the State, as is our desire, so that they can become proud Barbadians like the rest of us. 6.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have run out of time, unfortunately, but there were a number of other issues that I believe reflect the continuum that this Government has embarked upon. Therefore, I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition has been living when he can say that he does not see a vision being charted by this Government in terms of the transformation of this society, or the readying of this society for the challenges of the new global economic order, or the new international economic arrangements, and whether there be matters of cultural trade policy which in our preparation will determine the extent to which we assert to preserve our heritage whether through censorship of programmes or

through protection of our other forms of heritage, all of those things, yes, we agree will have an impact on the preparation of this society as we move into the 21st century, community participation, new forms of governance. But, indeed, Mr. Speaker, this is not the occasion on which we can fully debate the matter.

As we go into the Heads during the course of this week one would hope that we would have a greater opportunity to reflect that but suffice it to say that we have held faithful to the basics that we set out in 1994, get the sound macro-economic fundamentals right, and all else that we want to do as a country and as an economy for our people will come but if we do not have the money, we do not have the capacity then we can have the best intentions in the world, just as they had in 1991 to 1994, but instead of providing for people and providing to improve the quality of their lives you found yourself cutting salaries and sending home people.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in this 1999 Estimates Debate recognising that we are in the dawn of a new century, and that much of the foundation which we lay today by way of the programmes which are encapsulated by Government's proposals for spending will continue to have their impact long after we have crossed the flood.

Government expenditure, Sir, is the major component of this whole matter of fiscal policy. We were treated today, Sir, to a good exposition by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Member for St. Peter, on the whole issue of why he has over the last 25 years of his professional career focussed on this all important matter of Government policy, and how what Government does or does not do will have its impact.

Sir, I want to reiterate the point which I hope will not escape that this Administration, those of us on this side, were able to hold to a longer term perspective and a perspective based on a high principle. We did not succumb to the temptation which many Governments have fallen to in engaging in an orgy of pre-election spending. We did not, Sir.

We were able to steer the course. We were able on the eve of an election, Sir, to cut back on our capital spending in order to avoid overheating of the economy. We were able to maintain our fiscal deficit within the range that we had predicted and all of this, Sir, in the case where other administrations less focussed would have fallen to that temptation.

Sir, I want us to recognise as well that in addition to those domestic issues which form the context in which these Estimates and other Estimates are normally indebted, that we are also at an interesting crossroad in terms of the international economic developments. In fact, the whole aspect of economics often referred to as development economics is really at the crossroads.

Many of the old principles, many of the factors which have been taken for granted are now being held up to question. Everything from the right of countries and regions to have preferential trade agreements to the use of GDP per capita as an indication of relative welfare within particular states, these are all up for questioning.

There can be no doubt, Sir, that the World Trade Organisation and its creation which has ushered in the era of rule-based reciprocal trade and has pushed the tendency toward trade preferences out of the way has grave implications for economies such as ours.

Also. Sir, the matter if it only rests with trade and goods would have been one with which we could more readily deal with. The fact that there is now the intrusion, not only into the area of trade and services, but also other aspects, and by services, I should mention before I go into the other aspects, by services these include those things which have traditionally kept many aspects of the financial services, insurance, banking, for example, and others, but also the movement of capital, labour standards, environmental standards, all of it are part of this new paradigm.

Some like to even call it a new theology where in a unifold world, the world thinking is supposed, if that powerful nation has its way to conform with their thinking so you really have the internationalisation of their domestic philosophy. That is the reality that we face.

Sir, we also have at this point in our development to deal with the redefinition and the renegotiation of the longstanding arrangements between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Union countries in terms of what arrangements will be in place after the LOME Convention, as it presently stands.

This is again subject to external pressures, the pressures again of the WTO and its rule-based reciprocal bias, as well as a recognition of Europe which today no longer feels that it has any colonial or post colonial ties and it is in the process of reordering its approach to development aid and assistance and where its own strategic interest and priorities will lie.

As if that was not enough, Sir, we also have to contend with the matter of economic hemispheric integration not only now as we have struggled for many years at the level of CARICOM but also with the Free Trade Area of the Americas. All of these, Sir, are issues which are of direct significance.

These Estimates that we are considering this year and what decisions and actions we take today will have a profound impact on those who have the responsibility of carrying on where we would have left off many years into the future.

Sir, these are issues which face States great and small, but Barbados as a small State also has to its credit been taking a lead role in seeking to ensure that the international community does not forget the small States issues. Credit must be given, therefore, to the fact that the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has been very much leading and in charge in seeking to have the international financial institutions redefine their approach to small States issues, for example, workers coming on well on the matter of have a vulnerability index developed in order to take account of the critical issues in developments facing small States. 6.25 p.m.

Barbados has been one of the countries which has over the years suffered as a result of the use of GDP per capita as a,measure of one's well-being and welfare. It has caused us to be graduated from concessional financing from the international financial institutions and it suggests that yes, we are well off but it does not take account of the fact that the lack of economic resilience will put us in a position where all that we have gained can very quickly be lost.

So it is important, Sir, within the recognition of the challenges which are occurring external to us that we so order our affairs internally, that we so look after those factors which are under our control that we are better able to withstand those external or what the economist on my left would refer to, Sir, as those endogenous factors.

That is our responsibility. We have to manage those endogenous factors, so that it is to Barbados' credit and certainly to the credit of this administration that we have focussed on ensuring that we have pursued sound macro-economic policies, that we are able to have an economy in Barbados which is buoyant, which is relatively diverse and which therefore is better able to withstand external shocks should they occur.

Sir, if you look at the performance of the Barbados economy last year we have reason to be pleased. We were able to grow by some 4.9%. We were able to show growth in the foreign exchange earnings sectors although it has been pointed out, there is a bit of a blip in the general trend in that the foreign exchange using sectors have also grown very rapidly but primarily because of the growth in the construction sector which is obviously moving in a direction of building increased capacity.

Another important point to note, Sir, is that unlike many other developing countries Barbados has been able to manage its rate of inflation extremely well and that is a fundamental point which because inflation has never been an issue for us we ought to ignore. But the fact is that, contrary to what many of the detractors of the value added tax and many of the persons who would have hoped that what they considered to be the destiny of governments that introduce value added tax that we would have fallen by the wayside, Sir, after the unusual inflation that we had during the year of the value added tax, in the following year there was this disinflation. It cost less to live in Barbados in 1998 than it would have cost in 1997. That is a fact and we should not ignore the good news.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us look as well at the fundamentals. These Estimates, though they relate to a specific period, 1999-2000, also have to be seen in the context of setting the stage for the future and what does the future hold for us. Because of the way that this administration has managed-its affairs it has engendered investor confidence. Without investor confidence, people mothball their money, lock it away and it is of no good to the general community.

By contrast to what we have seen in terms of loss of investor confidence, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would know, is a level of investment by entrepreneurs great and small that has not been seen before. Let us look, Sir, at the number of persons who are boldly venturing into business in terms of the level of registrations of business names and companies. For 1998 we saw some 1 664 new business names registered. That is those registered in 1998 only and that is higher than any of the ten years previously.

Sir, we also saw in 1998 some 739 new local companies, limited liabilities incorporated entities, which again was higher than in any of the previous ten years or any time in the history before that.

Sir, that is an indication, proof, that more persons are actually getting into business but also if we look at the investment projects in the pipeline there is a pipeline of investment projects, take tourism for example. The pipeline is $1.7 billion long in terms of tourism projects which are

either in execution now or which are at the stage of having applied for planning and other permission and that investment is not in areas where the benefits will be felt for a short time and then not thereafter. That is building earning capacity in an economy and in a sector which has been identified quite rightly as being the leading foreign exchange sector at present and in the future as a sector in which we are definitely competitive. That, Sir, is important.

Building the capacity to earn into the future is what we have the responsibility to do. Our investments in projects cannot only, as is done in other countries, be as monuments, as mausoleums to ourselves. This administration, Sir, is laying a foundation which will ensure that our offspring will be able to earn their way in the world.

Sir, the matter as well of the creation of credit in the monetary system, mention was made earlier of the fact that there is more credit being created in the private sector than in the other sectors which is the proper thing to do. This correlates with the fact of increased investor confidence. If we look at the economic and financial statistics of the Central Bank of January 1999 and we look at the monetary survey we can see a period in 1988-1989 and 1990-1991 where there was a dramatic increase in net credit to the Government but there was a stagnation in the private sector. By contrast, after the actions of this administration in implementing sound economic management policies in which private sector persons, individuals, companies, whatever, were able to identify as being sustainable as giving them planning horizons which will allow them to invest, m which private individuals were able without fear to feel comfortable in investing in long term instruments like a house or even things that are not so long. They were willing to go and buy a car and what we see then is that after September 1994 we see a reversal, a slowing down of credit to Government and an increase in credit to the private sector. For example, whereas 1989 you had to the private sector credit, a holding pattern of about $1.1 billion, we were able to move by 1998 to a position of some $2.2 billion to the private sector. Those are just indicators of what is an important phenomenon. Without investor confidence, all of the Government's best laid plans are laid to waste. The example, Sir, has been very positive for private sector individuals great and small. 6.35 p.m.

Sir, the economic management of this administration has not only impacted positively on business. Private individuals have been able to see the benefits. The good folks of Christ Church East have been able to see the benefits, Mr. Speaker. These Estimates, this year as well as the Estimates in previous years have always had a people focus.

You will recall in the last two or so Estimates, Sir, where we were able to move spending in the social services sector from a figure of somewhere around $21 million annually to something in the region of $80 million. You will remember, Sir, that these Estimates for this year include an increase in expenditure. One of the major reasons being an increase in salary costs, occasioned by this administration moving to give individuals in this country, hard working decent individuals, the basic security of tenure which they deserved. For many years public officers going to work every day and working hard whether it be as masons in MTW, road weeders, clerical officers or whatever they were doing in Government, could only be guaranteed of working under situations in which they could be dismissed with a day's notice. That has retarded the progress of many families in Barbados. They were not able to obtain finance for house construction, they were not able to obtain finance for their children's education, for operations overseas and the like.

The facts of the matter, Sir, is that those persons were employed by the Government and what we have done is recognising what is the core need for public officeis in Government to give those people security that they deserve and that they will be there on a long term basis. A man at fifty years old after working thirty years in the public service cannot be casual or temporary. What that single move has Hone, Sir, and what is reflected in the Estimates is the full cost of implementing these matters and to give security to iuui[v],duals and lamilies all across Barbados, liiai is a people centred policy, Sir.

Sir, also reflected in these Estimates is another major economic people centred policy. For the first time in Barbados' history, a reversed tax credit was introduced into the tax system of this country. Contrast that, Sir, to a period not so long ago, when Barbadians were being fixed with increases in taxes, when they were hit with levies and surcharges and all other prices designed to dig deeper and deeper into the hands and into the pockets of individuals. We have recognised, Sir, that not only do we need to give relief to the not working poor as we have done by increasing the provisions for welfare, as we have done by allocating to the National Assistance Board, to the Rural Development Commission and to the Urban Development Commission to help those persons, but recognising the plight of the working poor. We not only were able to increase the basic allowances that is the limit below which you do not pay taxes from $13 000 per year to $15 000 per year but we were also able to provide a reversed tax credit, some $500 for persons who were earning less than $170 a week, I believe, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Money in their pockets, Sir, out of a recognition that in spite of the relief which they would have been given by way of the direct tax system, which they do not pay, but they would also have been made some payments out of the indirect taxes and this is money in their pockets. 6.45 p.m.

Sir, another people - centered policy which is reflected in these Estimates this year are the measures which were taken to remove the Value Added Tax (VAT) on a wide range of food items - 33 categories of food items which between brand and sizes, Sir, have amounted to some 2000 different items on which the VAT was removed. The loss in revenue, Sir, is reflected in the four years' programme there.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can clearly place our confidence, Sir, in an administration which thinks locally, but also recognises the need to act globally. What in the new language of today is called 'being global'. We recognise our obligations and responsibilities to provide a strong macro-economic environment, an economy in which there are opportunities for investment by companies and private citizens, Sir, but we also recognise the need to be able to respond and to respond decisively to the external, economic challenges which we face. These Estimates, Sir, represent the Government's best efforts at doing just that.

Looking ahead, Sir, projections indicate that we will be able to reach our target of some 2.73% growth, again, driven by the foreign exchange earning sectors. We anticipate, Sir, continued growth in the financial services sector, growth in tourism and growth in other areas. But, Sir, I want to leave one matter which I will develop more fully when we are into the Head and that represents one final aspect of international challenge.

Sir, the challenge for the WTO front for example, in the banana issue has been made and the international economy suggests that small states should get out of primary production and get into services. When they have gone heavily into services, they come on the other side and mount major challenges for services.

There is a report called the OECD Report on harmful tax competition which is a back door effort and bears no respect for the sovereignty of individual countries, including Member countries of the OECD, Sir, where Luxembourg and Switzerland have unceremoniously rejected the main tenets of this report on harmful tax competition. And basically, Sir, if it is allowed to have its say, would have the very underpinnings of the new direction which they suggest we should take cut from under us. We will not allow that to happen. But that is a matter which I will develop more fully in the Head. But I am making the point, Sir, that we must recognise, as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has indicated that we cannot invent the world as we would like it to be, but we have to put ourselves in a condition to be able to respond to the world as it is.

We recognise the international challenge which we face, Sir, and we know that through these Estimates and the quality of the management of our fiscal affairs, we place our economy in a situation where it is best able to be dynamic and to respond positively to those international challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, judging from the exposition of the Honourable Minister of Finance the Honourable Prime Minister, it is quite clear to all of us that this is going to be a year in which we are not going to witness any extravagance. Indeed, it is going to be a year in which we will have to be extremely cautious and extremely watchful. The Honourable Prime Minister has made it quite clear that fiscal prudence and fiscal restraint will be his motto for the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all Barbadians will see the common sense of this approach, because we know what this country went through in the early 1990s and I do not think that there is any living Barbadian who would want us to go through such an experience again. Barbadians definitely fear a return to those days.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard of the intending global economic crisis and I do believe that that global economic crisis will be felt right here in Barbados. Because, as the saying goes, when those powerful nations sneeze Barbados and other small countries, they will catch a cold. They will catch pneumonia because we are still a vulnerable small state and we still have a fairly fragile economy and we rely a lot, Mr. Speaker, on what happens in those countries.

I believe it is even going to be a bigger challenge for us, Mr. Speaker, because we have the whole question in Barbados now of the security of tenure for the casual workers - we have to deal with that issue. We have to think about the 8% repayment and the increases for the public servants. And, this makes it all the more necessary for us to do what is called in cricketing terms 'keeping the batting pads close together'. The same analogy can be used in things like the preparing for a hurricane, so we have to be on the alert especially when we see things on the horizon. We have to take certain precautions.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is a challenge which is facing not only this Minister of Finance, and facing not only this country, but I believe that it is something facing all those who have to manage national economies. I therefore, Mr. Speaker, want to commend the Honourable Prime Minister for his presentation of these Estimates. I have every confidence, Mr. Speaker, that these Estimates were very well thought out. In fact, I know this and I dare say that the people of Barbados too, have confidence that these Estimates have been well thought out.

We have just come out of an election, Mr. Speaker, and I do believe that the return of this Government in massive numbers is an indication, Sir, as to how Barbadians see the stewardship of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. These Estimates are really a continuation of the policies and programmes of the Government. They are forward thinking and I do believe that they will further whatever policies we initiate and whatever policies we continue. The people, Sir, are aware of what this Government has done and what this Government continues to do. They had an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to evaluate Government's work and they evaluated it, Sir, and they gave the Government their endorsement.

I am very happy, Mr. Speaker, to hear that one of the projects budgeted for in these Estimates for this coming year will be that of Skeete's Bay and Consett Bay project. I must say that the people in the Skeete's Bay area and Bay field have been crying out for this facility for many, many years and I am happy to see at last that it has come on stream. Indeed, Sir, the last time I was there I could see them actually putting in the equipment and getting ready for the start of the project at Skeete's Bay. So I am very heartened by this.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that at Skeete's Bay where the modern fish market is going to be built, right now what is there is a very poor apology for a fish market. The fishermen have no facilities whatsoever to change. They cannot take a shower when they come in on evenings and it is extremely bad. On mornings when the fishermen leave their homes, they wear their bathing trunks because they do not have any where there to change and safe enough to leave their clothes. So I am very happy that this is coming on stream.

The whole question too, Mr. Speaker, of the jetty at Skeete's Bay is something which I welcome. The fishermen now have to drag the fish, the bags and so on through the sand and they have to travel about 100 yards through the sand with the fish and that can be extremely back-breaking work. It is a very hard thing for them to do. The whole question of the lack of the jetty now means that they have to swim out to the boats on mornings and then swim back in. They also have to swim the fish in too. We have had instances where the big sharks in the water actually cut the bags of fish that the fishermen were carrying. It is that dangerous. And therefore to hear that this is coming on stream, Sir, is something that really and truly makes me feel very good. I welcome the project, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on a theme which the Honourable Member for St. John started. 6.55 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. John, Mr. Speaker, spoke of family services and he spoke of the changing role of women in the society and as I said, I want to pick up on this theme but I want to approach it from a different angle. I want to look at it really, Mr. Speaker, from the whole question of our working women and the contribution which they have made. Because I figure, it is something that we very often overlook.

I believe that this question can be seen as a women affairs issue. It can be seen, Mr. Speaker, as a social issue. It can be seen as an economic issue as well. It can be seen as a labour issue. This is one of the reasons that I want to pick it up. Because I said, I want to acknowledge the contribution which they make 10 our economy.

We have said that the economy is in good hands. We have said that the economy has grown. But I want to say something about the part played by women, because we tend to underestimate it. I do not think that we should marginalize our working women.

I would love to see, Mr. Speaker, an analysis or a survey on the number of women, particularly single women, who have bought land, houses or cars in Barbados within the last fifteen years. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the findings of that survey would be very very interesting indeed. I do believe so.

Many of them, Mr. Speaker, have now reached the stage where they are so independent that they no longer expect the men to be doing it for them. They are now, Mr. Speaker, the homeowners, they are the property owners, Sir, in their very own right. They have contributed significantly, Sir.

A lot of them, Sir, are employed in things like hairdressers, they are entrepreneurs, small business operators and, Mr. Speaker, in such capacity, they employ persons who for all intents and purposes might be otherwise be unemployed and the point I am making is that they have indeed contributed and we virtually take it for granted.

Very few families in Barbados today, Mr. Speaker, are made up of a father who works and a mother who stays at home and looks after the children. I believe, Sir, in our grandparents day that was the norm.

But nowadays, Sir, we have hundreds of career women, women who actually put a career before the whole question of raising a family and they have it all planned out. Indeed, if you talk to them, they will explain that to you. They look for the career first and the whole question of raising the family could come afterwards and they are not content to be mere housewives.

I will hazard a guess, Mr. Speaker, and say that I do believe that in today's Barbados, nine out of ten women actually want to work. A lot of them, Sir, are pursuing higher education. The whole question of the institutions of higher learning in this country, I do believe that if you had to do a survey there again the findings would be very interesting. Because if you look at it certainly as it meets the eye, it tells us that they are a lot more women at these institutions of higher learning, at the Community College, the Cave Hill Campus and so on than there are the boys and the men.

I do believe that the whole question of EduTech that the majority of people who would benefit from the EduTech programme again will be the females. It is perhaps a bit frightening to us as men, but it is the truth.

Indeed, the Parliamentarians as we all are in here will tell you that the people who come to us in the constituency offices asking for the jobs, 90%, of the times would be the women who come there asking for employment.

You see, Mr. Speaker, there are so many demands being made on our money nowadays that 90%, I believe of the women who work simply have to. They have no choice. They live in a real world. This is the reality. They have to lool$ after their children's education, Mr. Speaker. They have to look after the cost of the food. The cost of clothes. The light bills and so on. They have to go after a pay cheque.

If they do not Mr. Speaker, I believe that some of them will fall through the cracks. In fact there are some of them who get such a small pay, Mr. Speaker, that they might still fall through the cracks.

Having said all that though, Mr. Speaker, one of my biggest worries about the whole question of globalization, is how it will affect our female workers. How globalization would affect our female workers because I interpret globalization, Mr. Speaker, to mean that there is indeed a real possibility that we could see the exit of certain sectors of our informatics sector heading towards Mexico and Costa Rico where labour is much cheaper. It is going to be a matter of survival of the fittest and people are going to adopt this attitude.

So, Mr. Speaker, I remember the Honourable Member for Christ Church East spoke about building up our people's capacity to earn.

I remember a few weeks ago the Governor of the Central Bank made the point that some of our women will have to look towards non-traditional forms of employment, non-traditional jobs. But whatever we do, Mr. Speaker, we must keep the door open for these women, we have to.

I do not think that the day is fast approaching any longer, Sir, I believe that the day has arrived when young Barbadian women will indeed have to look at the construction industry for jobs to sustain themselves and their families. In areas, Sir, such as tiling, painting, steel bending, those areas are areas which our females may be called upon to explore.

Already, Sir, there are signs that our young ladies have realised the need to get into the non-traditional areas. We are actually seeing a lot of it. The National Training Board, Sir, is witnessing the increase in numbers of females in carpentry, in masonry, in plumbing, electrical installation and steel bending. Indeed, in the construction sector generally at the National Training Board, we are witnessing this increase in the number of female entrants and participants. Even in the bobcat and the backhoe classes, the young females are making their presence felt.

More importantly, Sir, they are doing extremely well in those classes. 7.05 p.m.

I spoke to the Director of the National Training Board only to hear that in some cases in the very classes that I just spoke about, the bobcat, the backhoe and so on, some of the females were actually at the top of the class. In quite a few instances they are doing better than their male counterparts.

Over the past six months, calls have gone out, Mr. Speaker, for us to import workers from overseas. In fact, I have on my desk right now a letter from a Guyanese official asking us to take some Guyanese workers for the reaping of sugar cane and so on. I do know it is something which is fairly ongoing.

In the construction area as well we are getting requests for people to come to Barbados to get into the area of construction. I look forward to the day when any shortage in construction workers created by the lack of male local workers can be adequately and competently filled by the availability of skilled female construction workers because as we have to admit, this is work too and it is something which they can manage, something which they can handle.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 21 st century, we have to look closely at those matters which will impact on our people and on the quality of their lives. I am convinced that Government's proposals as set out by the Honourable Prime

Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, will do justice. Therefore, Sir, these Estimates have my fullest support. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed heartened by the Estimates that were set aside this year by the Honourable Prime Minister. I am indeed honoured to be here today to speak on how the Estimates for this year will impact on housing in particular, and how it will help all Barbadians. Mr. Speaker, I must say from the outset that I am pleased to see that the economy for the last four years has sustained on an average of 4% growth and this is, indeed, commendable when one looks at the years of Democratic Labour Party rule where one saw negative growth. Indeed, I must say that the economy started to grow from 1993 or thereabout but sustained growth for the last four years is indeed commendable and it is expected that the economy will continue to grow for the next year or so by 3%.

I am also heartened, Mr. Speaker, in the fact that employment has been created in this country so that we now have unemployment down to less than 11.5%. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we must take into consideration the rate of inflation. The rate of inflation has been stabilised. It is lower than it was three years ago so that Barbadians are not talking tonight about the impact of the VAT. Barbadians are not speaking tonight on how the VAT has impacted on them. In fact, we can say that over the last two or three years, Barbadians were concentrating more on seeking employment and on spending money to help themselves in construction, help themselves in other areas of economic activity rather than in looking at the VAT and other measures which the Opposition was trying to point out. One found, Mr. Speaker, that when the election time came up it was not an issue.

Mr. Speaker, this economy has shown confidence by all Barbadians. All level right thinking Barbadians recognise that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has done an excellent job in providing the confidence which all Barbadians are proud of. I speak of investor confidence in traditional areas of manufacturing, traditional areas in the service sector where more hotels are now being refurbished, manufacturing and other areas of economic activity that foreigners are now clinging to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to concentrate, however, on investment in the housing sector which is really taking on a new dimension. There are a number of foreign interests, foreign investors who are really looking at Barbados and why are they looking at Barbados? Why are the foreign investors looking at Barbados' economy? When one looks across the Caribbean one finds there are larger countries with greater population numbers, where there is a strong demand for housing, where there is strong demand for construction yet Barbados has been attracting a number of foreign investors out of Canada, out of the U.S.A., out of Italy and out of England.

There are a number of investors who want to put large sums of money into housing in Barbados. Every day for the last four or five years a number of investors have been seeking to come into Barbados to provide the solution for housing and that is why we were on a path of providing the necessary infrastructure. One found that since 1996 or thereabout this Government has spent on an average more than $6 million every year in acquisitions. In fact, in 1996 we spent over $6 million in acquisitions. In 1997 we spent $7 million. Last year this Government spent $8 million in acquisitions and this year we expect to spend $6.5 million in acquisitions of land to sustain our land bank. At the end of last year our land bank totalled more than 500 acres of land, and we must commend Government. 7.15p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we did this to help provide solutions to housing and this year, despite we are not having the same level of money put into the Estimates as last year, we do not need it because we have concentrated in the last years on building the land bank. The activity in acquisitions will continue but not at the same level as in the past years because we want to concentrate now on developing the land that we have acquired over the last four years. We are happy to point to the fact that we have written all the Members of Parliament asking them to point out to us where land is available for housing development, where land is available for CGI vmunity development.

The Honourable Member for St. John asked the question where is our focus and a vision for the Ministry. Surely, Mr. Speaker, these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure point to the vision for the future if one looks at how we are providing an opportunity to make Barbadians truly owners, to make this a landowning democracy where Barbadians can own their homes. It was not like this under the Dems. In this new dispensation, Mr. Speaker, we envisage as we approach the year 2000 that Barbadians who want to own their homes will do so and we are providing the mechanism through which they can do so.

WThen one looks at these Estimates it points to the fact that money is provided for the development of the land and we are pushing ahead to develop our programme but I want to underscore the fact that when one looks at the Estimates on page 5 it really heartens my heart because you see this year that over $553 million will be spent on wages and salaries, and why do I look at that? $553.6 million will be spent on wages and salaries up from $508 million last year. That is important. I will tell you why.

Persons usually get loans and mortgages based on their salaries. Persons receive a quarter of a salary and they pay for mortgages and if one looks at the wages that will be spent this year one can argue that over $138.4 million will be spent on housing solutions in this country. Mortgages will be spent because people usually spend a quarter of their wages on the housing solution either in rent payment of mortgages or in some other fashion to housing. We can say that when one sustains the level of wages to the extent that we are doing in this country it only points to the fact and explains why every MP is now bombarded by people asking for housing.

Do you know why they are asking for housing? They are asking for housing because they have real wages in their possession. They have savings in the bank and they want to turn it into real assets. That is a fact. People are asking every day to provide housing for themselves and their families and this Government has provided the mechanism and when the Honourable Member for St. John asks about the vision for the future it explains that we have a vision for the future in these Estimates that we will sustain the economy to such an extent that Barbadians will continue demand for housing.

Mr. Speaker, we also started a year or two ago under the last Honourable Minister of Housing a programme called Settlement 2000. Settlement 2000, Mr. Speaker, will not only be looking at the acquisition of land and the acquisition and development of land but we are also looking at uplifting and reshaping the many tenantries across Barbados.

In that programme, we have also an element of refurbishing the many derelict properties across Barbados. In that programme of Settlement 2000 we envisage that as we go into a new century, as we go into a new millennium, that Barbadians will think more about themselves and their homes, that we will provide the mechanism through which they can upgrade their homes.

It was this Government, Mr. Speaker, that provided the opportunity for Barbadians to acquire loans at 6% and 100% mortgages. We went further and only two weeks ago we came to this Parliament and approved legislation that Barbadians can now acquire not only $100 000 at 100% but they can acquire $250 000 from the Barbados Mortgage Finance to help supply the solution to housing.

The Honourable Member asked if poor people could buy at $250 000. You would be surprised to know and the Honourable Member for St. John spoke about it today that people are building big homes in their communities and you do not have to buy a home at $250 000. It is spending below $250 000 but you qualify to buy the homes at 6%.

Mr. Speaker, I can point to the fact that at the National Housing Corporation last year a number of people got loans from the General Workers' Loan Fund which is lending the $5 000 within 48 hours. From April 1994 to February 1999 I have to tell this Honourable House that the General Workers' Loan Fund loaned to ordinary Barbadians - the maids, the cooks, the general workers got a total of $20 million to repair their homes, to buy land and make themselves comfortable.

I want to assure this Honourable House that over the next 12 months because we have set ourselves a target that we want to encourage more Barbadians to obtain loans from the National Housing Corporation at 6%. We want to encourage ordinary Barbadians to get loans to upgrade themselves. We want to go into the new century in real style. We want to encourage Barbadians - and this Estimates provides the mechanism through which Barbadians can now go into the new century improving themselves. 7.25 p.m.

I want to say that we stand ready to help them. Not only, Mr. Speaker, are we going to encourage Barbadians to develop their homes, improve their homes, improve their surroundings, Mr. Speaker, but these Estimates also speak to the fact that more land will be acquired for recreation. We have acquired more playing fields and more community centres across these areas than ever before. Over the past three years, Mr. Speaker, over 65.7 acres of land was acquired for recreation at 70 sites across the country. Recreation, Mr. Speaker, in St. Michael Central...

Asides.

Hon G. A. CLARKE: St. Michael Central got a piece of the action. St. John, Christ Church, everywhere got a piece of the action, Mr. Speaker, and we are developing. We have passed them over to the Ministry of Sports and I am pleased that the Ministry of Sports have developed and have responded to the request. In this year, Mr. Speaker, more money is put for the Ministry of Sports, not only to develop recreation but also to build more pavilions and so on. I hope that the Honourable Minister will also remember St. George North.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I am just hoping. Money is put in the Estimates this year to help develop recreational facilities. The Ministry of Housing will not only be providing house spots and so on but we want to develop communities.

I heard the Honourable Member for the City spoke some time ago about the new development, a new concept for housing. I want to assure the Member for the City that

we in the Ministry of Housing, are now looking at a new project for the year 2000. A new concept of architectural design, a new concept of development and we are hoping to put that on the market very soon.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that this year we are providing opportunity for landless farmers. We have identified, Mr. Speaker, land at Coverley which is Government owned and we are taking out the land for housing and the remainder of this land will be given to the Ministry of Agriculture where they are going to provide land for landless farmers. For a number of years, there are a number of farmers who have been asking for a little acre, two acres or three acres of land to develop spots for animal husbandry and so on.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: We are doing this in order to provide self-employment and provide employment for Barbadians who want to go into agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we are also providing the mechanism and right here in the Estimates it is shown that we are now about to sell units at Church Village. We have visited Crrirch Village recently and it is in our Manifesto on housing...

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: In our Manifesto, Mr. Speaker, on page 25, which is a document of the House, we pledged to provide the mechanism. We make the point:

> "Accelerate the sale of existing single, duplex and terraced units of the NHC. Pricing of units will reflect the duration of the tenancy and a payment history of the tenants."

We want to say to the House that very soon we will be announcing a policy where part of the rent paid over the years to National Housing Corporation will go towards the down payment of the house. That is part of our Manifesto and I am pleased to say that it will come in this year. We have provided the mechanisms and we are providing the vision that the Honourable Member has asked for that we will honour our commitment. That Barbadians, those persons living in the units will get an opportunity to own their homes and part of the rent paid over the years, they will be entitled to buy those homes and a part will be the down payment.

We will also encourage persons who do not want to live in the housing units but have rented for twenty years, that portion too will also go to buy land belonging to the National Housing Corporation somewhere else. That is the policy that we want to enunciate. All of these things, Mr. Speaker, are coming out of these Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and the honour to say that I support the measures that are announced in these Estimates and I want all Honourable Members to follow suit.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. There is no grace period, the bell is rung and we go straight into it.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 7.35 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, 1 think v e need to remind ourselves of the speech made by the Right iionourabie Member for St. Peter and Minister of Finance *

yesterday in commencing this debate on the Appropriation Bill. In my judgement it sets the parameters within which this debate will usefully be conducted. If I may say so, Sir, it was wide ranging in nature, characterised by sound economics and a lot of practical good sense. In the course of his speech the Honourable Minister of Finance reminded us of the genesis of payments problems in small open economies like our own and the steps that must be put in train if we are to avoid those payment difficulties such as bedevilled us at different stages of our economic history since Independence. It is that recognition of the necessity for us to avoid payment difficulties that I think in the end informed the structure of the Estimates. It informed too the strategies and the tactics employed in framing the Estimates before us.

There are three features which we need to note, Sir. There is, first of all, the commitment to fund the deficit by external borrowing. There is secondly, the commitment too to de-accelerate the pace of growth in the economy from 5% to 3% so as to ensure that there is no stress and strain placed on our foreign exchange reserves. There is too, Sir, indication that the capital works programme which will be implemented in the course of the year will consist in the main of projects from which there has been foreign funding. For example EduTech 2000, the Airport Expansion and

Redevelopment Project, the Bridgetown Road Project, the Sewerage Project and so on.

It is significant and ought to be mentioned in the course of this address that we have a new phenomenon in our economic history insofar as there is a threatened payments difficulty. It arises not from Government's borrowing from the Central Bank as has happened at different points in our recent history but from credit created by the public sector. That credit is not credit that has been the result of consumer spending but the result, in the main, of major productive projects as reflected in the $1.7 billion or thereabout which is on the drawing board or on the ground in our tourism sector.

Sir, the 5% growth which we have experienced over the last year is a remarkable performance given the low from which we have come only four years ago. I think there are one or two points that have got to be made which are causes for concern. The first relates to the fact that the unemployment decline which has resulted from the growth has benefitted men to a much larger degree than women. While the unemployment among men is about 8% both in my constituency and nationally, among women it varies between 15% and 20%. When we remember, Sir, that most Barbadian homes are headed by women most of whom are anxious to participate in the labour force, it points to the necessity for all of us who are concerned to fashion programmes and projects to make sure that at this stage there are skewed, if I may so put it, in favour of the women.

The women have been put at a disadvantage for two reasons. The employment that has been generated has been as a result of the construction boom in the main. That has given rise to a large range of steelbenders, carpenters, masons, brick layers, tilers, truck drivers and what is sometimes referred to as heavy duty work not ideally suited for women folk. At the same time as the boom, we have had a decline in jobs in data processing on our industrial estates resulting from the fact that many of those operations have found it economically prudent to relocate to less expensive destinations such as Mexico and the Dominican Republic and others. That is why, Sir, I think we must all lean on the Minister of Finance to make sure that all those who have been given short-term employment in the run-up to the election and in the last few months, should be retained as much as possible because for the most part, those who have been so employed are women in the Ministry of Public Works, NCC and in other institutions.

Even though the Prime Minister is concerned, and rightly so, about the rise of the wage bill to the extent of some 9% or thereabout, I think that in the multi-billion dollar economy such as ours, that the finding of an additional $1 million, $2 million or $3 million to make sure that those women are kept at work is worth it because, through no fault of their own, they have not benefitted to the same extent as the men have benefitted in the great economic activity which we have been experiencing in this country in the last few years.

There is another point, Sir, which I think ought to be emphasised. It has to do with fact that even though income distribution in Barbados is among the most even in the developing world, that was pointed out more than 25 years ago resulting from a study of Barbados and some twenty other countries in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere using what is called the Lorenz Curve. This is a statistical device for measuring the evenness of income distribution or lack of it. Notwithstanding that, Sir, there is at least one class that has been left behind in Barbados. I have alluded to that some two or three years ago in a speech in this Parliament and I want to return to it because the Honourable Minister of Finance seems acutely aware of their plight too. I am referring to agricultural workers.

In relative terms it is my judgement that they are as badly off as they were in 1937/38 when the Deane Commission sat. I recently re-visited the evidence that was given before the Deane Commission in 1938 following the riots in Barbados. Even though there were several classes of persons in Barbados that were very depressed, I formed the judgement then that agricultural workers were among the most depressed. That situation obtains today again. Women working in agriculture are to found in the constituencies of St. John, St. Joseph, St. Thomas, St. Peter and St. George for the most part, they often get no more than three days work. They carry home no more than $100 to $105. It is a matter of deep regret that for reasons which I find hard to understand, a lot of them haye not benefitted. I do not want to overstate it but there are some of them who have still not got the reversed tax credit of $350. 10.15a.m.

Mr. Speaker, an interesting suggestion was made yesterday by the Right Honourable Prime Minister to the effect that we need to refine the reverse tax credit or introduce some form of differential so as to make sure that the very poorest of the poor are better treated through the reverse tax credit than the less poor. That is an interesting suggestion but in my judgment it may not in the end go far enough. It may be necessary to fashion an additional instrument to take care of the plight of our agricultural workers particularly those in the field.

I am concerned, Sir, that we may not know as mucri as we ought to know about them. In what circumstances do they live? What will be the shape of their pensions? Can they look forward to retirement in dignity, defined at the lowest level of dignity? And in my judgement a study ought to be done on whether we do it through a Parliamentary Committee or some other institution. We need to make it our business to know and to know soon what exactly is the plight of these agricultural workers who have been left behind and

who are now outside of the mainstream as we are moving towards a new plateau of economic well being . That is my first consideration about our going foward and leaving some of our brothers and sisters behind. I think that we can all agree those of us who know of these things and those of us who are in the rural constituencies in Barbados can speak with first-hand knowledge. And so plantation managers were not terribly concerned about the recent wage negotiations involving agricultural workers, because they said,

> "Look! If the Unions want $50 a day, give the Unions $50 a day and let us get on, because at the end of the day we will only give them two days work, so that our bill would still be the same $100."

That was the view which I heard expressed by many of them. But it goes to emphasise the plight of these workers.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot live as the head of a household, without dependents on $100 a week in a Barbados as we know it today. Only to state that as the average earnings of some of them is to indicate the depth and the enormity of the problem with which they are faced.

I want, Sir, to deal with one or two other problems. The Honourable Minister of Finance and the Right Honourable Prime Minister in the course of what I regard as an important speech which he made yesterday, alluded too, Sir, to the initiatives which are taking place in the courses abroad which we need to understand and relate to because we are not to be left behind. The importance, for example, of our getting the best out of the negotiations leading to our involvement in NAFTA, the importance of having a successor convention to LOME IV which is in the interest of the African-Caribbean and Pacific countries, the importance, of our understanding and adjusting ourselves to the forces of globalisation and liberalisation and the speech of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East was very much in that trend too.

Tourism is and will remain for the long future the main source of foreign exchange in the country. The point needs to be made, Sir, that for small open economies like our own, the pace of our development, the structure of our development will be dictated in large measure by our earnings in foreign exchanges and the reserves of foreign exchange which we have. It is virtually a break of our development. If you have no foreign exchange, you cannot move forward in any viable way, or at all. So that we must always bear in mind the importance of foreign exchange earnings and foreign exchange reserves in a small and open economy like our own.

It seems to me, Sir, that we have to revisit our tourism and ask ourselves some questions about our markets and look too, at the extent to which liberalisation and globalisation is impacting on international air transport. It raises a very important question because unless we make sure that we have adequate air lifts into Barbados and out of Barbados we may be putting this substantial investment in our tourism plant only to find down the road that we do not have the capacity to bring visitors to Barbados and to take them out of Barbados - so it is a very important issue, liberalisation and globalisation as it affects our international air transport.

Before that, Sir, I need to make the point that even though our tourism has been growing - it has as it were, Sir, been this engine of tourism which has been firing essentially on one cylinder and that is the visitors from the UK market.

The UK market took off, Sir, from way back in the late stages of the 1980s, around 1988. My good friend on the right, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South will correct me, working as he does on these issues on a day-to-day basis, if indeed I should misstep or even misspeak. It is interesting because it came at a time when we started to allow Charters into Barbados in the face of much resistance from people in the industry who felt that Charters would cheapen our product and we may have a situation where women in curlers, as it used to be said, might be found walking the beaches of Sandy Lane.

The Charters came, Sir, and I think the jury is no longer out in relation to the UK market. I think the jury is in that the Charters which for the most part, bring visitors at the lower end of the market can co-exist with Concords and BA Cabin Class and First Class. The point that I wish to make about the UK market, however, is that it would be unwise for us to continue to have our heavy reliance on it. There is a need for serious diversification. It is at the end of the day a small market and there is a limit to how much fishing as it were, can be done out of that sea.

It is dominated, Sir, arid this is a special feature of the UK market, by three or four tour operators. They exercise disproportionate influence in the market. The fact that we are now getting rates which short haul destinations are getting, is a reflection of the large clout which they exercise. At any time they can shift the visitors elsewhere in the Caribbean or beyond. These markets at the end of day, however long a ride you get - as it were - are vulnerable to cycles, shifts and tastes and at the end of the day you can suffer from fatigue that those, particularly the repeat visitors, after a while they get tired with you and they want to go elsewhere.

So it seems to me, Sir, that we must put more emphasis in Europe, outside of the UK. 10.25a.m.

Germany is the market in which we have invested years ago and we suffered a downturn. The Germans continued to travel and I think it would be unwise to retreat from that market in the face of economic difficulties and that we should continue to invest in Germany and in particular, Sir, we should put more infrastructural organizational infrastructure there.

For too long, we have been dependent on a single man. There have been two or three development which have called for concern. We have lost BWIA in Germany. Martin Air is caused for concern, it is believed now the very latest information reaching BA is that they will come back next winter but they are'likely to have a summer programme and Condor is really no more than a scheduled charter.

We have to work closely with them and we have to make sure too that we put some investment in the Benelux countries bearing in mind that Amsterdam is an important hub and that a lot of the traffic that we have got out of Europe have over the years come via Amsterdam.

But it is in terms of diversification which is our answer. I want to turn to the US market because that is still the most lucrative market in the world. It is close to Barbados relatively speaking, just three or four hours away. We can claim some cultural harmony not to the same extent as with the UK. But we have been at a plataeu from a drop, we have tended to plataeu in terms of the number of visitors out of the US for a while.

Unfortunately, we have not done, in my judgement the diagnostic study that needs to be done to determine why is it that we are not getting larger numbers out of the US market.

We are told that it is a result of the fact, Sir, that we only have two gateways. That is, that we only come out of Miami and out of New York. We are told, Sir, that we are not spending enough money in television promotion. All sorts of armchair theories have been advanced in relation to the United States of America's market.

But I said four years ago in here and I will repeat it, that we need to go about the whole question of addressing the United States of America market in a more scientific way than we have been doing.

We need to begin by doing an empirical analysis, a diagnostic study, as to why is it that we are not doing better out of the United States market.

Now, things have worsened to some extent for us because we now have no US chains in Barbados and a lot of visitors follow chains. With the closure of Marriotts, there is no US chain with Barbados.

But I think too, Sir, that we have got to look at what the Jamaicans have been doing. It is true that their situation is slightly different from ours. They are closer and they have many more American carriers there than we have, US-Air and Continental and Delta and so on. We now have only American Airlines and that is a very serious situation that we are in, Sir. Because you only got to cast your mind back, Mr. Speaker, three to four weeks ago when there was a strike in America. The whole industry was in a state of panic. Now that is a totally undesirable situation that we have one single American carrier that comes into Barbados and so we are at the mercy of the corporate decisions of American Airlines.

Now, Jamaica, Sir, was able to, working closer with wholesalers in specific cities... They have been able in recent years to develop traffic from cities not covered by scheduled carriers. It seems to me, Sir, that that is a lesson we have got to learn.

But we need to say something, Sir, about what is happening in relation to our international transport policy. Following the regulations in the States, Sir, there was a lot of excess capacity and we benefitted from that capacity. We had Eastern. We had Pan-Am and that was of America, Sir. So, it was a reflection of the excess capacity resulting from the regulations. Everybody got into the market.

Then we went through that period, Sir, of savage warfare among the carriers and the massive hemorrhaging and Pan-Am went to the wall and Eastern went to the wall almost simultaneously and then the decision makers of Barbados were heard to shout to the bureaucrats, go and get Delta, as though Delta was there waiting on Barbados. That is not the way to do it.

We are regarded more and more in this era of globalisation and liberalisation and a collapse of that excess capacity as a marginal destination. We have to face that reality. There is no excess capacity waiting to come to us but the story of Virgin is instructive, Sir. Because we cultivated a relationship with Virgin a way back four years ago. We made regular presentations to them. We kept them up-to-date on what was happening in the Barbados market.

At one stage, it was even printed in the trade press four years ago that they had made a decision to come to Barbados. That was an announcement in the trade press. The Prime Minister may not remember that he had a breakfast meeting with myself and three or four people from Virgin and the Chief Advisor on those matters at the time, Mr. Clarke.

At the last moment, however, and this is important, Mr. Speaker, it was a question of where the most profits could be made. There was one plane available, one piece of equipment and they decided to go to Florida.

We kept up our relations with them and when the bottom dropped out of the South East Asian market and they had some additional equipment and had no problem in coming to Barbados. They had been kept aware of the Barbados situation. They had studied the arithmetic of the market and it was easy for them to come to Barbados. We have to maintain our relationships with those carriers and we have to understand, Sir, the extent to which the whole American situation has changed.

If you go to America now, Sir, you will recognise that there is a parcelling up of the American market among the grandfather carriers as they are called. Those that have survived the hemorrhaging resulting from deregulation even though some of them went into chapter 13 are now strong again. 10.35 a.m.

So in Miami you have American. You go to Fort Worth, you have American. You go to Chicago, you have Continental. You go to St. Paul's, you have North West. You go to Philadelphia, you have US-Air. You go to Washington, you have US-Air. They have parcelled up more and more. They are into alliances. Every major city is a hub. The small cities feed into these hubs.

The Caribbean must now recognise that we are now into the era of these mega carriers and we have got to make partnerships and alliances with them. BWIA, I am advised, is in a relationship with Continental and Air Jamaica has a relationship with Delta.

We in the region need to strengthen the regional carriers so that they are able to make these relationships with partnerships and alliances. Government may have to give more aero political support but what I am concerned about is that this whole process of globalisation and liberalisation might not be sufficiently understood by any of us in terms of its likely impact on capacity air transport services to Barbados and out of Barbados in the future.

Some people go so far as to suggest that we need to move to the establishment of a fund to make sure that we can finance the filling of the gaps that will be bound to result from this process. The Minister may be well advised to commission as early as now a study on the impact of liberalisation and globalisation in terms of international air transport on the Barbados situation and what steps we may have to take to avoid the adverse consequences.

There is an aspect, Sir, of globalisation that we had not sufficiently touched on and I thought that I would express some tentative ideas with respect to its likely impact on Barbados and the Caribbean.

You have been most indulgent, Sir, and I am much indebted.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure presented by the Honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the good management of the economy of this country during the past 4!/2 years is indeed evidenced by the composition of this Honourable House and, indeed, with the exception of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. John, it is good that we could speak on this Side on the good performance not only of the economy but the stewardship of Members of Cabinet on this Side without any interruption and any heckling.

It is indeed interesting to know that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. John are the only two Members on that Side who did not participate in that activity. It would be wise if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy could together with the Honourable Member for St. John advise Members on that Srde to desist from that type of activity.

Mr. Speaker, the performance of the Government during the last 4!/2 years is particularly evident in the areas of housing where for the first time for a long time we have seen renewed activity in this particular area and, as the former Minister of Housing, I think that I would bear the responsibility for any damage control and at the same time I would have to take the credit for any outstanding performance in this particular sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind the Honourable Members on that Side of the outstanding performance in the area of housing during that period and from these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which have been presented to this House one sees a continuation of the initiatives which were taken during that period. We now have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where persons are now better able to access housing in this country thanks not only to the Members on this Side but Members on that Side who assisted in the location of various sites throughout the length and breadth of this country for housing both in terms of housing lots and in terms of terraced units.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the outstanding achievements which can be seen at places like Pondside, Apes Hill Terrace, Flat Rock to mention a few, and one looks at the areas which are presently in the planning stages in Bush Hall for instance one is left to wonder what was happening during the period before the Barbados Labour Party came into Government.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a situation where persons can now access loans as low as $5 000 - maids, labourers, carpenters, artisans, persons in the low salary scale, without the need for any security and all this has assisted the housing situation in this country. We have moved at the National Housing Corporation from a situation where there were $200 000 in loans disbursed when we came into office to a situation where by the time of the last elections $11 million in loans were disbursed under the National Housing Corporation programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. We have seen the improvement of the plight of persons who were qualified tenants under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, the receipt of grants, $15 000 to persons who were affected by the amendments which the last Administration made to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act.

We have seen administrative changes in terms of those urban tenants and when we talk of urban tenants we do not mean urban tenants in a loose way who are now able to purchase their lots at $2.50 per square foot. All these changes have taken place at a time when there has been a general improvement in the living standards of people in this country.

We have also seen, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, the neglect in areas of land slippage in places in the Scotland District being addressed. For a very long time we have seen the neglect in these areas where persons who had been affected by land slippage were not able to have alternative accommodation like persons in the rest of Barbados and it is good that in these Estimates one is able to see a continuation of this policy whereby persons in places like White Hill are now able to be relocated at Government's expense being given the opportunity to own their own houses at concessionary prices.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates also see a continuation of the improvement in the infrastructure in the rural areas, areas which for a very long time, which include St. John, have been neglected by previous Democratic Labour Party administrations if only because of the fact that in those areas there was a heavy representation by the Barbados Labour Party and also a heavy support for the Barbados Labour Party.

So the rural infrastructure in places like St. Joseph St. John, St. Andrew, St. Peter and St. Thomas could now be improved drastically and these Estimates see a further improvement of the rural infrastructure in those areas.

In the area of transport these Estimates will also address the inequalities in the delivery of those services to people in the rural areas. The Urban Development Commission has during its short period of existence worked wonders in ensuring that people in the urban areas for the first time received the type of assistance which was denied tljem by former administrations even at the time when the Government on that Side had represented those constituencies. 10.45 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that there was a rebellion on January 20, 1999, if only because Members on that Side had threatened to disband the Urban Development Commission.

Mr. Speaker, in these Estimates one sees the additional assistance being given to institutions, agencies of Government, Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission in order to alleviate the plight of persons who are less fortunate than most of us in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of a Ministry dealing with the plight of these people has gone a long way in ensuring that those persons who are less well off in this society will feel that for the first time people like us, people in this Assembly really care about them.

These Estimates, Mr. Speaker, place a very heavy burden on that Ministry not only to ensure that all services are delivered to those individuals - those individuals falling through the cracks. These Estimates also represent the commitment of this Government of making these people feel that they are not second class citizens in this society. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the composition of this House, when you realise the background of Members like the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Minister of Finance, one is left with no doubt that Members on this Side are truly committed and ensuring that persons at the lowest end of the bracket are not left out in the overall development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, one is left to wonder why Honourable Members on that Side cannot understand the Government's commitment by establishing a Ministry of Social Transformation in ensuring the upliftment of those individuals at the bottom rung of the ladder.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates are presented at a time when we are moving into a new century. They are presented, Mr. Speaker, at a time when globalisation has changed the entire pattern internationally as to how we do business. These Estimates are presented at a time when because of globalisation, Barbados will be seen as just a small village. These Estimates are presented at a time when certain engines that used to drive the economy of small companies like manufacturing and agriculture will lose its emphasis in the scheme of things.

Mr. Speaker, because of the declining influence to the economy in areas like agriculture and manufacturing, it is important that small economies like Barbados look to some other source in order to drive its economy. This is the reason why tourism has become a very important tool in most of the global economies of the world. Tourism, Mr. Speaker, is the principal engine of growth in the Barbados economy representing some 70% of the foreign exchange of this country. It is responsible, Mr. Speaker, for some 20 000 jobs - on average, Mr. Speaker. When you look at the situation with respect to most of the countries internationally, one would see the increasing importance of tourism and the challenges which face Barbados as we move into the 20th century. A country which relies so heavily on tourism obviously would have great challenges in order to remain in the market.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest challenges is the increased competition from new emerging destinations notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, the crisis in Asia. We have had a situation where in the Eastern Asian and Pacific countries the tourism industry has been growing at a rate of 10.4% as compared to our growth of 8% in Barbados. In the Middle East there has been a growth of 14%. In China, 11.1% and in Latin America 6.1%. Even, Mr. Speaker, in the traditional destinations there has been tremendous growth when you take into consideration what has been happening in the United States where there has been a greater concentration on domestic travel. In some cases an increase by as much as 13%.

This means, Mr. Speaker, that a small country like Barbados has to be prepared for these challenges. It is fairly obvious that in order to benefit from the worldwide expansion in the area of tourism, we will have to ensure that not only we increase the numbers but also maintain the quality of the tourism product.

Mr. Speaker, this administration in its endeavour at improving the tourism product in this country in order to increase the capacity of small hotels which accounts for some 70% of the hotel rooms has in its Manifesto committed itself to the establishment of a small hotel co-operative in order to facilitate the operation of small hotels. We are also committed to a small hotels investment fund to provide capital for the improvement of their properties and a hotel equity investment fund in order to meet the long-term financial needs of the sector.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other challenges which the hotel industry faces as it moves into the next millennium in order to meet this increasing competition. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke of developing and maintaining adequate airlift into Barbados. 10.55a.m.

Mr. Speaker, there has been fluctuations in the number of tourists coming to Barbados during the past ten years. It is not difficult for us to explain the shift in the improvement or the increase in the visitor traffic from the UK over the US market. The same reasons that have been advanced as to this increase in the UK market are the same reasons which were there at the time when the US market outstripped the UK market. The US market in 1999 accounted for 33.4% of the market as opposed to 20.7% in the UK. By 1998 the figures had moved from 25.6% with respect to the US market and 36.4% with respect to the UK market.

Mr. Speaker, those same reasons were there at the time when the US market dominated the tourism sector in terms of the visitor arrivals. The question with respect to our association with the UK and our association in terms of our colonial ties is one of the reasons advanced as to the improvement in the UK market to the strong sterling which was also evident in the 1980s.

It is fairly obvious, Mr. Speaker, if we are to ensure that we maintain a prominent place with respect to the tourism sector, it is fairly obvious that we have to address the various concerns relevant to the decline in the US market. There can be no certainty that the improvement in the UK market is something which will remain. The UK market is as important to us as the US market and it is fairly obvious that if we are to ensure that we do not put all of our eggs in one basket by putting a lot of emphasis on the UK market that we will have to do some very serious marketing and to do an assessment as to why we have lost the US market.

Mr. Speaker, the question of the cruise tourism business is also one which will have to be addressed as we move into the next millennium. There has been a decline in cruise tourism over the past ten years. It was the first time since 1998 that we had a decline in the cruise tourism business. In assessing the importance of cruise tourism to this country and in determining what benefits in terms of charges, it is fairly obvious that we should have a serious look at the Head Tax which is charged to the various cruise lines coming to Barbados.

The cruise tax should be looked at in the same way that one assesses, if I may use the analogy of a person who is making a claim for personal injuries in an accident where it is extremely difficult to assess the real extent of the injury. Cruise lines are becoming better and bigger. It is extremely difficult to assess the damage to the sea bed. It is extremely difficult to assess the damage to the environment and it is fairly obvious that no matter what are the benefits coming to the country at this particular point to persons like taxi drivers and tour operators that we look to the future. If we do not make a true assessment of the Head Tax which is being charged to the various cruise lines, our children and our children's children will be left with a liability which it will be extremely difficult to wipe out in future years.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is therefore very important that this whole question of the Head Tax be looked at in its true perspective. At the moment, the two issues involving the Head Tax are the amount of money which we pay to the Bridgetown Cruise Terminals on the one hand out of what is paid by the cruise lines and the amount of money which we charge cruise lines on the other hand.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to address the problem pertaining to the amount of money which we pay the cruise lines on the one hand, we must therefore put our house in order and ensure that it would not appear to the cruise lines as though whenever we get an increase that that particular increase goes to some other agency, individual or corporate entity which bears no relevance to the increase which we requested in the first place.

This is a matter, Mr. Speaker, which we need to look at. It is a very pressing matter and where the cruise lines are concerned, we need to make sure that that Head Tax bears some relationship to the type of damage which might come to this country at sometime in the future, taking into consideration the points which I mentioned about the damage to the sea bed.

And, at a time, Mr. Speaker, when we are expanding the Bridgetown Port at a cost which is not reflected in what we charge the cruise lines, it is fairly obvious that this matter be addressed with some degree of urgency. 11.05a.m.

I would hope that the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal dealing with our internal matters before we deal with the cruise lines would at least come to Government voluntarily with some proposal before any action is contemplated as to what Government sees as a what I would call redressing of certain imbalances which might not be in the interest of many of us in the business.

Mr. Speaker, the question of the infrastructure or rather the infrastructural development is one which must also be addressed when you think in terms of the air links. The question as to whether or not we have adequate facilities in order to accommodate the types of air lift that we would like out of the various destinations must be addressed.

During this administrative period we will see an expansion of the Grantley Adams Airport in order to accommodate the type of traffic which one would expect up to the year 2015, when this is added to the expansion, which will take place at the Bridgetown Port. It is fairly obvious that we in the tourism sector are making an effort in order to address this whole problem of infrastructural development.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I am obliged to you.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed happy to be giving my maiden speech in this Honourable House in support of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1999-2000.

The policy programme which informs these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure is designed to facilitate continued economic growth and development in this country.

This country has gone through periods of economic boom and burst during the last three decades. The more recent experience of economic downturns during the early 1990[f]s resulted in severe hardships for large numbers of Barbadians, especially the least fortunate.

The origin of this crisis was widely discussed in this Honourable House and elsewhere. All informed participants to this important discussion noted that international factors and irresponsible domestic economic management at the time were the major contributory factors which created the problems for the Government of the day.

The Government of the day, the Democratic Labour Party Administration, ignoring all advice from those very knowledgeable persons, increased Government expenditure significantly during the year 1990.

If one looks at the economic and financial statistics, January 1999 at page 58, Table Gl, you will see that between the years 1989, 1990 and 1991 that current expenditure in this country increased from $851.7 million to $957.268 million, giving us an increase of $105.56 million.

Capital expenditure over the same period increased from $202.649 million to about $240.1 million, giving us an increase during that year of $37.4 million dollars.

The most important figure nevertheless, if we look down the final column, Sir, was the deficit and it appears as an outlay in that column, a deficit of a whopping $ 248.187 million up from a modest $66.4 million from the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, while the Government of the day was engaging in these bouts of reckless spending, the Barbados economy's progress was retarded. Real growth in 1990, Mr. Speaker was -3.3%, compared with 3.6% in 1989. But of course the retardation in the Barbados economy continued in the ensuing years 1991 and 1992 where the figures for economic growth was -3.9% and -5.7% respectively. That information can be found in the Annual Statistical Digest, page 183 Table 11.

To support this level of fiscal impudence at that time, the Government made every use of Central Bank's finances.

Domestic credit to the Government between 1989 and 1990 moved from $262.5 million in 1989 to $498 million in 1990, an increase of some 89.7% in the one year.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were treated to a very intellectual presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister, where he gave us some insights on the causes of balance of payments problems in the Barbados economy. The empirical evidence for Barbados and indeed other Caribbean countries and indeed other less developed economies accords with the analysis utilized by the Honourable Prime Minister yesterday.

The main point he made yesterday was that balances of payments problems in our types of economies have as its major cause or one of its major causes, fiscal impudence afforded by the Central Bank financing.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, reminded this House that one of the more important statistics, economic variables in small open economies, is the balance of payments. He reminded us that the balance of payments is a statistic of highly significant importance because of the high degree of openness of our economy. The high degree of import dependence of our economy and it is absolutely necessary for us to either build our stocks of foreign reserves or be in a position to access financing from external sources in order to promote the productive structures of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, there is a theory in the field of economics, which connects politics and economics. This theory is called the Political Business Cycle Theory and is associated with Professor William Norris.

I want to take a couple moments to explain the essence of this Political Business Cycle Theory, because it is relevant to the point I am making. The Political Business Cycle Theory suggests that politicians manipulate economic policy to secure electoral gain. Let me repeat that. Politicians manipulate economic policy to secure electoral gain. 11.15a.m.

In the pre-election period the incumbent created favourable economic conditions by using expansionary fiscal and monetary policies. These policies, though promoting growth in the short-term basis and in a very artificial sense, had severe economic consequences which manifested themselves in the period immediately after the election. Therefore, the timing for the implementation of the policy must be precise.

Severe economic consequences which manifest themselves depending on the structure of the economy could be inflation, more conventional flowed economies but in highly open economies the severe economic consequences which manifest itself in the period immediately after the election will be destruction of the balance of payments. These problems could become so acute that there has to be a reversal in the economic policy programmes in the period after the election so as to restore some sort of balance to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the political business cycle period, as strictly outlined, is very applicable to Barbados' case as outlined above. In the period leading up to the election on January 21, 1991 there was pretty reckless spending on the part of the Democratic Labour Party and that took place against all proper advice given by Central Bankers.

I remember being a member of the staff of the Department of Economics at the time and listening to Dr. Haynes in this Honourable Chamber warning the Democratic Labour Party that a problem was around the corner and they disregarded the advice even from the old technocrats in the Ministry of Finance all to the detriment of the economic health of this country.

You will recall in the early 1990s we had a situation where the situation with jobs in this country had reached one of the worst states. The unemployment rate climbed to 24.3% in 1993 with the number of persons employed falling from 107.1 thousand in 1991 to 100.4 thousand in 1993.

You will recall also that that period of the early 1990s was characterised by social and industrial discontent. There was also a reduction in the working days for some categories of workers from five days to three days, a week on and a week off programme for other workers.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates which are before this Honourable House, like the others brought to this House by the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, are well-informed by an organised economic programme with clear and achievable objectives and designed to ensure that the citizens of this country will never have to relive those days of the early 1990s.

Since 1993 we have seen a turnaround in the economic fortunes of this country. The Barbados economy has been growing consistently since 1993 and in 1998 alone the economy experienced growth to the tune of 4.9%. Also, this improved economic performance on a consistent basis naturally would have resulted in a real improvement in the job situation in Barbados and at the end of September 1998 we saw the unemployment rate in this country continue to decline reaching a level of 11.8% and that compares very favourably with the 16.1% which existed at the end of the third quarter of the previous year 1997.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John during his fairly lengthy discourse would have wanted us to believe on this Side that the Barbados Labour Party never brought an economic programme which had as its centrepiece an economic strategy for employment creation in this country,

I well remember that over the years the Honourable Prime Minister in his various Budget presentations since assuming office in September 1994 outlined certain elements of a strategy to deal with the employment situation which had reached a really bad state in the early 1990s.

The Honourable Prime Minister over the years and very systematically through providing special incentives promoted the savings habits in this country and facilitated improvements in the transformation process in Barbados, the transformation process being the rate at which savings are transformed into productive activity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, any Government that is able to deal effectively with the employment situation in a country bringing the level of unemployment down from 24.3% to 11.8% in a couple of years, any Government that remains committed to seeing the unemployment rate in this country reach single digit numbers, must at some stage have thought carefully about the type of economic policies which need to be pursued in order to achieve success on that front.

Mr. Speaker, the essence of the Barbados Labour Party's job creation strategy had as its underpinning the creation of the right economic environment in order to allow private investment to flourish hence improving the growth prospects for this country. 11.25a.m.

Mr. Speaker, the good management of the economy can be seen when one takes a look at other important economic areas. Speakers yesterday informed this

Honourable House that there was disinflation in Barbados. The inflation rate was -1.2% in 1998 compared to a rise of 7.6% in 1997. Of course, the rise in the inflation rate in 1997 did not occur as any mystery to anyone. We know that with the introduction of the Value Added Tax a necessary consequence before necessary changes could be made to the Value Added Tax would be an increase in the general level of prices in the country.

So any person or persons who got very excited about an increase in the general level of prices in 1997 would not have understood the immediate impact of the introduction of the Value Added Tax as a result of an attempt by the Government of the day to simplify the indirect taxation structure of this country.

We see that after the euphoria which resulted from the implementation of the Value Added Tax that in the short period afterwards with Government revisiting the structure of the tax and taking advice from all quarters and doing it in a timely way, some advice coming from members on the Other Side, so we need to give them a bit of credit for that; but the Government zero rated a number of items and the zero rating of those items contributed in some way to the reversal in the movement of the level of prices in 1998.

Of course, there were other factors contributing to the dispensation but we must note that changes made to the indirect taxation policy in Barbados was a contributory factor.

During 1998, the net international reserves of the monetary authority declined by $ 14.1 million with the sort of reserves at the end of the year amounting to some 12 weeks of imports. This net international reserve movement and the reasons for it were quite ably explained by the Right Honourable Prime Minister when the Prime Minister concluded his presentation yesterday. At some point during his presentation he emphasised the importance of managing the foreign re$erves of Barbados properly and understanding the linkage between Government expenditure, running a fiscal deficit, using Central Bank financing to accommodate those deficits and that it is vitally important that we hold to a fairly tight programme of Government expenditure.Therefore we need to run a fiscal deficit which is manageable in the circumstances and in the Estimates on an international financial institution basis to see that the economy is expected to run a manageable deficit of 1.5%. That is no different from what was experienced or what is expected during the current financial year. The outcome we expect to be in the order of 1.5% of GDP on an IFI basis.

With respect to managing the foreign reserve in the Barbados economy at this time the Prime Minister noted with some concern the way in which the financial system, mainly the commercial banks in Barbados, have been allocating credit during the current financial year and it is vitally important that we pay close attention to the sectoral allocation of credit in this respect.

I noted that domestic credit for the private sector has increased significantly during the last two years but we have to look at the composition of this credit allocation and it becomes a cause for concern when most of the allocation of this credit is finding its way to the personal sector for consumption activity. However, a lot of the credit has found its way to the tourism sector and we know the importance of the tourism sector as an engine of growth to this economy so if that is the case, credit is going to one of those productive sectors which should result in a generation of foreign exchange in order to help keep this economy going forward.

We need to keep a careful eye on the allocation of credit to foreign exchange using sectors, especially the personal sector. The Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is aware of this.

Aside.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: What are the Estimates aiming to facilitate? These Estimates, as I said earlier, are designed in such a way as to maintain Barbados or improve Barbados' economic performance and the forecasting figures indicate that growth over the next financial year should be somewhere between 3% and 4%. The Prime Minister, quite rightly, indicated that at this time the Barbados economy should not be aiming to sustain a growth rate of 4.9%. So the aim is for us to achieve a growth rate of 3%, a rate which with careful economic planning should be sustainable well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more to the Barbados Labour Party as an effective team to take this country into the 21 st century than just proper economic management. I should take this opportunity to say that one of the important planks of Barbados' economic policy which lured me into elective politics was its social policy programme. Being a resident of a rural constituency before I became a representative of the constituency of St. Philip South...

Aside.

11.35a.m.

Asides.

Hon. A .P. WOOD: No, I have not moved out .and I will never move out. Why should I leave St. Philip South when the constituency of St. Philip has probably benefited most by the migration within this country.

Mr. Speaker, I know the gross neglect of the constituency of St. Philip South especially by the Democratic Labour Party over the years. There has been a representative in place in St. Philip South even before I was born.

Mr. Speaker, I know because I can speak from a position of authority about the importance of the establishment of an agency like the Rural Development Commission to deal with certain social and infrastructural deficiencies in rural districts. A number of Honourable Members on this Side, I think can speak with the same degree of conviction and accuracy about the importance of the Urban Development Commission.

These Estimates allows for an increase in allocation for the capital programme of the Rural Development Commission from $6.085 million this year to $7.5 million. I can assure the Honourable Members on the Other Side that this increase in allocation will redound in some way to the benefit of their constituents. There is also an allocation in next year's Estimates of $11 billion for the Urban Development Commission. The Estimates for the year 1999/2000 are designed to further promote the property and land owning democracy in Barbados. The Estimates are also designed to allow to make the requisite changes at the Ministry of Agriculture to make agriculture policy in this country more relevant and more effective as we move into another century.

The Estimates are also designed to allow, through the EduTech programme, to help to better prepare young persons in this country for competition in a fast advancing technological world economy. They are also designed to improve the performance of tourism, our main foreign exchange earning sector.

Mr. Speaker, I have lots more to say but my time is up. I am obliged to you.

Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely grateful to the people of St. Lucy for allowing me the opportunity...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, any MP who can beat off $95,000 on election day and win by 414 votes cannot be barely. As I have said, Sir, I am extremely happy to take part in these Estimates, Sir.

I want to start from the beginning, Sir, by issuing a warning to the Prime Minister of this country, the Honourable Member for St. Peter to let him understand that it is O.K. to come to Parliament every year and talk about running a small deficit. I want this House to understand that whenever there is a deficit on the current account in this country, Sir, that that deficit has to be financed at some time. For the last five to six years, excluding 1997/98, that this economy has been running a small deficit which will have to be financed at some time. I want to tell this House that I am not one who believes that you can continue running an economy on a deficit and clap your chest and say you are performing well. Somebody has to pay for the deficit.

I want this House also to understand that in 1988 to 1989 there was a surplus on the current account of $30 million and that by 1991 the economy was in trouble. I want this House to understand that, Sir. I also want to develop that point by saying that in 1988 to 1989 that this surplus was generated by growth in the economy. That is very important. Tourism did well, the agricultural sector did well and all the sectors did well and we had a surplus but by 1991 to 1992, we were in trouble.

If we are aware of these facts, Sir, and yet every year we come to Parliament and we talk about the economy is doing well for five years and then five years after it finds itself in trouble and we continue to develop a deficit, what it is telling me, Sir, is that we are not managing this economy well

I am saying, Sir, that when one looks at what happens in 1997 to 1998 where we were able again, Sir, to get a surplus and to come in here yesterday and listen to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Honourable Member for St. ^Mlip North now belly-aching about the possibilities that will happen in the economy, we must ask ourselves whether tins conomy is well-managed.

I also want to pick the Prime Minister up on a point that he made yesterday. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that in the early 90s, the Democratic Labour Party being the Government at the time, utilised the credit facility of the Central Bank and destroyed the economy of Barbados. He admitted that in the last year or two, that the private sector did likewise. I want this House to understand that whether the credit facility of the Central Bank is utilised by the private sector or by Government, the effect will be the same. At the end of the day, it is the total amount of credit extended by the Central Bank to the country of Barbados. To come in here, Sir, and to take out a section and say, this belongs to Government and this belongs to the private sector will not work, Sir. We have to look at the total amount of credit available to the country of Barbados and how it is utilised.

Where it would have been different, Sir, is if that credit was taken by the private sector and that credit was used to invest in revenue generating agencies that were able to create foreign exchange. But we have no such evidence, Mr. Speaker. I am saying, Sir, that I do not buy any excuse from anyone in this Parliament that the economy of Barbados is sound and that it will continue to be sound.

I pause here, Sir, because this is the time that we cannot have a relationship where we speak about the Protocol....

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Prices and Income Protocol. The Protocol is like a triangle where you have the Government on one side, the private sector on the other side and the trade union on the other side. When you look at the triangle, the Government receives large sums of revenue and the private sector receives large profits but where are the workers?

I am saying, Sir, that any time you have a triangular relationship you cannot have a situation where two sides have gained and the third side has not gained. It cannot be fair, Sir, and it cannot be fair play. I am saying that the part of the triangle which happens to be the base and which happens to be the workers, they have contributed significantly to the growth of this economy and now they are being asked, Mr. Speaker, to hold tight. To hold tight at a time when the private sector and the Government were not requested to do likewise.

I am saying to the Prime Minister, the private sector and the trade union movement in this country that they must understand that the workers, especially the civil servants who took the brunt of everything that happened in the early 1990s that they have feelings, they have common sense and they can budget too and that they are business people also.

I do not buy this excuse, Sir, that if you give them $60 million tomorrow that they will go down Bridgetown and increase the large profits of the business sector down there. 11.45a.m.

After you have told me, Sir, that in the early 1990s those people could not pay their mortgages, they could not invest and now you are telling me that just because they have the opportunity now to have a piece of change in their hands that they are going to lick it out. I never heard that type of example being given to the private sectors down town.

It is true, Sir, that if you were to charge anybody of squandermania, you would have to charge the Government of today. For the simple reason that the revenues from VAT were squandered by the Government and I am going to tell you something. We had a situation in this country that in Table 14 under taxes on goods and services that the Government of the day was able to move VAT from $488 533 622 up to a total of $722 980 494 giving the Government $234 000 000 in surplus off taxes on goods and services alone.

And, one would probably come and say to me, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time these taxes were going up on goods and services other taxes were coming down, but I will show you the light of that. If one looks at the total current revenue, Sir, it increases to $1 458 285 835, the previous year it was $1 232 178 443, which gave a surplus of total Government revenues of $226 107 392. So in truth and in fact, Sir, the same increase that they got in goods and services were shown as the same increase that went right through the total revenue of the Government. So there was no trade off. So all the talk we heard about this tax being revenue neutral, now we have the accounts in front of us there is evidence that further more than being revenue neutral, the Government was able to rake in $226 000 000 more.

You know, Sir, I am extremely grateful to this Parliament for having the Honourable Member for St. Philip South in this Assembly today and making his maiden speech.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: And I can tell you why, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member said that everybody in Barbados knew that the VAT was going to be inflationary. Everybody in Barbados knew and I regard this as the strongest criticism of the Prime Minister that he has ever gotten in his whole life because the Prime Minister said on the Floor of this House that it was not going to be revenue neutral and I can bring Budget debates to prove my point, but yet still the Honourable Member for St. Philip South said that everybody in Barbados knew that this tax was inflationary and he said that it was going to reduce the revenue that he was going to bring in. So any tax that was going to reduce the revenue that he was going to bring cannot be inflationary, it will have to be the opposite. And I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for St, Philip South for making the point, because it is the same point that was made on this Side, Sir, and we were castigated for it.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is misleading the House. He is insinuating that revenue neutrality translated to the tax being inflationary and the two things are mutually exclusive, as far as I am concerned.

Revenue neutrality of the Value Added Tax has nothing to do with the Value Added Tax being inflated. I said from the outset that many persons in this country knew that the introduction of the Value Added Tax would have resulted in an increase in general price levels. That has nothing to do with the tax being revenue neutral or revenue non neutral.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, seeing that this is his maiden day, I will leave him. But I want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that in future when he is in this Parliament and I am speaking, do not allow other people who cannot defend themselves to encourage him to get up because then I would have to treat him like them.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So, I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have a situation where we were told, Sir, that the VAT would have had an effect on the economy where the revenues would have been neutral. And we saw for ourselves, all those who are willing to see, and all those who were prepared to hear previously that instead of the tax being revenue neutral and instead of it being not inflationary, it ended up to be inflationary and it caused a lot of hardship on poor people in this country. I am saying that I am grateful even though he does not want the credit, Sir, to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and when he gets praise in here he has to learn how to appreciate it, because it will not come all the time. Sir, it shows that the information given to this Parliament was not sound and that it was misleading and many points of order should be engaged in, but we will not do that at this time.

I am also saying, Sir, that when the Prime Minister comes to this Parliament and claps his chest about reducing the capital expenditure last year, and I want to remind you when that happened. That happened between November and December. The Prime Minister was quite aware of what he had planned, so it would have made no sense for him to continue his capital expenditure because it would have collided with something else. So this belief that he did something that was wonderful is not true. It was well timed and well planned and it sounded good at the time. It is only when the election day was announced that everybody knew why it was done. Because there is no way you could have started those capital projects and they would have created the effect you would have wanted at that point in time. And if you had started them you would not have gained any more. So it would have been better to hold back and keep them for another time when you need them and that is exactly what was done. So I compliment him for that.

We have a situation in this country where we speak a lot about the unemployment rate in this country. And, I want to compliment two Honourable Members in this House for the wonderful job they have done for the Prime Minister when it comes to unemployment - the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. They have done a wonderful job for the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister should compliment them. One used training to its total effect so that it had a very positive effect on unemployment and the other was able to use the new registration of people who were working before into the National Insurance Scheme and help reduce the unemployment figures in this country and I compliment them. 11.55a.m.

Well thought out, well planned and well designed and it created exactly what they wanted and I must compliment them for that, Sir. But I am saying, Sir, that these things can only happen once, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, No, No. I will never accuse anybody of fiddling with the figures. I never said that. It was nothing illegal, it was well done and Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point, Sir.

When people who were unemployed were moving into training that was nothing illegal, Sir. When the ZR men who were not paying National Insurance were made to pay National Insurance even though they were working previously and they then came into the statistics of being employed, there is nothing illegal about that.

But I am saying that they did a good job and they helped the Prime Minister and the figures look good.

But what I would like to find out, Sir,...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I cannot understand the Honourable Member for St. George North. Two weeks ago I said in here Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister was able to use housing to generate a lot of revenue and to generate a lot of foreign exchange and to confirm that yesterday, Sir, ll:e Honourable Member for St. George North did it, and I tLaixk him also, Sir. He wanted me to give him his praise, he got his praise.

Sir, we are here in a situation today, Sir, where the economy is heading in a direction where we need to stop, Sir, and have a serious look at it. This belief, Sir, because the Government has a lot of revenue that you must go and spend money unnecessarily is wrong. I will tell you why it is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

In the early 90's the plan of Government was to shift the employment generation over to the private sector. We made sure that they got all the concessions that were needed to make sure that the private sector got what they wanted to create these jobs. They did not create the jobs. They made large profits, Sir, but the Government of the day was able to take the revenue that it should be holding in reserve then to spend on people, employing them.

I am not saying that the Government should not help create jobs. But I am saying, Sir, that when you give a sector incentives to create jobs it is their duty to create the jobs. I am saying, Sir, that if they did not create the jobs that the Government should have been able to call back for their money and use that money to help spend on those particular jobs.

Because if we have a country, Sir, where incentives are requested and you ask the other partner to deliver and that other partner is not delivering and we have a situation going on like that all the time, Sir, then the poor people in this country will continue to suffer.

Mr. Speaker, because of the amount of foreign exchange that we received from selling of land on the West Coast, it appears to me, Sir, that the Government has not looked at agriculture the way it should. I am going to tell you why I am saying this, Sir.

We have a situation in this country, Sir, where Barbados in the early 1980's and the late 1990's, I mean after 1986, before '86 and after '86, we were able to get a programme where a gentleman at Harrison College, named Mr. Phillips was able to beat the problem of onions in this country.

Thirteen years ago, Sir, and today, Sir, the farmers in St. Lucy can produce all the onions you want. But there is no policy in place, Sir, to export those onions. I have a particular farmer now, Sir, in my constituency, who has to try to market eight thousand bags of onions and there is no support given to him by any government agencies and you are asking farmers, Sir, to take risks.

What is hurtful, Sir, is that whenever those farmers get an opportunity, whenever there is a shortage, Sir, the same Government agencies who are not prepared to help them are the ones to come in and import to stop them from making a little change, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that if we are serious about agriculture, Sir, that the same emphasis being put on tourism must be placed on agriculture.

You know, I will tell you something. When the agricultural sector in this country was controlled in Warrens, that used to happen. But now it is controlled by the small man in this country we are not getting the same effect, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that when one looks at what the small man is doing in this country for agriculture, Sir, he is being more productive and more creative than the group of men who sit at Warrens, Sir, because their bedrock was on sugar and sugar alone.

But a small man in this country has reversed that trend. He has shown Government now that there is an alternative to king sugar in this country.

I am saying, Sir, that onions is a crop, Sir, that we should look at and look at seriously. But we need to find a market for it. It does not make sense a man growing and producing these things and there is no market. It does not make any sense.

I have been calling on this Parliament now for over four years for a processing plant in this country. Because every year we dump thousands and thousands of pounds of vegetables that could have been processed. But we are not doing anything about it.

We like we cannot understand in this Parliament, Sir, that because the fanners are saving us foreign exchange that it has the same effect as those who are bringing in foreign exchange and it seems because they are not bringing in the foreign exchange that people cannot understand the total effect of that, and I am saying it has to stop, Mr. Speaker, which brings me on to my big point.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Those were small, these are big ones now.

ADM bought the shares that Government sold to Maple Leaf in this country. Maple Leaf had a certain understanding between the Government and themselves and there was a commitment by Maple Leaf to sell a percentage of shares to the public of Barbados and also for the 10% that Government had in Barbados Mills that those 10% along with the 30% would have given farmers the clout in this country.

Today, Sir, I am sorry to report to this House, that the small farmers in this country do not know where they stand tomorrow and I do not buy any excuse put out in a full page paid ad today.

Because, Sir, why would a man plan something good for you and hide it from you for one year. For one year, Sir, two companies were negotiating to buy, merge, do whatever they want and it was a hidden secret and they are telling me, Sir, that all of these things are supposed to be in the interest of the small fanners.

Let me tell you something, Sir, the small farmers will be asked, Sir, to implement a system called tunnel ventilation, Sir, which will cost a lot of money and I want to pause here, Sir, to let you understand what goes on in the poultry industry in this country.

Most poultry farmers grow for contract for the processing plant which means all they have to do is build th.e pens, provide the labour, provide the electricity and water. All the other expenses are covered by the processors, Sir. I want you to understand that, Sir, which gives him a good idea of the amount of money the farmers are making, because it is the processor who is writing the cheques.

I am going to tell you something, Sir. I have been told that those cheques are sometimes very large and it appears to me that the processor now is getting greedy and he wants the whole cake and he wants to cut the middle man out. I am

going to tell you why, Sir. When one looks at the contract growers and I said to one once, a little about a month ago, it is the only industry in Barbados I know, Sir, where you can only spend three hours per day. You go in on mornings, you go in at twelve o'clock and you go in at night. Three hours, and that at the end of two months, Sir, you can look for a fat cheque. Written by whom, Sir, the processor, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that what we are seeing now, Sir, and this thing about tunnel ventilation, Sir, that is the step because they are not going to put in the tunnel ventilation for the farmer. What they are going to do is tell them to put them in before you can keep chickens for me. Which is automatically saying to them, I do not need you anymore.

I am saying that the Government have a commitment to those people to step in. I am going to tell you why, Sir.

Two years ago, I had an ongoing debate with the Barbados Egg and Poultry Association, Sir, where I told them, Sir, that instead of cutting back the protection of poultry meat in this country they should have been increasing and exporting. 12.05 p:m.

At the same time, Sir, they were given advice by the processors in this country that they should cut back. I told them they were making a serious error. They did not listen to me. They listened to the processors because the processors knew exactly what they had planned.

I am saying to this Parliament that if the small farmers had taken my advice, pushed up their production, forced them to export, the Government of the day would now be forced to look at their interest because it would not be only the local market that we are dealing with, it would have been the export market which would have been bringing in foreign exchange.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, any time a Government is about to lose foreign exchange it looks at that but it has no interest in the local market and that is where the small farmers have been caught in the web. Instead of taking useful advice and moving on they allowed some of their friends whose interest was better served otherwise to give them advice which they took and today I am being asked to present a case which I presented two years ago. I will do it now because I see it as a case being put for my brothers and sisters out there but I am not one to repeat or go back to an occasion.

Now, I want to tell the Poultry Association.that when advice is given from here and it is not taken again do not come back to me for the simple reason I do not travel a road twice. I move on and now I should be dealing with how we will be going into the American market with poultry meat but I am now trying to deal with a situation. I am now two years behind in my thought, Sir, where I now have to deal with saving them when I should be dealing with them expanding on a larger height.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has been passing a lot of notes. Many things have been given to him and I have not seen them made a document of this House. I believe he has deprived this Parliament of useful information but I will not deal with him at this point in time. I will give him the opportunity in the Estimates to explain the whole poultry situation to this Parliament.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I also use this opportunity, Sir, to inform Government that their expenditure has increased but I have not felt that expenditure in my constituency.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew went into my constituency a week before the election, bulldozed a road and now we are having a serious health problem because if you want to find mosquitoes - I have to speak to the Minister of Health on this because I think the problem with mosquitoes in this country happens to be in that road that they bulldozed and did not finish and left a lot of potholes which are breeding real mosquitoes in St. Lucy, at Ellis Tenantry, just because of a few votes. That was just beyond Judge Gap. That is the one time he passed the Judge Gap.

I am saying, Sir, that expenditure in this country cannot be used to create health problems in this country. If they are going to come and build roads in St. Lucy they must be completed.

I also want the new Minister to understand that there are over forty something roads I applied for St. Lucy and not one has been delivered as yet. I am saying, Sir, that in this Parliament and on this occasion even if 1 have to bring out my people to march against the Government in order for them to do things in St. Lucy I will have to do it. I would not like to have to take the other option because, as I said to you, Sir, there are only three areas in St. Lucy to block off.

I am saying, Sir, that these Estimates as they are presented to us today are backward in everything, in their outlay, their projections, everything. I am saying these Estimates cannot help the interest of the small man in this country. I am extremely grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on these Estimates. We are speaking on these Estimates against the background of a number of important issues, the issue of globalisation, the issue of the need for competitiveness but, above all, we are speaking on these Estimates today against the background of

a political party having received a resounding victory in a recent General Election. It sounds good to be here, Sir. Twenty-six past two is much better than 24 past 3, Sir.

The Estimates are also consistent, Sir, with a theme that the Labour Party has been preaching in this country since 1951. It emphasises its fundamental belief that it is necessary for a Government in a society like Barbados to play an important role in the economy, an important role in the structure of Government but not the only role. There is a role for others to play.

We have never subscribed to the view that the Government must take a complete backseat and leave it to others to look after the interest of the citizens of this country. The Estimates also emphasise the Labour Party's view that it must encourage change. It must give incentives. Above all, it must be very concerned with the issue of social justice.

I am very glad to see that these Estimates reflect the creation of a new Ministry of Social Transformation. All of us look forward to this Ministry performing the important role of coordinating the totality of efforts of a number of Government Departments and a number of people who are paid to look after the less fortunate members of the community in Barbados. That is a very significant policy initiative in my opinion.

I have been around long enough in politics to know that however and whatever the good intentions politicians have, and all of us, I believe, sincerely believe that we should do our best to look after the interest of the less fortunate in this country, however, good our intentions, they can be frustrated. They can be stupefied by the bureaucracy. As I say, more injustice is done in this country to our fellow human beings by those who are responsible for carrying out the well-intentioned policies of the politicians and by the politicians themselves. 12.15p.m.

I wish the new Minister very good luck in carrying out its programme.

We also must recognise that we are operating today where more attention must be paid to the impact of the new international order, the World Trade Organisation, in particular, on us and we must continue to pursue the quest that the Barbados Labour Party has always pursued and that is to lend its weight behind all of those whose effort is towards fashioning a regional relationship that can allow us to be able to face the dangers of this new international order in a better way than if we do it alone. It is no point any of us attempting at this stage as we approach the new millennium to convince our people that business can be continued as usual.

I must criticise some of the statements that are made, particularly by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, in respect to the impact on a number of our small producers in agriculture and others in relation to our tourism industry. The reality is that we are living in an era in which mergers and acquisitions, the tendency to monopolize, is in vogue all over the world. Our duty is to analyse these trends not encourage our people to believe that they are to bury their heads in the sand. We must master the new international institutions and I am very glad to see that appropriations have been made in a number of Ministries to ensure that our civil service, our technicians, will be able to devote time to study and analyse the World Trade Organisation and its rules.

There is no doubt about it in my opinion that the Caribbean economic community in the early 90s in its zeal to carry out the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank failed to analyse the requirements and the pace at which the WTO's implementations should have taken place.

We have sacrificed some of our agricultural interests. We have sacrificed some of our manufacturing interests. This Government must now re-analyse the situation and exploit the options that are still available to it to give some measure of relief to our agricultural producers and manufacturers. There is scope within the rules of the new international trading systems for that to occur. I trust that this Government will be vocal in the regional institutions, that they will fight in the regional institutions to ensure that all of those who wish to tout the cause of unlimited free trade which is a myth, those who wish to argue the case of the multilateral institutions, that we will be brave enough to fight it

We must as a region learn the lessons from the banana issue. We must also learn that when Jamaica permitted itself to withdraw that protection that it gave to its cattle industry both the beef and dairy, while they were doing that, in Canada the Canadians were exploiting the opportunities in the WTO to impose tariffs in the free trade area as large as 300% in relation to chicken, pork and other products. They knew the rules but we did not know the rules. We never studied them.

They tell me that at this stage, Sir, we still have an opportunity to introduce tariffs at about 200% in what is known as a clarification process. I would like to see no effort spared at all, every haste indulged in to ensure that we in Barbados, the Government and the private sector, devote great energy towards this matter. We cannot continue any longer with licences, as the Prime Minister said. The surtax put another mechanism to phase in the WTO in relation to textiles and some manufactured products. We still have opportunities and I trust that they will be taken.

I am also very glad to see that appropriations have been given to the productive sector. I regard the productive sector

as agriculture, manufacturing and services tourism and international business. I see that there has been an increase in the appropriation to the Tourist Authority.

I want to say tins. It is my view that part of that appropriation should be spent in helping smaller tourism establishments, particularly on the south coast in their marketing effort. This is nothing new. I was Minister of Tourism for 9 years and I well recall that 9 years ago we used to have a small hotel brochure. So to suggest now that it is an innovation, to promote such a concept, to me is ludicrous. We used to have that.

Part of the appropriation to the Tourist Board in those days was devoted to that. What we have to recognise that has not changed is, with all due respect to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, that the Hotel Association remains exactly the same as it was in those early days. As a matter of fact, it is the same as when it was first formed. It is to a large extent still, as all organisations are, under the influence of those who produce the greatest revenue for us. That is a fact. That is part of the dynamics of our association. You do not ignore the hand that feeds you, not if you have sense.

I like to praise the work that they do. I always praise the work that the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association does. The interest of the Association is to look after its members. That is fundamental but what I am saying is that what is not known in Barbados generally is that it is not representative of all of the tourism establishments and thai there is out here in the Barbados tourism industry a large percentage of accommodation which is not a hotel at all. As a matter of fact, one only has to go up to Silver Sands and Inch Marlow, the constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and St. Lawrence, particularly the old Worthing area, and you will see that there are a large number of establishments with two to five rooms arid people who have apartments. I have never seen so many apartments as I have seen in Atlantic Shores and Silver Sands recently. I do not know whether the Land Tax Department knows about them but the basic position is that you only have to go by Enterprise Beach or Miami Beach, as it is called, early in the morning and you will see a large mass of people walking down to the beach. If they do not clean the beach they get in touch with me and they will soon get in touch with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East because they are saying that this is their business. They are not members of the Hotel Association.

The point is that other societies have it. Puerto Rico has it. Ireland has it. Portugal has it. They have to pay taxes now because they have to pay value added tax. That is one of the things the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not recognise, that one of the virtues of the value added tax is that once you spend even if you buy a nail, not food now because this Government has seen that a large area of food is reduced. 12.25 p.m.

Sir, I would like to see the generosity of the Minister of Finance to the tourist industry reflected in a wider help being given to these unofficial establishments, so to speak. I am very glad and I am a strong supporter of the joint effort of the Tourist Authority and the Hotel Association. I do not subscribe to the view that if you give the Hotel Association the $45 million, you would have spent it better. I do not agree with that.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not agree with that at all. I know the people who you are dealing with. If you give that, what would happen would be that most of it would be spent in one direction.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: One of the most stringent set of criticisms that I have ever heard of the Hotel Association and others, of the tourist industry generally was a speech made by a former President of the Hotel Association in Barbados. On a public occasion he said that Barbados had 98% literacy and 2% illiteracy and among the 2% the largest majority was the hoteliers.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is what a former President said about them. Any doubts I had, I think, were resolved after that speech. Our position is, Sir, that marketing alone is not the only problem that we have in our industry. It is a fact of life that we have to face that in our markets from which we get our visitors, great structural changes have taken place. There has been vertical integration among the great tourist providers. Anybody who has looked at the European tour operator structure will know that it is predicted that in a place like the United Kingdom four or five tour operators will dominate the totality in the mass market.

As I speak now, last week it was announced that the last of the two smaller ones have merged - Kuoni and First Choice have merged. Parallel with that has been the impact of the single market in Europe. Parallel with that too,will be the impact of the European currency. All of these things are in sync, so to speak, with what is happening in globalisation and what is happening around.

I commend the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph on the need for the Caribbean Governments and private sector to ensure that we have a strong and viable airline in the region....

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not mind any wishing of luck. In 1982, we produced a paper in the Ministry of Civil Aviation in Barbados and circulated it to every Government in which we called for a holding company to combine the existing airlines at the time - Air Jamaica, BWIA and Caribbean Airways. That we were to have a central reservation system and a central tour operating company. Since 1982 this issue has been on the table but as usual, the Caribbean cannot conceptualise anything. They must experience bankruptcy, they must experience hardship, they must experience adversity before they will begin to think along these lines.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not mind whether it is not going to happen or whether it happens. All I know is this. That the Caribbean would be in an infinitely better position and less dependent and less fearful of what happens in the airline industry particularly from North America if they had such an entity. I want to go further. I say that the climate is better now than ever because they are faced with a threat of bankruptcy by the sheer economics of the operation. They are also faced with the problem that they need re-equipping and they are blessed by the fact that we now have a brilliant awareness and understanding of Pan Caribbean companies taking advantage of stock exchange business and capital throughout the Caribbean - so the climate is different.

Sir, I do not expect the private sector to lead this fight because the last fight they led in relation to this area with Carib Express was not successful. It has to be a combined, thoughtful action and I commend the speeches that have been made in this direction. Nobody has to convince me on this. I was always of this view point and I can point to a clear, articulated position as long ago as 1982.

Sir, I want to say just a few words about agriculture. I very much welcome the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in this area, Sir. It is true that some of his ideas are a little outdated.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The point is, Sir, that the small producers of Barbados whether they be poultry producers, non-sugar vegetable producers or indeed sugar producers, they have to be seriously concerned like the banana producers in the OECS countries and like the beef and cattle producers in other countries. They have to be seriously concerned about the impact of the new agricultural regime.

I want to say this. The merger of two important producers of feed in Barbados - the merger and the incontrovertible integration with the processors is something that has to be watched very closely. One of the problems with free trade and a limited Government intervention is that it can lead to abuse. We must have laws to prevent these matters. Either you are going to have price controls which is out of date or you are going to have a Fair Trading which will be empowered to investigate these matters. I believe that the consumers in Barbados are the ones who in reality pay for these monopolies. It is time, on a regional basis, that we have modern and up-to-date Fair Trading laws and laws preventing the abuse of dominant positions, theoretically, in a single market like ours. Our people should not be so worried about this because they will say that we will just import the feed from Trinidad but one of the problems that we have is that some of the institutions that are controlled here also control Trinidad. That is one of the problems that we have.

But all is not lost because there is nothing to prevent people from importing raw materials from other countries. It is a question of scale.

Anyway, Sir, these matters must be looked at. I see a new Ministry and I want to commend the Prime Minister. A new Ministry of Commerce charged with the responsibility to do this. If there is one thing, Sir, and I want to be very clear, if there is one thing that we must appreciate about this new era is that we have a sufficiently large number of Ministers to be able to produce what is necessary.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: There is no excuse. None at all. 12.35 p.m.

When I became a Minister, I had about nine different subjects to deal with, Sir, so that six hours a day devoted to your work should produce great results. I look forward, at an early date, to the first draft of this fair trading law. Jamaica has a President. I believe that among the states of Australia, because of the...

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St, JOHN: Well, whatever form they have, it is still worth looking at. The basic provision is they have ploughed the ground already and I do not believe in ploughing the ground twice.

There are plenty of precedents available. You can start off in the United States of America with the Sherman Act and things of that type. But the point is, we must appreciate the importance of having these laws on the statute book, because there will be more and more tendency for mergers and acquisitions. You cannot reverse that trend.

Finally, Sir, I want to make a little plea for the fishing industry. I am very glad that increased appropriations have been made in this area. All of us recognise that food security

alone dictates that we pay attention to agriculture and fisheries. They are areas of productive capacity of which we can be proud particularly in non-sugar agriculture and the developments in the fishing industry. But the Government needs to continue to give it help and increase appropriations in the fishing industry for the modernisation of the fishing facilities is something that the Barbados Labour Party has been pioneers in. We do not have to be ashamed about this at all. The Fishing Industry Act in 1952 came after adult suffrage. The building of the fishing facilities in Oistins and the building of the fishing facilities in Bridgetown came after the 1970s. The only period of interruption we had, we in that period 1986-1994 in which the facilities at Speightstown were stopped, the modernisation of Oistins Town did not take place, but what do you expect, Sir? They treated themselves exactly the same way in St. John. People forget that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph actually settled the agreement with the European Economic Committee to have fishing facilities on the East Coast. He is not responsible for the fact that in the nine intervening years after he did it that nothing happened. But that is how it happened.

The Honourable Member for St. George South does not have any problems with this, Sir.

Aside.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is right, Sir. So that the Estimates reflect these matters, Sir, and I just look forward in this vein also to the implementation of the Manifesto promise of the building up of subtownships in Barbados.

I accept the fact that the Honourable Member for St. John should be annoyed over the fact that what has happened in the Gall Hill community area has not been concluded. ! want to say that they have not concluded mine in Oistins either. The two of us have something in common. We are the only two representatives of Parliament that had to face an election when projects were started by the Democratic Labour Party, left unfinished and I had to face the indignity of being judged by the Honourable Member for St. John and his colleague in my constituency as to how I was treated, Sir. It is not going to happen this time. Every time we speak I am going to speak of the need to resuscitate, revive and implement and finish the Oistins Development Plan.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is what I look forward to and I am glad to see that a start is being made in these Estimates.

Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 2.00 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, those words sound like music to my ears. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you are Honourable, you know,

Asides,

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: I am reminded, Sir, I am grateful for this opportunity to stand in this Chamber to speak and let me first begin by saying how grateful I am, Mr. Speaker, to the people of St. Michael South for having sent me here.

Asides.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: That I make my maiden speech during these Estimates and that the Estimates are made with time about changing regional fortunes and the changing world economy.

Now, these new and unprecedented difficulties that the world economy is facing would certainly have a serious impact upon Barbados and upon the way in which we develop as a country over the next five to six years.

Sir, the global economy is still in some turbulence. The next three to six months is going to continue to be a crucial period in the terms of the world economy. We have still not totally gotten over the crisis in South East Asia. The whole concept of the collapse of the financial and capital market and it is bound to have some effect upon our own economy. Tourism for example, particularly from Europe has already shown some pangs of recession.

Of course, Sir, this is once again like 1980 and 1990, hostile borrowing conditions with capital markets and how we respond to that as a country, how we respond to that by bringing our growth in line so that we are not very dependent upon the international markets but that we have enough

foreign reserves to be able to weather the storm is really going to make a substantial difference.

These Estimates, Sir, are also laid at a time when the future of commercial agriculture is very much in doubt as it relates particularly to developing countries from our region.

I think, Sir, that when we consider the recent WTO rulings and discussions, particularly as it relates to the Banana regime, it is important that we take very good stock of what we are doing.

The message in my opinion as being sent is that nobody owes us anything. This is an age of reciprocity and that global competitiveness would be the buzzwords by which we must live over the next number of years.

I think too, Sir, that the recent rulings on the Bananas particularly a third world war being fought over 2%, two bananas really I called it, 2% of the entire world consumption of Bananas.

The WTO ruling seems to be, and particularly the United States seems to be a very strange ruling to me. Because obviously, countries of different levels of economic development cannot be treated equally. I think, Sir, that this is the message that must be sent.

Our struggle will be obviously to remain globally competitive both in the short term and in the long term.

I think, Sir, that regional competitiveness as well is going to be very very important. As I heard, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East saying yesterday that Barbados obviously needs to take the lead role in unifying the region to be globally competitive and to make the international financial institutions understand that we Sir, in the face of these new realities that there are serious problems that we must face and that we are very very vulnerable in terms of these small open economies.

I think, Sir, however, the creation of opportunities for all Barbadians through sound fiscal policies on the economic side, the concept of building capacity for the future and the concept of how we build social capital which is the whole check and balance system for the economic side of our lives is very very important.

I believe, Sir, as well that there is very little more that we as a country can do at the macro level to be able to change our fortunes. Certainly, Sir, running a small fiscal deficit, little external financing, incentives to boost the export subsectors, strengthening social capital. Probably we can do a little bit more with interest rates etc.

But the real concept is going to be the concentration at the micro level, at the sectoral level. I have always believed, Sir, that what we need to do what we have been doing very recently is looking outwardly at the global economy. Looking at how it is going to impact upon Barbados and how we can position ourselves to take the best advantage of what this global economy is turning up, both in the long term and the short term.

I think, Sir, that Government over the past four years has in my opinion done just that, and I am not in agreement with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that we have not clearly defined our policy objectives or have not set a fix set of goals.

The 1998 Budget was the fourth in a continuant and I think, Sir, if we look back at the last of those last four budgets, the first one dealt with at the micro level setting the productive sectors on all cylinders and trying to get them firing again. The second budget, the Honourable Prime Minister was set to stimulate savings and investment. The third budget spent a lot of time looking at indirect tax reform, the Value Added Tax obviously for example and easily, Sir, looking to pass on the surplus of any Value Added Tax to the most vulnerable in our society. Then, Sir, obviously looking the last time at small business and seeking better to enfranchise and empower Barbadians to take their real place in the 21 st century.

We also have, Sir, in the 1998 Budget now, the concept of capacity building, institutional reform. Looking at the sectors, looking at education in a serious way. Looking at agriculture, tourism, housing, manufacturing and of course the offshore sector.

We deal first, Sir, with the whole concept of the capacity building as it relates to education. I think the Prime Minister was very clear when he said that education must not only be free but relevant to what is happening in the world and that we have got to change our course.

I think, Sir, that EduTech 2000, the Minister of Education pointed out yesterday, is just not about making children computer literate but also making them right for the next century. The capacity for them to be trained and to be retrained. Making them thinkers and problem solvers, really translating the white paper into something tangible. Knowing how to handle information, because today's most powerful commercial and developmental tool is information.

I think, Sir, as we go on too in terms of our capacity building, how we look after the aging in our society. How we take care of them. How we bring them in as well. To continue to create the best society for all Barbadians is important. Looking, Sir, at the establishment of the Fair Trading Commission seeks to protect our people and then obviously there was housing.

Barbados must become a property owning democracy. Making funds available with Government facilitating this act is obviously of great importance. Saving to build. The concept that the Ministry of Housing spent a lot of time

securing lands for all Barbadians and then being able to create the capacity of 100% mortgages. Being able for people to acquire land at reasonable prices that they can afford. Poor people, and then of course, Sir, small business development to the Small Business Development Act, another one of the planks of our capacity building for Barbados into the next century.

The areas that we looked at in terms of creating the right type of environment for small business, the 25% corporate tax. If you have less than $2 million in sales or less than twenty-five employees, no duty on plant and equipment, no withholding taxes. These kind of things, these kind of initiatives to ensure to stimulate small businesses.

But also, Sir, in terms of a broader theme, being able to enfranchise and to empower Barbadians to own, to get involved in business at another level. Because, Sir, we are never ever going to satisfy the objectives of full employment, unless we look at non traditional ways as well, of bringing people who are not traditionally in the business mix into the business mix.

In terms of manufacturing, looking at how we can stimulate that, particularly when you consider female employees. Many single female employees are involved in the sector and how we bring them up.

Of course, Sir, there were other areas that we looked at, agriculture, the new agriculture development thrust, the offshore sector and being able to strengthen our capital markets. 2.15p.m.

Sir, I am mostly concerned with how we use fiscal measures and policies to build social capital that impact so heavily on the economic side of our lives. The concept of community building is going to be very important to our well being in the future. How do we get the under-class of our society up to the level of the working class without damaging that working class, without putting too much pressure on that working class? How do we get the working class up to the middle class without putting too much pressure on them? Then how do we continue to empower and to enfranchise all Barbadians is my major concern.

Sir, that is why I take particular interest in the Ministry of Social Transformation because I believe it may be the most proactive approach ever taken by any Government of Barbados to look at helping the under class in our society, looking at building again strong communities.

Although many people may try to pooh-pooh the whole concept of the Ministry of Social Transformation that I have ever heard, I consider the Ministry of Social Transformation to be very important as well to our economic wellbeing because I look at it in three levels: (1) the remedial side, immediately fixing in communities the things that bother, filling the holes, really going to the source and dealing with those at the bottom of the ladder and seeking to make their lives better, fundamental concepts.

Then I looked, Sir, at the whole concept of the community-based ideas in terms of the Ministry of Social Transformation, the community groups, the Pinelands and the Israel Lovell Foundation, look at those entities which have already been doing substantial work in terms of building strong communities and being able to fund and help them to continue to build strong communities to move our economy and our social fabric forward.

Then, Sir, the next level is the level of empowerment, how the Ministry of Social Transformation seeks to create linkages with other Ministries, linkages in non-traditional ways to empower people. Sir, I am one who has spent a lot of my life wrapped up in sports, for example, and it is important that these non-traditional areas, areas that seemingly have never been looked at as areas of strong economic concern need to come to the fore. How much money we allocate to them, how we spend that money is fundamentally important.

Sports come at a time particularly when our young men seemingly are the most vulnerable in our society and are giving - people would say no end of trouble - I say these are the ones we need to look at. I think that sports, I will deal with culture, particularly plays an integral role in all of this but also. Sir, the economic side being able now, rather than eAc-nrrug bananas and sugar, the whole concept of how we export our young people in terms of their being sports people and being able to earn.

Obadele Thompson a couple of days ago, not even so long, won US $30 000 for one race running in the World Indoor Championship and I believe there are a lot of Obadele Thompsons running all around Barbados that have not yet been tapped, have not yet been dealt with and the whole concept of how you use sports particularly in communities to be able to build.

There are lots of Football Leagues all over South America and all over Europe where all Barbadians have the potential to be and the potential to earn and therefore the Ministry of Social Transformation linking with the development of sports, using that community base to be able to create people with earning power and earning capacity is important as well to our economic development.

Then, of course, Sir, there is the cultural side of our development, building a sense of identity, understanding who you are, being able to see images just like in sports, being able to see our own people excelling on television and being able to replace the images, I think the Leader of the Opposition talked about yesterday, and being able to replace those images with people of excellence from our own communities who have come out of this same 166 square

miles. It is important as well how we develop Barbados into the 21st century.

I believe, Sir, that the whole concept of National Heroes, that we have to get an understanding that these two areas play a critical role in being able to create the correct economic base for Barbados and that culture is not a PR exercise about who has an opportunity but it is a philosophy and it goes deeper in terms of identifying good Barbadians and being able to emulate that behaviour and other good West Indians.

I think, Sir, that the Ministry of Social Transformation will play a critical role in the terms of the whole economic development of this country into the 21st century. I think, Sir, also linking social transformation in terms of its empowerment role suited the productive sectors, the ones which are really firing as a plank of economic development.

Sir, that is why the affirmative action steps that have been taken there are more to come, being able to create the successor institutions to the Barbados Development Bank, Fund Access, the Enterprise Growth Fund. These are the issues that I consider to be important in terms of empowering Barbadians to really take their rightful place.

Sir, it is important that the Ministry of Social Transformation be involved in these linkages and particularly, Sir, its link to the one productive sector that we continue to call the Saviour and the lifeblood, how it gets into getting these people in these communities to be linked to the tourism sector.

I think, Sir, that for Barbados to take its rightful place on the world stage we already know that everyone is organising themselves into trading blocs but Barbados by the shift of economic activity from North to South and Barbados being in the middle and being able to be the perfect bridge-head for investment particularly investment into services and the service economy being the one that is going to rule the world and the one area in which we will continue to compete.

Tourism has a special significance for me and should have for all Barbadians because if we are talking about the buzz words of global competitiveness tourism is the one area which continues to compete on its own global competitiveness without all these concessions globally.

Let me say, Sir, that tourism contributing 70% of our foreign exchange but only 13% of our GDP is interesting because I believe that tourism has not even scratched the surface in terms of what it could contribute to our Gross Domestic Product. But to be able to do that, we must be able to bring non-traditional players into the whole area of tourism and that is why I say the Ministry of Social Transformation and its linkages to the productive sectors are important. Non-traditional players must be let in.

Sir, I have heard a lot of discussions here today about where we are going in tourism, and why tourism is not functioning. I have heard a lot being said about the airline industry, the US market and all kinds of markets. It is my fundamental belief, Sir, that tourism has structural problems and I am not going to get myself drawn into a whole argument about marketing, how we can fix the US market and how we cannot fix the US market although I believe that I have the licence to do that.

I like the Prime Minister believe that the economists should be a registered profession and it should be prosecuted for economic malpractice. I believe that marketing too should be a registered profession. Everybody is an expert on tourism and how to cure the ills that we have in the tourism sector but I believe we need to look more clearly at the whole concept of the structural part of our tourism industry to be able to start to deal with it. 2.25 p.m.

Tourism development, as I was taught, takes place in four stages: institutional and organisation strengthening, human resource development, marketing and research and information. Then, Sir, there are linkages to industries that are compatible with the tourism industry and industries that are in themselves compatible. Manufacturing, agriculture, and, of course, culture and cultural development, but I think the way to solve the problem is not for everyone to have some opinion but to be able to look at these four areas of development of tourism, to be able to weigh them, to be able scientifically to see which ones are weak and be able to fix them and put them in place regarding the marketing.

Marketing is a discipline too and rather than trying to find ways to fix the US problem or the European problem or the German problem or even the airline problem we should look at the marketing mix again and be able to identify the marketing mix where we are weak and be able to deal with that as it relates to North America, as it relates to Germany, as it relates to wider Europe. This thing about the only fire on one cylinder in the UK market and being driven by tour operators and everything else, that is a job for the technocrats.

As far as I am concerned, the tourism industry in Barbados has structural problems and until we deal with them in a scientific way, until we spend time analysing the structural problems that the tourism has, and let me tell you one of the weakest problems when it comes to the Barbados Tourism Authority is lack of information: a real serious basis for understanding where we want to take this industry, who Barbados' customers are, where they are gathered from and how we can appeal to them. That is what we need to be doing instead of spending time with these gut feeling approaches to the tourism industry is looking at understanding particularly marketing research.

The Barbados Tourism Authority for all its years of operation still does not have a research division as a marketing agency. It does not have a marketing research division and rather than us trying to come up with all these plasters over sores to fix the tourism problem look at it in a structural way and in a serious way. Tourism also has to compete against the other sectors for the same tradeable and non-tradeable commodities and it must be made more competitive against the other industries.

The Prime Minister yesterday spoke at length about the whole concept of balance of payment problems arid the pressure that has been placed upon credit and most of it was being spent in tourism and in tourism development projects and whether or not the jury is still out upon whether or not the money that is being spent in tourism is being spent wisely. I got the impression that he was of the view that if it builds capacity for the future in tourism then it was worth while.

I say, Sir, this afternoon that we have got to be very clear in Barbados, particularly a tourism economy into the 21st Century, of what we want out of tourism for Barbados and for our people. To start the concept of where tourism is and what we want out of the industry - how many people you need on Accra Beach on a Sunday, every man to have his own space, where do you want the people to come from? Those are the kinds of issues that we need to be dealing with. How do you put 260 000, almost the population of Barbados, on this island between January and March and then see what impact it has upon the human resources, what impact it has upon our disciplinary forces, what impact it has upon our water resources? How do you deal with the concept of having them in there in terms of disposal of solid waste? These are the kinds of issues that we need to be dealing with in terms of our tourism industry. These arc kinds of issues that we need to study and to come up with rather than everyone taking a potshot at how you deal with the tourism industry over a period.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South make reference to the BHTA and the small hotels programme. I just want to say in passing. The BHTA is not a marketing agency. Barbados has a marketing agency and up to now it still does not have a programme that speaks to the issue of looking at small hotels in terms of a marketing programme specifically to deal with small hotels.

I am of the view that the BTA budget should be used as well to subsidise the marketing of small hotels those that belong or do not belong to the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association.

I also, Sir, am much obliged to the Prime Minister for the whole concept of creating the small hotels co-op because that in turn is really one of the problems. The small hotels on the south coast of Barbados have problems. A lot of them are profitable and can deal in terms of making a day's profit but the real issue is debt servicing because a lot of them are under capitalised from the beginning. These are the kinds of issues that we need to be dealing with.

Regarding the airline industry and having this regional airline -1 realise that change only takes place at two levels: enlightened self interest or pain and suffering. There are only two ways of change. If we believe that we are going to have someone come down and tell us that we need to organise ourselves into one airline we will be talking about it for 40 years and we are not going to get it.

The issues with the airline industry and tourism is having access to airline and airline seats in and out of your country, not owning an airline. The number of people that we move in the region it is not necessary for us, I believe, to own any airline. We should invest maybe in one but one is already existing but to be able to create our own airline now, particularly with the shortage of planes and all the other issues that we have to deal with, it is certainly going to be the issue. There is no need to have a regional airline but to have access to one and have constant access and substantial access is really the issue.

Sir, I want to speak some more on tourism. I know I will have an opportunity when they call the Head. I want to thank you for the opportunity. I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. T. GILL: I rise to speak to this Appropriation Bill and I would like to take issue first of all with a statement vhich the Honourable Member for St. John made yesterday afemoon when he was drawing a reference to election priming after the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St.. Peter, made it clear that he had taken the move to cut back by $100 million the monies going towards capital investments and the Honourable Member for St. John said there was no need to do this since you were already some two years earlier priming for an election.

Sir, this is the second time that I heard such a statement. The first time was in the Other Chamber and the second time was yesterday. What I will say is the first time we had not yet crossed the flood but now we have crossed the flood we know what the position is and if there is any semblance of truth then I would say that the Right Honourable Prime Minister should be put up for a Nobel Peace Laureate being able to do this two years before election and winning the election so handsomely.

Sir, it is nothing therefore for us on this side to be ashamed of if we could treat our constituents very well from very early in the five-year regime.

Sir, today, Barbadians and Barbados are enjoying a good economy with an increasing demand for more and more imports by citizens a good and at times a bad move but, at the same time, Sir, we must be very careful as to how the spending is carried through.

It was not just overnight that we have reached where we are today and you just have to cast your memory back early in the last five-year period to know that Estimates such as these had sp&it quite some time in correcting some of the things that had gone wrong previously. I remember early in that regime helping the small farmers, those with small holdings, to be viable so that their operations could make a profit. 2.35p.m.

Sir, we came to the rescue of the tourism sector. We made wrong things right with our overseas marketing agents. We were able, Sir, to settle our debts with the University of the West Indies so that our students could go about their courses a lot more leisurely and comfortably knowing that the country's debts were settled. Sir, all of these measures were put in place during that period of time and now today we are at this enviable position getting ready, Sir, to what I refer to as a new orbit as we leave the gravity and inertia of the 90s and move into the new century. Sir, these Estimates, I can best describe as being holistic, forward thinking and challenging.

Today, I am justly proud to be able to contribute on the fifth consecutive occasion to these Estimates, albeit the first in this Chamber. Sir, the Estimates in my opinion are well configured and well conformed. They have taken into account the mood of the local industries and economies. They have also taken into account the position of the international business centres and the international financial capitals. Sir, they will serve as the template and the blueprint for the coming year and subsequent years ahead.

Sir, there is something about these Estimates which remind me of an efficient manufacturing process; an efficient synthetic process. Sir, where we have the energies of $1.63 billion being required to run the country and at the same time having a good projected yield of some 3%. We know that in any synthesis or in any manufacturing process if we do not have a good saving on energy, a good return on the input of energy or a minimal loss, to put it another way, in terms of the initial through put of energy, then that system is not worth the paper on which it was written or designed.

Sir, these Estimates show some areas of synergy as can be seen from the spin-offs where in one instance with the hotel industry, although at first glance it might appear that in that industry there has been an over-spending and over-heating, where lots of the hotels have been undergoing refurbishment and rebuilding, nonetheless, these new buildings, these rooms, in the words of the Prime Minister act as "capacity for the future".

We know that with it to come, Sir, the work, the unemployment we can have several young people looking around, searching day by day for new employment, for fresh employment, such an investment will redound only too well to the future of the country.

Sir, the Estimates also show some degrees of conservation as opposed to conservatism. Conservation - if we look at the way in which the transfers were held constant. If you use the same model which I referred to earlier, that of the energy in a synthetic system, where these energies are shunted and go into other areas which will help to support the marginalised and the abject poor as in the case with the Urban Development Commission which we have heard quite a bit being said about it in here and outside over the last two months and particularly so during the month of January.

I think there is not much I could gain by going over it but we all know that these two Commissions - Urban and Rural help in no small way to protect the most vulnerable in our society. The social and philosophical component of our expenditure cannot be too much when we come to the rescue of these folk at the other end of the social spectrum.

Sir, we also see in these Estimates the pre-emptive move by the Honourable Minister of Finance when he exercised some fiscal restraint in making sure that although, as the Opposition said we were electioneering and we were priming the pump, it was a bold enough move, a pre-emptive move to make sure restraint was exercised.

Asides

Mr. D. T. GILL: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South, went into the actual academic side of it. He opened it up and went into the theory, something that I was not trained to do but common sense will tell me that if you do practise such restraint before an election and not only common sense but history as you will see in this country before, prior to two elections, that if you need to exercise such restraint without fear or favour that at the end of the day it could only be beneficial to the country, then such a move is one highly recommended and plausible.

Sir, this model meets all the requirements, as I have said earlier on, of a highly efficient synthesis. One which in economic terms gives a good yield. I see the yield as that 3% growth. It also, Sir, has a good workable current revenue of $1.63 billion, which I refer to as the intrinsic energy to get the country moving. Sir, there is an acceptable shortfall or, as I will refer to, a requirement of exogenous energy to keep the system going, of some $343 million. Sir, it is a desirable deficit. Sir, if you work that loss to yield, it is a commendable effort. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I see therefore as the keystone and the hallmark of these Estimates prudence rather than profligacy, safety rather than serendipity and caution rather than carelessness in guiding these Estimates.

Asides.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Put another way, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and in more contemporary language or jargon, it is simply the best.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful for your indulgence.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I sense that all Members who wanted to speak in this second reading exercise have already exercised their prerogative to do so and I therefore rise to bring this second reading debate to an end.

I want to thank all Members who have spoken in this debate but particularly to highlight the contribution of those Members who were speaking in this Parliament for the first time and to say that there has seldom been in this House a collection of first time speeches that reflected such a commanding grasp by first timers where there is clarity as well as a complete respect for the Parliamentary procedure. I salute them especially on this occasion.

I must thank the Members who spoke on the Government side for having so wonderfully well outlined the nature of our economic situation and having spoken so clearly as to the precise policies that Government will continue to execute to keep Barbados on a path of stable and sustainable growth. 2.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to give a long winding up speech but 1 do believe that I have a responsibility to be very clear as to precisely the message that we want to issue from this Chamber. Because I have seen reports appearing in some sections of the press that represent a comprehensive misunderstanding of what we were attempting to send forth yesterday in terms of the economic message about the programme in place and to be followed.

I know there is no doubt, Sir, that Barbados has, as we said, enjoyed the benefit of six years of robust economic growth and this Budget is about ensuring that that growth continues, but at a more sustainable rate. And the first point that this debate I think has led to a consensus about is that all of us agree about the desirability of the growth continuing but equally about the desirability of bringing that growth within the capacity of the country to absorb. And may I say in that respect, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I was very grateful to the Honourable Member for St. John for referring me back to the Democratic Labour Party's Structural Adjustment Strategy that was made a document of this House. I regret that I did not think that I should have read this during the election campaign, Sir, because this gives an image as to what the Democratic Labour Party thought could have been accomplished. It was prepared by them in 1994 and it is very interesting to see what we did accomplish without reference to their policies by the dint of our own efforts.

This Structural Adjustment Strategy of the Democratic Labour Party said that by 1998, following their policies, unemployment in Barbados would have fallen to 15%. I am very pleased to say that by not following this document called the "Democratic Labour Party Structural Adjustment Strategy" that we were able to bring into the gainful employment, thousands of other Barbadians who would otherwise have had to languish in joblessness under a Democratic Labour Party administration.

But on page 9 of this document, Mr. Speaker, says that unemployment should be reduced to about 15%, Sir. Unemployment is now less than 12%. And it spoke about the foreign reserves projected to being no more than 2!/2 months imports for most of the period. We managed to exceed these targets by extraordinary amounts. And generally speaking I would urge Honourable Members to refer to this document for contrast, not for guidance, to contrast between what they had wanted for Barbados and to compare it with what we have managed to achieve. I will come back later to the issues that excited these documents having to be presented.

But the point I am making, Sir, is that we have this country on a course of strong, stable growth, and the issue is how do we keep it to that process of strong, stable growth. And the argument from this side, Mr. Speaker, has been that that growth has been accompanied by good, economic fundamentals, namely growth leading to production in unemployment, accompanied by fiscal stability, accompanied over the course of the last six years by a strong external position as reflected in increasing reserves and also reflecting in price stability, as reflected in a low rate of inflation.

What this debate highlighted is that while the •'nndamentals still remain strong in 1998, there was one'little blip on the radar, namely the blip in reserves that could invite us to review the bases of our growth. And the judgment of this House and all informed commentators, Sir, is that in the context of the existing level of reserves and in the context of a $4 billion economy and further in the context for the projections for the recovery of the reserves this year, the $ 14 million blip last year does not constitute a basis for us to change our policies.

I really want to stress that point, Sir, that [4]yes' a blip appeared on the radar - that all along we had strong growth following unemployment, stable prices, rising reserves, fiscal stability in all the years. Last year, we had all except for the fact that there was a small fall in reserves. The issue is, do we change policies because of that blip, the answer has to be that the blip has to be measured in the context of the magnitude of the economy, the volume of reserves and the prospects for the immediate future.

Central Bank has already indicated, Sir, that it expects the reserves to grow this year, although not at the same rate as it accrued in the years between 1996 and 1998. Sir, as I said, a $14 million loss in reserves in the context of record reserves is not a major lost and in the context of a $4 billion economy, a $14 million reserves, Sir, is not something that in and of itself should induce a major change in economic policies.

I say that, Sir, because the message that has gone forward and has been represented in the blaring headlines would seem to be setting the society for some drastic change in Government's policies as reflected in some intended credit squeeze, nothing of the kind was intended to issue from this Chamber. I have said, Sir, that we will continue to watch the situation because one of the features of a very small economy, Sir, is how fast things can change for the worst. Let us never forget, Sir, that 1989 was a record year, but all the record achievements were turned into the most dire recession by 1990. So while it behoves us to take these signals seriously, there was nothing that was intended to suggest a drastic change in the Government's policies, nor was there anything to suggest that the Minister of Finance was proposing to institute a credit squeeze.

In fact, I was very clear to say, Sir, that the jury is out and that we will continue to monitor the situation and particularly to monitor the distribution of the credit as between credit to build productive capacity and credit to build consumption. So that those who would not set their economic sites and compasses on the expectation that there is going to be a drastic change in the Government's credit policy are likely to be extremely disappointed. A $ 14 million change in an aggregate in a country as large and the economy the size of Barbados cannot, of and in itself, bring about a convulsion in economic policy. It will take something far more than that for us to take the economy off its present course. We are watching the situation, Sir, as we should, if only because it has been our experience and the experience of all small economies have been such that small matters can, at a very soon date, give rise to exaggerated problems. I hope that that message is now clear. We do not take likely any loss in our reserves, but the assurance is that we will be able to rally without introducing new draconian policies. Having said that, Sir, I am not going to say that other considerations may not induce us to look to re-examine the mix of our policies for other reasons.

I think we all will leave this House very clear that in the context of the new global forces, an extraordinary effort will have to be mounted to support and to sustain commercial agriculture in Barbados. TThere is absolutely no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of the imperatives with which this House and this country will have to grapple with, in circumstances where the price of sugar is likely to be on the decline in each year over the next decade.

The House can therefore expect that, as I promised in my Budget presentation last September that the Government will proceed to fund an Agricultural Development Trust, the proceeds of which will be to ensure that commercial agriculture in Barbados continues to function. I would have said enough also to suggest, Sir, that the Government is going to be removing some of the props of protection that manufacturing enjoys. The House must not believe that this administration, however, will leave the manufacturing sector entirely at the mercy of international and regional market forces.

2.55 p.m.

It cannot, Sir, and if policies are induced in these directions, Mr. Speaker, it will have nothing to do with any credit squeeze. It will have to do with our responding necessarily to factors which can bring about structural change in our economy in a manner that might disadvantage the Barbados economy.

So, that I do not want the society to be braced for the reintroduction of selective credit controls. The use of selective credit controls went out of practice, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago and there is no proposal to reintroduce them.

We are however, Sir, watching as I said the build up in private credit and if the situation was to warrant it we would use measures to make sure that the rate of growth of credit is consonant with real growth desire for the economy but that is to anticipate, Mr. Speaker, and in fact might be to just merely to speculate.

So blaring headlines speaking about a credit squeeze and so on do a grave injustice to the tone and temper of the message that should have gone from this Chamber.

Sir, I come back now to the question of employment, Sir. The Democratic Labour Party structural adjustment strategy, said that by 1988 unemployment in this country would have been reduced to about 15% and this is in a document contrary to .what the Honourable Member for St. John said that does not set out an employment strategy at all.

In the medium term macroeconomic framework 1996-1999, and again contrary to what the Honourable Member for St. John says, an eleven-point employment generation strategy was set out by this administration and has been faithfully followed. And we are in a position, Sir, to claim credit for the variance between what was expected and projected for Barbados under the DLP structural adjustment strategy and what has been achieved on the strength of the policies that had been put in place to seriously address our most important social and economic problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, Sir, that on the Opposition Side, the Honourable Member for St. Lilcy, with his usual rambunctious self and sometimes if he pauses, Sir, for breath and thought, we may yet still make a Parliamentarian out of him, Sir. But his is a speech that is delivered, Sir, with all the enthusiasm sometimes of original discovery.

He fastens upon a point, Sir, and it is a rattle and the ears have, Sir, to be bombarded unnecessarily by presentations which sometimes do justice to salient points.

I listened to him, because I think he is genuine in trying to bring a specific concern to his debates. I really do, Sir, and he very often unearths matters that sensible Ministers will listen to because he has access to information, as all Opposition Members do and Members who are coming into politics on the Opposition Side, they have to understand that very often Opposition Members are better informed than Members on the Government Side. This seems strange, but he does injustice to it, Sir, by a bombastic delivery that sometimes suggest that he has fallen instead in love with his intellect and that he feels that he has to play it from the roof, Sir.

I must say to the Honourable Member for St. John though, Sir, that I know when he came to the House in 1987 he set this model for himself as a social engineer and I have been trying to suggest to him, Mr. Speaker, that that is fine, but that in small economies the most powerful instrument open to policy makers is fiscal policy. That is a fact,

Exchange rate policy is not an option opened to us because we have said our exchange rate must be fixed, Monetary policy is a derivative of fiscal policy in our country. Policies which affects the economy through capital markets are limited, because our capital market is highly-underdeveloped.

Our monetary system is dominated largely by banks. We do not have well-developed capital markets so we have to use fiscal policies and the Estimates debate is about the expression of fiscal policies.

Government's revenues and expenditures policies, have an overwhelming bearing on the structure and functioning of small economies that go beyond what is expected of fiscal policies in many other economies.

Sir, when I was in Jamaica, every year Michael Manley used to give some wonderful statements during his addresses during the budget debate, but he would never come into contact with fiscal policies. I kept telling him, but you must deal with the fiscal policies and the fiscal issues because unless you get them right, all the other things that you are trying to achieve with social re-organization will not be accomplished, and he kept being told, Sir, that the deficit does not matter, how you finance the deficit does not matter. The fiscal policies is for the technicians and a lot of stuff and then one day Jamaica woke up to find that it had a structural deficit about 21% of GDP.

The economy impacted, Sir, and a lot of people reputations were damaged carelessly by association with fiscal matters.

But the fact is, Sir, the Estimates, matters. The budget matters. Fiscal policies matter because we affect almost everything in this country by the structure and rates of taxes and the composition and the allocation of expenditures.

The next point, Sir, and I am speaking particularly to the younger Members of this House, this is the budget debate. Government's budget is set out before us in the projected Estimates of Revenue and the projected Estimates of Expenditure. We are involved in the real budget debate.

There has grown up in this country a convention whereby Ministers of Finance may come after this debate and bring additional measures to either increase or decrease taxes, change expenditures and that have come in the popular imagination to be treated as the budget. What we are doing is the presentation of Barbados' budget for the next fiscal year beginning March and, Sir, I am begging all Members of my Side to take it seriously, and I say that because if there is a stricture that I had to be liable, is that he, the Honourable Member for St. John, wanted me to go into a Manley type presentation where I dealt with the new international order and with crime and violence and give visions about all things other than dealing with the budget as a budget and as a fiscal policy.

In Committee, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have the opportunity to go into sectoral issues, international issues, social issues, financial issues and I would hope that the totality of uur discussions in the Committee would allow us to reach a state of union analysis.

But let us, Mr. Speaker, set out on that wider holistic discussion by making sure that the fiscal policy that is embodied are reflected in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure make sense in the context of the state of the economy where it is, as I said in terms of its space and time and where it is trending to go.

The Honourable Member for St. John, I think, Sir, brush too quickly over the more fundamental issue that a shadow Minister of Finance must treat them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1987, I constructed an Estimates reply, the second reading speech by what was contained in Appendix G. 3.05 p.m.

I reached Appendix G by going through the Memorandum at the front of the Estimates that give such valuable information about Government finances. I had'gone through all of the Ministry's proposed allocations. I had gone through the Appendices that examined Government's Sinking Fund and the withholding of debt, and had gone down past Appendix E and F to a new Appendix G which showed what Statutory Boards had asked for and what Richie Haynes had granted them, and which showed that the only statutory institution that had received what it had asked for was the Defence Force contrary to the Democratic Labour Party's policy in its 1986 campaign that it was going to miniaturise the Defence Force in compliance with Gabby's calypso. That Appendix G constituted such a horrible

statement about Government's policy that it dominated the debate.

Sir, a lot of effort is put in by the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance officials, all the fiscal planners and every Government Departments entertain these Estimates, Sir, and it is a little disappointing to come to Parliament and we are to be told, do not let us bother with the hard core financial issues. Those are for technicians. Let us go on to state of the union issues about other matters. There is a place for that too, Sir, but let us agree that at the start of this fiscal year we really join the discussion. Is the fiscal policy relevant?

Sir, I want to leave this debate by saying again to the House that a fiscal policy that sets a limit on Government's overall deficit at 1.5% of GDP in this year is relevant. And it is particularly relevant because that deficit of 1.5% of GDP is intended to be financed by access, and disproportionately so, to foreign resources. I believe it will be financed by a process that will lead to a reduction on our reliance upon the domestic market and that therefore Government will not be adding to any increase in credit creation locally that we have identified as the factor that has put some pressure on the reserves last year.

It is for that reason, Sir, that the establishment of the connection between the problem to the extent that it exists and the policies to be pursued, it is because of that intrinsic and integral connection that we can say that these fiscal policies in the context of the economy at this time and place are relevant for today's and tomorrow's purposes. It is on the strength of that, Sir, that I am asking the support of the House.

I know the Honourable Member for St. John does not like this debate. When he was Minister of Finance he acquired a reputation for pragmatism by people who watched him because he had moved away a bit from his social engineering disposition and he saw the wisdom of dealing with fiscal issues but there is always this tendency for him to bat on Freundel Stuart's wicket and he will have, I hope, learnt in the last election that he should be himself rather than wanting to be Freundel Stuart, and I say no more to him on this occasion.

Sir, I will not be giving him much advice all at once but he criticised me for pragmatism, but I remember when he was Minister of Finance, he had acquired a reputation to the extent that he had acquired a reputation at all and somebody who could have a pragmatic instinct but there is that relapse into that loose rhetoric and so on which suggests to me that he has not read the Estimates. I would like to invite him after these Estimates debates are finished to read the Estimates because he would then be able to see the good handy work to an extent that he has not seen it.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I do not want any praise, Sir, because what he is telling the House is that if he read them he would have no choice but to praise. That is what he wants to say.

Mr. Speaker, this Parliament has to assert itself as the place where supremacy of financial matters reigns and it comes from Government back benchers, that the Government benefits not from a weak approach to analysis of its policy but from a strong approach and a sensitive Government will respect a strong approach and listen to it carefully. But, Sir, that is his way and he criticises the Estimates by reference to criteria that the Estimates do not purport in and of themselves to want to agree to.

These Estimates for us, Sir, are first and foremost the embodiment of Government's fiscal policy and fiscal policy being the most powerful policy, Sir, has to be treated with relevance to its own logic, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, the member, as is his wont in every debate, could not help trying to indulge in some pieces of controversy. Once again, Sir, he throws the GEMS Project to indulge in his controversy. He has at some stage to make up his mind on what he wants to say about that Project because at some time he tells us he knows everything about it and is only waiting to unleash the information, as he did in the last Budget when I had to produce all the contracts that the GEMS had entered into, and then when it suits his purposes, he says he knows nothing about it whatsoever and that all of us need to be told, and he wants us to produce the financial statements, the prospectus and things of that character.

I want today to lay the Prospectus for the Hotel and Resorts Limited and make it a document of the House. This Prospectus was prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Companies Act by a private company registered under the Companies Act and seeking to raise financing by way of a bond on the market. There are serious legal implications about publishing a prospectus. It is not to be taken lightly.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, there are other private companies that have been established by the Government of Barbados, BACT, BAMC and others which have had to raise money under Government guarantees but whose activities have never been exposed to the public by way of a prospectus in the way in which Hotel and Resorts Limited has been exposed. I say that to make my first point, Sir, that we have nothing to hide in this particular issue.

Hotel and Resorts Limited has to date published at least two major supplements in newspapers together with a large

number of Press conferences and any matters that the Opposition or any Member of the Government wants to raise I am happy to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, in Barbados there is this thing called "verandah politics" where one of the most destructive aspects of politics which generally begins by people saying "I hear that" and generally "I hear that" is not necessarily based on fact but it establishes the person's access to privileged information and then is used as the basis very often for embellishment of situations that do not warrant embellishment, or putting out scenarios that are so lurid that they bear no relationship to reality.

There are also, Mr. Speaker, a very sad disposition in this country that every major initiative that is taken in this country is met by a sense of doubt. It is one of the aspects of developing countries' psychology that seems to be embedded in its characteristics.

When the ABC Highway was built, Sir, I heard some of the most remarkable scenarios about what it was going to do Barbados, and why it was built, and every major project in this country is met with this notion of doubt. We have to allow things to work for us over and over again. The contrast between what was intended, or expected to be intended, and what was achieved is so drastic but positive in this country that we have to stop doubting ourselves. 3.15p.m.

As regards the GEMS there are additional complications in that there are two members of this House whose families have lost their family business, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South but there is the suspicion that the Government has in some respects conceptualised the GEMS to find some way of enriching those families or putting their businesses back in a viable state at the expense of the taxpayers and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is correct that once he and the Honourable Member for Christ Church are in here on this Side it is obvious there will be a finger pointed. I add as well, Sir, that some people who are alleged to be close to me but who will get fired if there are any infelicities at the GEMS the fact that they are involved makes this even more lurid for all persons involved in verandah politics in this country.

I want to speak to the issue because the facts are simple. When the BDB had to be closed, the advice that was being rendered was that the Government should take all of the small hotel properties and put them out for auction. We told the IDB in particular that we did not think that that was going to be a sociably just way to go. There are a number of firms that were just ready to buy these properties at bargain basement prices but for long there had been the view that the small hoteliers particularly in the South coast faced unique problems because of their small size. They were undercapitalised and had poor reservations marketing supply systems and if a way could have been found to bring them under one common management to upgrade and refresh them to equip them and make them into modern management systems, recapitalise them and whatever else that a lot of the small hoteliers functioning as members of a group would have a chance to operate successfully in circumstances where they could not as a single entity.

I want also to say that at least 13 hotels in debt to the BDB were judged to be entities that could have participated immediately initially in the GEMS but that we did not use any compulsion to make them come into the project. I want, Sir, to speak to this point because our development is like a relay race where people pass on the baton to succeeding generations in the expectation that by that process of building that we would eventually reach our goals but the failure of the BDB is a sad failure in many respects of that generation who were able to acquire property through development financing immediately after the independence in too many respects not recognising their obligation to future generations of Barbadians. That has to be said.

Many of them too many of them received loans from the BDB in the belief that because it was a Government institution that they were under no obligation to repay them. My heart goes out to those institutions, those starter businesses in particular that were the victims of a refinancing programme that was intended to save the small hoteliers but which by capitalising the arrears increased the amounts that people had to be repaid without their full knowledge so that p ;opb thought they were paying their loans when they were not because they were paying back bigger loans because their arrears had been capitalised.

Sir, it has to be said that the BDB also became a victim of some people who believed that an institution that borrows from the public to lend them to create assets and property could long survive without being repaid what they had borrowed. There are some hoteliers who borrowed money in the early 1980s and up to 1995 had not paid back a penny of principal or interest and that is a most disturbing thing.

There are some who were in a position by the mid-nineteen nineties to go and commit unencumbered properties in support of bail for politicians on the loose but whose properties to BDB was not being properly serviced and there are others in the tourism industry as well who while not paying their loans to the BDB were busy acquiring other properties, race horses, Mercedes Benz and the like.

When it came to the issue as to what you would do with those thirteen properties a whole saga over two years between 1994 and 1996 evolved that when it is written properly it is going to make a disturbing chapter in our history.

We made a decision that where the properties were concerned we were going to get independent valuations of

what the real estate was worth then we were going to deduct the debt of the hotels to the BDB together with any third party debt and what was left was the equity of the original hoteliers in the new company.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas' family business, the value of Worthing Court we got independent valuers including a former member of this House. We offset what they owed the BDB, what the hotels owed third parties and the balance was put into the project as that family's equity in the project and that is all that they own now, Sir, having lost their family business. The same with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

There were some, Sir, who came and said and who were represented by members of Parliament who were their lawyers as well and told us that this hotel is their birthright and that they educated their children in Switzerland from it and they are not now going to be told how they are going to rebuy it out of debt or balance pay. We were told that.

There were others Mr. Speaker, who had properties that were valued at $8 million owed the bank about $4 million and wanted to buy the hotel out of debt by paying $2 million for the debt and we told them no. For two years we had battles of that kind with people who believe that the way to acquire property is getting somebody else to pay for it because that is what the result will be if the successors to the BDB cannot realise from the sale of assets funds to cover the repayment of the debt to the BDB.

This House between 1994 and 1996 has had to ask the taxpayers to pump $20 million of funds that could have been used to build tenantry roads into the BDB to pay back its creditors.

There were other people who objected to the value on their property saying that the independent valuations did not matter that they had put in something called sweat equity and that we had to inflate the value of these properties beyond what they were worth. They were running to politicians on all three Sides. What was most astonishing was that people said they were not going to participate in the project that they would offer to buy themselves out of the debt which is a right and to put up one offer and when next we meet with them they have reduced the offer and they write all kinds of letters through their lawyers and through Members of Parliament on both Sides to the Ministry of Finance to say what a wicked set of people we are.

It was an experience, Sir. Over two years to get the concept agreed but to get people to accept that if you are coming in and you are going to employ special management you have to come in good faith. Of course, at the same time, Sir, we were under attack from leading sportsmen on behalf of the Hotel Association who in moments of irrational exuberance were really putting a case on behalf of other small hoteliers who wanted the Government to give them funds for refurbishing because they believed that the money that the Government had put the $10 million into the GEMS and Government put in $10 million equity was money that we gave the hoteliers.

The $ 10 million that the Government committed to the GEMS project went in as Government equity and is designated as Government's equity. It is not the Member for St. Thomas, the Member for Christ Church South's property. What they own is the value of their real estate less their debts to the BDB, less their third party debt but that $10 million cannot benefit them. That has gone on as Government's equity in the project.

Sir, the project therefore started with a concept that all agreed to, but along the way hoteliers dropped out and the question given the nature of the management that we all agreed was necessary and we engaged Canada's best company in rehabilitating small hoteliers and that is true. They have a tremendous track record that when there were other entities that said that if people have dropped out we will agree that our properties be brought in. 3.25 p.m.

There was a property that was making money, Blue Horizon, that was brought into the project because, clearly, Sir, it added to the critical mass. Eastry House, in my constituency, dormant for a long period of time was brought into the property because you need to spread the management cost over a wide enough base to be able to make the project viable. We acre working on that concept, Sir, that over a period of time we wcJuld be able to deliver 1 000 refreshed hotel rooms, properly capitalised, under professional management to the public of Barbados. The Government, having established a track record for the GEMS will eventually divest itself of its interest. We did not go into this because we want to own hotel properties, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We will not stay in the GEMS for a day longer than necessary.

It is for that reason, Sir, and I want to stress this point as well, that we went out of our way to get one of the best Boards for any institution. The former Member for St. Michael North is not on the Board to represent the Democratic Labour Party, Sir. It is because we feel that given what is at risk here that you want some of the best Barbadian minds to be on the Board of the GEMS. The Board of the GEMS reflect the former Chairman of the Barbados Development Bank who by reason of that office came over as Chairman of the GEMS. The Head of the Tourism Authority, Mr. Shuffler; he is on the Board. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism is a Member of the Board. A Mr. Coon who is a businessman is a Member of the Board and Sir Harold St. John and Mr. Philip Greaves are Members of the Board.

I want to say as well, Sir, that every appointment to the GEMS has been by way of advertisement approved to and approved of by the Committees and the fiill Board. Every contract for construction undertaken by the GEMS project has been on the basis of open competitive tendering. Gone through comprehensively in a manner that I wish had been followed in relation to the St. Joseph Hospital. Every contract, Sir, has gone to the Board and has been the subject of Board scrutiny and Board approval, Mr. Speaker, and I am prepared to lay them all on this Table.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, what we are involved in because, as I have said, Sir, one of the gentlemen who works at the GEMS is supposed to be a friend of mine but he knows, Mr. Speaker, Sir, how I feel about it. That I know of his past as well but if there are any infelicities at the GEMS, he will have to go because I will not defend any infelicities of any kind whatsoever. I can say that, Sir, from this Floor or anywhere else because they know the pressure that I have them under to answer every query that is raised about the GEMS project.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John also now wants to raise the snide remarks that there were no financial statements. Sir, the GEMS is in that phase where construction is taking place. If you are building an apartment over a three-year period, you will be incurring expenses now and at some stage three years hence your earnings will start to be generated.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The financial statements have to be published under the Companies Act and will reflect the status that is involved in construction. That it has expenses at this stage but that it has not yet created the capacity to start earning a lot of revenue. That is as is budgeted, Mr. Speaker, Sir. When the audited financial statements are available, I am going to make sure that they come to this House. My Cabinet is in a position to say that among all the private companies owned by the Government, the minutes of the private companies that come to Cabinet as a matter of course are those involving the successor to the BOB and the Hotel and Resorts Limited.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that all private companies owned by Government were as assiduous in this. I did not see the audited financial statement of the BAMC or the BACT when they were established by the Honourable Member for St. John.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is no requirement under the law for Hotels and Resorts Limited to file audited financial statements. It is a private company. It is not a publicly listed company. It is the option of the company when it has audited statements. For the purposes of the CDB loan, both the BAMC and the BACT were required to prepare audited fmancials. If not, the sugar industry would not have got any assistance from the CDB. It is true that they were not made available to the House but there was no guaranteed Resolution which came to the House, in the same way that a Resolution came because the law did not provide for it in that way.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, if you remember, we had to guarantee all of the loans of the BAMC that came to this House. I do not know what nonsense the Honourable Member for St. John is telling us because the situation is the same. The Government has guaranteed the loan of two sets of private companies.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. If the situation was the same, the Attorney General would have advised the Prime Minister that there would have been no need to bring a new piece of legislation to permit the Government of Barbados to guarantee loans made to private companies. That is what the whole debate came about because of. The Government brought a Companies Guarantee Bill in which new legislation was brought to the House to permit Government to guarantee loans contracted by private companies. That was not the way in which the financing of the BAMC we \t. It was not a guarantee of a private company loan. There was some other way in which it was facilitated. That was not the option in relation to Hotels and Resorts Limited.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: .Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is also very dangerous when the Honourable Member for St. John purpoits to speak on behalf of this Government as to what Government's intentions are. It is within the capacity of this Government to guarantee any loan under existing legislation for any entity in the private sector. We guarantee loans for the Barbados Light & Power Company or for anybody. That legislation that came to the House was not to empower the Government, Sir, to guarantee loans only, but precisely to set limits that were reviewable by Parliament so that Parliament would have the right and by way of new statutory law, be in a position to be able to control at any one point in time, how much is guaranteed to any private company owned by the Government and to change those limits as it sees fit.

The Government could have guaranteed loans to the BAMC which was a private company owned by the Government without having to have special legislation in here, Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is a fact. It could have done the same thing with the GEMS, Mr. Speaker. We thought we would put a limit on it so that it would put the House in a position....

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I am not challenging the point that the Honourable Member is making except to say that he was not here when the debate took place but the Attorney General took the point then. We searched around to find the legislation in Barbados which would have permitted Government even to guarantee, for example, the Barbados Light & Power Company loan. Myself and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South could not find it. Then the question arose in that debate whether we should not bring one piece of composite legislation which would authorise, as you have said, all guarantees that Government makes, whether to state corporations, private companies or utilities. The point was taken. The point that I am trying to make is that at the time when the BAMC loan was made - this is my recollection - the way in which the guarantee was offered in relation to the BAMC was in the way in which we would normally guarantee a CDB loan. My own view is that we should bring legislation to cover all Government's guarantee and I go a step further- I hope the Minister of Finance will agree with this - that the guarantees should be listed in the Appendix to the Estimates including the amounts outstanding by all entities.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If you introduce the law then, it can be done. What we were saying then is that for example the HRL loan, that in an Appendix to the Estimates, the BAMC loan outstanding liabilities would be shown, the HRL outstanding liabilities and so on would be shown as an Appendix to the Estimates. That debate took place and I urge the Honourable Member for St. Peter to familiarise himself with it because there was no contest except to say that I felt that the House would feel uncomfortable guaranteeing even Light & Power's loan except that the Light & Power is a publicly listed company which is required to publish an annual report and therefore any citizen would have an idea of the financial viability of Light & Power but it would not be so with either BAMC or Hotels and Resorts Limited. We are not in any big dispute on the issue. 3.35 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would get familiar with the Appendices, he would realise that Appendices to the Estimates do in fact provide statements of sinking funds and external balances where there is a legal requirement to do so. In fact, Sir, part of the purpose of bringing the legislation for the limits on guarantees for the Government's private companies was to put them in a position where they had to be accountable to Parliament by way of a reporting relationship, because in this matter we have nothing to hide and that is what I have been trying to impress on the Honourable Member for St. John.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No, because, Mr. Speaker, Sir, these Estimates were prepared...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker. In future as a result both that legislation as well as a further piece of composite legislation which will cover all guarantees given by Government, because the Light and Power guarantees...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It can, but what we are saying is for the avoidance of doubt and therefore any guarantee which the Government has given, whether in respect of its own statutory corporations, a private company or a publicly listed company would form part of an appendix to the Estimates. And the Honourable Members on that Side said they will raise it with the Minister of Finance in due course.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, they do not have to because the Minister of Finance, by bringing that legislation, Sir, was in advance of that thinking. We previously brought guarantees on matters to this House by way of Resolutions and the House was invited to resolve that these issues should be guaranteed.

We took the initiative to bring statute law to the House to serve as the basis upon which private companies owned by the Government would seek guarantees and to give the House the authority to set the limits as to how much loans guaranteed by the Government on behalf of any statutory organisation that it owned could be approved.

The next year's Estimates, Sir, will have obviously to begin to reflect these, because that is a statutory matter that the appendices will speak to. The notion of having an omnibus piece of guaranteed legislation, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is very much apropos, because it is in keeping with our bringing to the House legislation to guarantee what we do on behalf of companies that the Government owns. So that same Government that will bring that legislation, Sir, will bring legislation to protect the public purse from guarantees issued on behalf of companies not owned by the Government.

The point I am coming to, Mr. Speaker, is that at this stage the GEMS is in its construction phase where it is incurring expenses without there being a stream of income at this time. The Budget for the GEMS anticipates that the capacity would have been completed in three years time. We can produce, as would be required to produce, audited financial statements at this time, but they would have to be understood in the context of where the Project is. It is under construction and as soon as those audited financial statements are available, I will bring them to the House. But I also give the House the assurance, Sir, that I will bring all

other financial statements by all other private companies owned by the Government, because they are many which should be also held up to a similar scrutiny. I feel that is the only proper way to go and that is how transparent the Government should function.

So there is no mystery, Mr. Speaker, about there not having been any audited financial statements yet presented to the House or because there is no legal requirement to publish them, but they will be made available. The prospectus of the GEMS was the basis upon which it raised a loan in the marketplace and therefore had to meet the scrutiny of persons who had to commit their funds. I know the Honourable Member for St. John is a little bit chastened by comments that he made that people who have his best interest at heart, spoke to him about as regards the extravagance of the advice that he rendered to the public.

Sir, there is a lot of contrast between how the Project was conceived and how the project has now evolved largely as a result of private hoteliers who were in debt to the BOB exercising their option not to participate in the projects, because in some instances they wanted and they are succeeding in buying their properties out of debt to the old BDB. And, contrary to a lot of misconception, Sir, there was never any compulsion by this Government on any person to participate in the GEMS, if they did not want to.

In fact, Sir, the GEMS project is designed with a buy back option for persons who are now even participating in it, but an image was put abroad that we were forcing people to participate in the GEMS against their wish. What I will say, Sir, is that there were hoteliers who did not participate in the GEMS, but who used profit pressure of a media that is not often critical enough to seek to get their properties out of debt, very often at bargain basement prices. At prices that do not reflect, either the value of the property, or the debt that they owed to the old BDB and it is to that issue I want to speak, Sir.

The BDB went out of operation with an accumulated deficit of over $77 million. The operation of the BDB was simple. It borrowed from the Government of the Central Bank and from the IDB to lend to potential investors on the understanding that they would have repaid and the BDB would have met its operating expenses and pay its debts. The Government has already paid back $20 million on what BDB owed its creditors. It is money that we could have found other uses for, Sir, but the successor institutions to the BDB have inherited the portfolio of the old institution and the company called CRL - Collection Recovery Liquidation is in the process of trying to collect, recover, or in some instance, liquidate - because BDB's obligations still have to be met. If they are not met from the sale of the assets or the repayment of the loans, then the deep, or the supposed deep pocket of the Government is going to have to be called upon.

I say again, Sir, that there are too many in our midst and one is too many, who believe that you can acquire property and get somebody else to pay for it. That is an attitude that obtains when people are dealing - unfortunately, with institutions that are owned by the state. This is a case that the Press should have jumped upon, but the Press allowed itself to be used - where a hotelier who borrowed $4 million and more in the early 1980s, ran the hotel for 10 years and did not pay back a penny in principal nor interest. The Press championed his cause as a cause of a small black man and made a decision that somebody has to pay back for this and if you do not pay back, the company has to be sold, Sir. The Press ran all these ludicrous stories about how the Government is trying to unfair a small black man. Had he repaid, Sir, the old BDB would have been in a position to help another small black man build a hotel too and that is what we have to tell people.

Sir, we have to make these points very clear now because the fund access is now starting again. It has a good delinquency record, but that must see itself as being in a position where the loans lent to one group in one period, serve as the basis upon which new investments can be made to another group in another period. But the old BDB clients had inspired them, Sir? Not at all, because there were good clients, but some of the old BDB clients failed the public.

The Honourable Member for St. John also used to go on record for talking about the 16 loans that we wrote off, Sir.

Aside,

Rt Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He admitted that there was this secret list.

Aside.
3.45 p.m.

Rt, Hon O. S. ARTHUR: I made the point, Sir, that when the BDB was liquidated, there were 16 loans accumulated over its entire history.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: You did too. Sometimes you were so careless that you did not remember what you were saying. Sixteen loans, Sir, and it was the subject of the DLP ads sometimes. Sixteen loans over the entire history of the BDB which when the point came for the Bank to be closed, were in such a sad state, the people who had borrowed the money had nothing against which you should recover, and as a result therefore, the bank itself, by incurring legal and other costs, would have put itself in a deeper hole and it sought to recover from people who were less than men of straw.

There were small amounts, Sir, the sixteen together came to about $600 000 with one, Sir, (who, I am not

going to call people's names in the debate with this statement, Sir), but there was one in particular that was well over one-third of the amount. But there were very small loans and these are people who had borrowed, the business had run into trouble, they had nothing that you could recover. So you just had to write it off.

Sixteen loans over the entire period of the bank had at its close to be written off and that became a political issue. Because these did not and should not, Sir, we did not publish the names nor the amounts and I will never do it.

But I want to say, Sir, that as regard the BDB that the small hotel portfolio has come to the GEMS and they are now trying to use that as the basis of rehabilitating the small hotels particularly on the south coast.

I am pleased to hear that the reports are out, that the quality of the rooms is very competitive and that I feel we will be able to deliver in a serious time, Sir, a thousand new rooms but that the Government will not stay in the GEMS for a day that is longer. Once we establish that record, Sir, the Government must not be in the business of running hotels.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, created facilities to assist the other small hoteliers who are not in the GEMS, with a small hotel cooperatives fund and the Government is providing these resources to the other small hoteliers and I hope that they would use them more expeditiously than the Small Business Association who had access to $2 million in venture capital and did not use it, Sir.

A decision was taken, Sir, that rather than sell off the fishing industry, that a lot of our fishing industry was built through BDB loans, that a special programme would be maintained to allow the fishing industry to continue to service the debt it owed to the old BDB through its successor organisation and that technical assistance has also been provided to them.

Outside of the hotel sector, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that part of the BDB portfolio that was not hotel loans has been put in a new institution called Collection, Recovery and Liquidation.

There were loans that were current and were continued to be collected on a monthly basis. There were some that were not current and receiverships and programmes have been put in place to enable the entities to be able to live up to their obligations. But the Government has a responsibility to the taxpayers of Barbados to make the people who borrowed in the first instance and acquired property, to pay back the debts of the BDB before it touches the pockets of the other taxpayers of this country.

That is the message, Sir, that has to go forward. Because as I say, Sir, too many people use the media in particular in this country, to get advantages over the rest of innocent taxpayers by false messages being sent out on their behalf that they are entitled to this cuddling because of the state status as so-called small black people. The media has a responsibility, Sir, to lift that veil, you must lift the veil, that when a man can come up with a million dollars of unencumbered property to go and stand bail for somebody else, but he is not paying his debts to the BDB, the media must expose that for the fraud that it is.

When a man says that he is a small black man and has bought property by a loan from the BDB that he is not paying back whilst having bought other property at the same time, Sir, the media should expose those things. Because it is members of the media, Sir, whose pockets will have to be pulled to pay back for property that is owned by somebody else, Sir.

Sir, I am using the opportunity of this debate to touch on these issues because I will love a postgraduate student to really do a serious analysis of the experience of development financing in Barbados.

The whole third world is replete. It is these examples of good intentions gone awry. Jamaica has gone through two Development Banks. Trinidad had to close theirs, Sir. We had to close ours. Other Caribbean countries still have development institutions and there is still a role for development of financing of our country but people who benefit from the development of financing must understand both their financial as well as their social responsibility to others that would come after them.

I would be delighted, Sir, if all of the arrangements pertaining to the functioning of the BDB, its successor institution and the GEMS could be the subject of enlightened and serious research as to the appropriate adjustment measures for dealing with the failures of the development financing in a country such as our own. Because we have to learn from its experiences, Mr. Speaker.

We therefore, in short, Sir, have a project called the GEMS that is as I said different from what we would have conceived it to have been. We would have wanted only the hoteliers that were in debt to the BDB that had been partied to it. They said they could not because they wanted to buy out the property. Some of them did but they have maintained critical mass. Others who were not in debt to the BDB but who wanted to come in were allowed to sell their properties to the GEMS.

The GEMS even bought a hotel that was performing and making a profit, because you do not want all lemons, you want some successes as well. The project, Sir, has three years of full expenditure after which a clearer perspective as to how viable it is intended to be will be discerned.

That is the fact, Sir. The prospectus is before the House but 1 do not think a shadow Minister of Finance should come to Parliament to ask for information about a private company owned by the Government in circumstances where that private company has put a prospectus out to the public. That is the point, Sir. But the Honourable Member for St. John by his contribution to the debate tried to continue the verandah politics. I hear that. When he does not need to do that, he can refer to the prospectus and I feel that if he were to in many aspects of our public life, leave out the verandah politics and deal with the facts, that you would have better public life in this country.

This debate, Sir, has been a rich debate. I can see, Sir, that we will have an outstanding session of Parliament and I could only close by giving encouragement to those young persons, young to the House who have joined this debate, Sir, to continue to treat fiscal matters with great seriousness.

There is nothing - as I said the most powerful tool open to small open economies in the discharge of the development responsibility is the fiscal tool, tax concessions, rates of taxes, determines the pace of patterning economic activity, Government expenditure spread across the sectors, spread across the social services and so on, Sir, set the basis for the quality of life.

Our monetary policy is derived from fiscal policy, Sir, and I am very pleased that in this debate, the persons speaking for the first time in these matters have shown that they have an intrusive grasp of the historic and monumental significance of these Estimates debate in the structuring of the Barbadian society.

It is in that spirit, Sir, that I close this debate in terms of its second reading and would hope that the rest of the work in Committee could reflect a serious House resolved to treat Government budgeting in the spirit in which Government budgeting should be approached.

I am obliged to you, Sir, for your and the House's patience.

I beg to move that this Bill be 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. 3.55 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 10- GOVERNOR-GENERAL- $1 113 574

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure now include continued improvement at Government House, particularly the installation of an irrigation and water storage system reaching both Government House and Ilaro Court.

I beg to move that Head 10 with that explanation of the increase in expenditure stand part.

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

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

HEAD 11 - JUDICIARY- $193 960

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a little dip in the other expenditures for the Judiciary because last year we did bring to account a number of new allowances for the judiciary which work has to be reflected here. Some are one-shot and I beg to move that Head 11 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT- $6 545 812

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the provision for Parliament has grown fairly briskly in recent years because there have been some changes in allowances but we are allowing Members of Parliament all to enjoy the richness of being able to participate in parliamentary exchanges and the like.

The crucial matter that still is to be resolved is the future of the west wing of Parliament. That centre has been under construction for a number of years and Government is coming to the view that the west wing of Parliament would among other purposes serve as a permanent centre for our national heroes where their memorabilia and other artefacts pertaining to their lives will be on display, where you can have an interpretive centre to bring home to the people of Barbados the various attributes that enables those ten Barbadians to stand as our national heroes. This would be without prejudice to having other aspects of the west wing of Parliament designated to serve Parliament in a more ample way than we are presently served.

Sir, there is also a view which I should even float that we should re-designate Trafalgar Square as National Heroes Square and the west wing of Parliament as National Heroes Centre. It is a view that I put out for public comment and consultation but the truth is that in the very centre of our principal city the persons that we designate as our national heroes to the extent that they embody the spirit of our nation, we feel that certainly that principal area at the heart of our national cities should be identified more with the national heroes of Barbados than identified with things that might have less profound importance for our contemporary development.

Sir, this Administration puts these things to public consideration but I know there has been a lot of talk as to how we will treat the heroes and how they would have statues. A statue for Sir Garfield has already been commissioned and I think that it is under preparation and that I think will be placed at the gymnasium which bears his name.

It is the Government's intention and now that the political season is off to treat all of our national heroes with a dignity that the standing of national hero requires us to treat them and we do not have to be impressed with calls for assisting in building any statues for anyone nor are we trying to be political if we support the efforts of any private group who wants to contribute to the erection of a statue for any of our national heroes.

We feel that all of our national heroes should be suitably recognised and that they should occupy by their images in this country and by their images being associated with other images in this country such prominent positions as will always have them stand as uplifting factors in the lives of today's citizens and erection of statues in one way have an interpretative sense. Other countries have national heroes circles and I put it out for what it is worth. There will be those persons, Sir, who will resist it; but we will have to go forward on the strength of the Tightness of what we are proposing to do for Barbadians who in point of fact I think will be uplifted by having at the centre of our principal permanent area well adorned in appropriate images and artefacts that keep before our people the notion that out of our system can come truly heroic deeds.

I know the Honourable Member for the City in whose constituency this takes place would be only too anxious to give support to these views but I know the House wants to speak a bit about the Management Commission of Parliament since that in itself is the subject of this particular Head. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister has no power in the Management Commission of Parliament nor in here beyond those of any ordinary member so my simple task as Minister of Finance has been to provide the ample resources for the Management Commission to spend, and the resources are ample, Sir.

I therefore will be participating in this debate to the same extent as any Honourable Member. There were some commitments given in the old session that we will be honouring and as faithfully as we can and that should not be itself an issue but I know that members would want at an early stage in this session to speak as to the manner in which Parliament itself should function and I will be taking no further part in this debate except to listen as to what might be the obligations that may descend on the desk of the Minister of Finance who in this matter is entirely a creature of this Parliament.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to second that and in doing so I would like to say from the outset any recommendation, any proposal, to rename Trafalgar Square will get my support. For years I have been calling it Parliament Square but I have no difficulty with National Heroes' Square. Indeed, when the responsibility for the restoration of this building in which we are now known as the east wing of Parliament was given to me and the west wing as well as how we should reconfigure these two buildings to make up our Parliament it was always a proposal that we would have a parliamentary museum of some kind. 4.05 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: After all, we are the third oldest Parliament in the Commonwealth. For that concept to be enlargened, to accommodate a repository as the Right Honourable Prime Minister has put it for the memorabilia and *etcetera* of national heroes. I have no difficulty with that either.

The premises are quite commodious on the Other Side, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and there is a great need for a greater resource base in this Parliament than we presently have. I am going to say something now which I have said in every single year that I have sat in this Parliament and this is the -1 forget - twenty what ever year it is. Every Estimates debate whether I am in Government or in Opposition I have to make the same point. It is a shocking and disgraceful thing that we have no library in this Parliament.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You cannot do research in here. You cannot even get a newspaper in here some days. I am not talking only about the *Advocate* and the *Nation* or the *Nation* and the *Advocate*. I have to put it that way because there are those who say that I have a preference.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: When it comes to reading it does not make a difference, I finish both of them in five minutes every morning.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And on Sundays seven minutes.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is ridiculous that in a Parliament like ours, Members of Parliament cannot come into this building on a Tuesday and say, can I see the *Gleaner* or can I see the *Guardian* or whatever.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister is quite right. This is a significant sum of money for Parliament in excess of $6 million. It cannot cost too much for basic materials to be put at the disposal of Members of Parliament. We each have, thank God now after all of these years, we each have a constituency office in the constituency but there are still certain facilities in this Parliament which are lacking and in particular in a week such as this one when we are debating the Estimates of Expenditure. We are going the whole gamut.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Right Honourable Prime Minister is right again. For all the years in here, I have said, that we have always done it back to front. That we do the Estimates of Expenditure and then we have a Budget, That has always seemed to me the reversed way of doing business. I am glad that we are gradually coming to a position where there are not now going to be two separate events and that one will come in advance of the other. These are basic reforms which have to come in this Parliament and I am hoping, Sir, with the assistance and the encouragement of officers of the House like yourself, Sir, the Deputy Speaker and Mr. Speaker as well, that we will see these basic changes being made before the end of this century. I cannot believe that we would go into a new century, a new millennium, Mr. Chairman, with the same old baggage and in the same old format which is not serving us well.

Members who sit on the Front Bench have an added advantage in that we have staff in Ministries who can do a certain amount of research for us. Some Ministries are better off than others in terms of research assistance and research material. It is not fair to Members of the Opposition and I have had my turn in Opposition, neither is it fair, in my judgment to Members of the Back Bench that once they come into this Chamber, they can have recourse to nothing. One or two newspapers will have to service twenty-eight Members. It is unthinkable. It will not happen or does not happen in other Parliaments with which I am acquainted.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I really want to appeal in this year of our Lord, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that these small things which can make the life of a Member of Parliament easier, can make a Member of Parliament more productive, will cause a Member of Parliament to give a better account and look better in the eyes of his and her constituents, can be effected, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I want to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that....

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Going to the point made by the Right Honourable Prime Minister in respect to national heroes. We have a great deal to be doing in this connection. How the Parliament will look is important certainly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when we get to that Head, Sir, I will be making the point that I am going to be using all the powers at my command to persuade the Minister of Finance, in this financial year that is to come, Sir, that we would wish to be restoring to former glory, Culloden Farm, with a view to making it a protocol house for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I suppose we may be the only Ministry of Foreign Affairs that *I* know of, which does not have a protocol house where you would take visiting dignitaries and so on, where documents of one kind or another might be formerly signed and that sort of thing. We need to have a custom designed and built Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It would be an opportunity, bearing in mind where our location is now, to restore Culloden Farm. This was the first residence of a Prime Minister and of a person who is now Right Excellent national hero. That proposal from the Right Honourable Prim. :vv/iister will get my support.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in respect of the Management Commission. I see that in these Estimates, that provision is being made for the administrative and operational costs of the Management Commission of Parliament. There are some things which have to be said about this. The Leader of the Opposition is operating in offices downstairs, Sir, which are less than adequate. We know that on this Side because we had our sojourn in those premises as well. It is proposed...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Well, it may have a lot of excess space now, Mr. Chairman, but again there are basic facilities which have to be put in place and we cannot plan for today only. This is a Parliament now that has - the institution, not this building - we have an institution of Parliament which has 360 years of existence. When we plan for the institution of Parliament we are planning for the very far and distant future. The Leader of the Opposition offices are meant to go back to the west wing where they originally were. There still needs to be Committee Rooms or rooms of some sort available to ordinary Members over there in the west wing. As I have said, Members have constituency offices but there is still business that they would wish to be

doing on sitting days. Sometimes people have to be received.

As a Minister of Foreign Affairs from time to time in order to do all of the Government's work, people cannot always come to Barbados at a time that is suitable to me, bearing in mind that I travel as well and sometimes I see people within the precinct of the Parliament. When I was Leader of the House, I used that office. That is not now available to me in that way and I will make other arrangements. Sometimes people have to call upon the Prime Minister here.

The Leader of the Opposition has offices and we overlook all the time the need that Government also has to have certain offices in this precinct. It is not only the Leader of the Opposition who is receiving people and doing business, but the Government needs to have offices as well in the same way as in the Management Commission when the present Leader of the Opposition in an earlier Administration made the point that there was certain support staff that he needed to have. I had to make the point that the Prime Minister also needs that kind of support staff and the Government also needs that kind of support staff on this Side. You cannot be expecting to have a research assistant for parliamentary purposes for the Leader of the Opposition without the Government having access to similar support service and facilities. That is only by way of illustration, Sir. 4.15 p.m.

The Management Commission of Parliament has to become, especially if we are approaching a new century and we are now in a new administration that we have to be become far more businesslike in the way we do our business. I think that the Management Commission can no longer operate on the basis of a few *ad hoc* meetings a year. It is very difficult to get a quorum in those circumstances, Sir. There must be fixed days of the month or of the quarter when the Management Commission should meet. It needs to be better serviced than it currently is. It needs to have a proper agenda put before it and it needs to do the business of the House. The basic facilities in this House are still lacking in many respects, Sir. There are complaints that are made about catering. There are still complaints that are being made about some of the basic facilities that are put in front of us. We came from the place where we used to have a piece of foolscap. New Members in here on the Front and Back Benches may not believe me, but up to a few years ago we used to get a piece of foolscap in here, now we get this little thing with Parliament written on the top of it, which means you have something to write on. I made a big racket about it over the years. You cannot get a pencil unless you ask for one.

Everywhere else in the world you have a proper Note Pad in front of you, a glass of water and a pencil. I cannot understand why it is that we continue to lower rate ourselves in this way over all of the years. We go on and on doing it and if we treat ourselves in this way, then the fault, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is largely ours and people will feel that they can treat us in this way as well. These are matters which fall to the Management Commission, but there are other matters, Sir, and I have been putting the case in this House for many years and this is not going to be the year when 1 will fail to put it, the matter of standing committees.

We have a Parliament that works hard. The year before the last, it met on 44 separate occasions - out of 52 weeks, we met on 44 separate occasions. This Parliament has been very busy and I foresee, looking at the Government's programme in this session, we are likely to be meeting on several occasions. Several weeks we are going to be here more than one day of the week, because the Government has a lot of business to do.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, in those circumstances, and bearing in mind that Barbados is a small country, but yet the Parliament of Barbados is expected to deliver a Government's programme in the same way as the Parliament of the United Kingdom or Canada or any of the big countries is expected to do. But we are expected to do in micro content. There is a scarcity of financial resources, there is a scarcity of human resources and for years I have put the case, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that standing committees of the Parliament would help to lengthen the arm of Parliament, the outreach of Parliament in a matter of speaking and help also to bring about that interface to which we all give lip service, but not much else, between the public and the private sector.

It is unthinkable in this year of our Lord 1999 that we do not have a standing committee of this Parliament on tourism, which is the major sector in our economy. That there is no standing committee on agriculture. There used to be a standing committee but that was really dealing with sugar agriculture and not non sugar agriculture and that has fallen into what in the legal profession they call desuetude. Nobody even recalls it, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am pleased that already in this session there has been a call by no less a person than the Minister of Finance for a standing committee which will look at our foreign affairs and foreign trade. We take it very seriously in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I wish, through you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to advise Mr. Speaker and the Clerk of this Parliament that we are willing to take an initiative in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to seek out a meeting with Mr. Speaker, and whoever else he may choose to begin to let us frame out this matter.

There is no time to lose. It is something that can be done very, very quickly. In a matter of weeks it can be put in place and I already am so clear in my mind as to how helpful it can be, not only to me and to us in the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and Foreign Trade, but to us all. Because on this matter, Sir, and I am going to speak to this when I get to the relevant Head in greater detail, but trade diplomacy is going to be the major thrust in this administration in this term of office as far as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade goes.

There are other Ministries with very severe and serious linkages into that area who must sit up and take notice as well, Sir. And, again, I am not taking anything for granted, I intend to take the initiative and approach them, rather than sit down and wait for them to approach us. So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is so much under this Head of Parliament that we need to be discussing seriously as to how we will structure the Barbados Parliament of the early 21st Century and how the Parliament of the early 21st Century will function and that is very important, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would take my seat at this time as I must, but I would hope to be able to make further contribution in debate under this Head.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this increase provision for Parliament has the support of the Opposition and I noticed in his closing sentences the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he treats himself as an ordinary Member of Parliament in relation to matters of the Management Commission. Now I still feel obliged, notwithstanding what he said, to point out that there has been too long a lag between the decisions which the Management Commission has made and their implementation. One, at one time got the impression that the Minister of Finance who also happens to be the Prime Minister and who by virtue of that office sits like myself, *ex officio* on the Management Commission, that the Minister of Finance had advised the Prime Minister to use his powers as Minister of Finance to almost veto, until he was ready, the decisions of the Management Commission. Now, that is not to say that the Commission has not achieved a lot and the Honourable Member for the City when she deserves credit, on the few occasions that she deserves it - coming from me that is, I will give it to her. I will say that the work which the Management Commission did in the last term was exemplary. The work which the Management Commission did in regrading the positions of the Constituency Assistants which was very necessary, the provision for Parliamentarians to have resources to buy office equipment and to get assistance in the payment of utilities as well as cleaning and the provision of supplies. The allowances offered to Parliamentarians to assist them with work in the constituency with, some very basic things like paying for wreaths for funerals, even assisting your own constituency assistant with some gas when she has to do additional work, using her own vehicle or things like that. There are a lot of Members of Parliament who were previously having to do this and particularly Ministers, out of the salary that they got as Ministers with no allowances for that. 4.25 p.m.

All of this was done in a very strong tri-partisan way by the Management Commission in its last term.

There were a couple of critical things though that the Minister of Finance in my view should give attention to. These Estimates I hope provide for them. One is the provision of either funds for the respective parliamentary groups to employ a research officer or alternatively to provide a research grant to the parliamentary groups.

Now, the reason why I have recommended a research grant is because the research which may be required, the group should have some flexibility in determining the source from which it is going to get that research and the respective parliamentary group should also have the option of purchasing research material on a particular subject and not just relying on the work of a paid research officer. I said that a more flexible approach would have been to give the respective parliamentary group an accountable grant for those purposes. But if that is not to be the case, I hope that very shortly the Leader of the House would indicate to us that the funds are available for us to have the research officers put in place, so that work can be done in preparation for debates in the House every Tuesday and so that those research officers could service the respective parliamentary group because that of itself is a very important role.

Apart from that, the recommendation of the Management Commission to my mind, have made the task of parliamentary representation slightly easier and I compliment the previous Management Commission for its work and I hope that the next Management Commission would be as diligent in getting these matters off the ground and that the Minister of Finance will not use his power as Minister of Finance to exercise what -amounts to a veto, whether temporary or otherwise over the decisions of the Management Commission.

It is a small constitutional point, but the Management Commission, since it is a commission of parliamentarians really does not have any requirement to go to the Minister of Finance. It could come in here and as long as the majority of Members of this House agree, a Resolution could be moved by the appropriate persons and provision could be made for the sums to be made available, on what Parliament agreed. But we go through the very said procedure.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John is dangerously misleading the House. Resolutions before this Parliament committing the House and Government and Parliament to expenditures can only come as a Resolution by a Minister and that is the standing orders of this House.

A Minister can only bring that Resolution if the Cabinet says it is in order for that Resolution to come to Parliament.

So that all requests for expenditure by the Management Commission of Parliament have to be treated by way of the same circuit of decision making as any request of any other entity that has access to the public funds.

The House cdn agree to a moving in but I just want to say, Sir, less the Member misleads himself and the House, that any and everybody just cannot commit the Government to expenditure. It has to be on the strength of a Resolution brought by a Minister, Sir. I would just want to remind Ministers that things cannot go to Cabinet unless the Minister of Finance say that there are all suggestions to Cabinet, if they have financial implications.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On this point will the Honourable Member just rephrase that statement, because it would appear that you are misleading the House. Please rephrase the statement.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I should ask the Honourable Member to remove the word "dangerously" but I take it in the spirit in which it is given. The Honourable Member, as I said, exercises a unique veto power but I am still of the view and I said a Minister could bring the Resolution.

What goes to Cabinet is a matter for the discretion of the Chairman of Cabinet. There is no law that says anything must go to Cabinet, except amendments to the decisions of the Tenders' Committee. This is one of the reasons why the Democratic Labour Party Government ended up having difficulties because Ministers brought matters to Cabinet for decisions which were within their purview.

The question of the appointment of a Director of Tourism was not a matter for the Cabinet. It was a matter for the Minister and the Minister could then inform. But because of the controversy of it, the Minister opted to build consensus and failed to do so. Because the only person who can tell you whether there is a consensus on the matter is the Prime Minister. But you do not vote in Cabinet.

So, I am saying that a capricious Minister could risk bringing a Resolution to give effect, Sir, to the desire of the Members of this Chamber to have the matters dealt with. But I am not recommending that. All I am saying and I am asking the Minister of Finance, please to deal expeditiously with these matters because there are some that do need attention.

The Management Commission has agreed that the issue of pensions need to be looked at, not to create anomalies but to remove some anomalies which have arisen. There is also the question of health insurance, which Parliamentarians do not enjoy and we are also excluded from benefits under the national insurance legislation in Barbados and there was a decision by the Management Commission to ensure that some provision was made so that those benefits could still in some other way be given to Parliamentarians.

There was a consideration at one point, of what one might call a resettlement allowance, as happens in other Parliaments, where when Parliamentarians lose office there is a short period of time for which there are assisted in resettling, because they have to start from scratch, look for jobs and so on.

All of these are important issues that we looked at.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, that is what I am saying. We do not benefit from unemployment benefit although we pay. We do not get those benefits and the Management Commission felt that health schemes as well as some of these things should be looked at and I urge the Honourable Member, the Minister of Finance to look at them because I felt there were by and large bi-partisan agreement on them.

It would not affect past Parliamentarians, so I am not making a case for my colleagues who were not successful. I am saying that I support the general principle of these things and I think that there should be looked at as quickly as possible, particularly the issue of pensions because again there are some anomalies and as a result of those anomalies some persons essentially have not.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, we try to resolve that issue. That issue was resolved and the method that we came up with, we found what appeared to be a solution but if it has to be revisited, well it has to be revisited and the alternative.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, I was not the one who torpedoed it. I think it was clear agreement that there should be a differential between Senators who are Ministers and not Parliamentary Representatives and Senators who are Members of Parliament and have constituency obligations. An attempt was tried to solve that issue.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well the resolution to that was that all persons would benefit in some way from a form of representation allowance and that was the way in which that allowance was introduced. But again, there are some people who felt that that was an unsatisfactory way of solving the matter and I urge any Minister who is capricious enough to invoke the ire of the Prime Minister to bring a Resolution and see whether the House would support it.

But no, I think that these are issues that I say that apparently are coming back before the Management Commission and I think there should be dealt with in a serious way. 4.35 p.m.

We are fortunate that we have a Management Commission that has been able to agree on these things because, prior to this, the attitude was that a third party should come and advise us on the level of remuneration and the benefits that Parliamentarians should get and also the expenses that should be allowed to them for their representation.

In recent times, however, I think this Parliament has matured to the extent that these issues can be resolved at the level of the Management Commission and, therefore, you would not want a situation where it appears that there is an appeal body that you have to go to after we have agreed because that appeal mechanism may itself introduce political considerations which we have long ago resolved and agreed that we will all take whatever criticism or praise is to be forthcoming on the issue. So 1 believe that these matters need urgent attention.

On the issue of National Heroes and the way in which they should be honoured, I have always supported measures to identify and honour National Heroes. We will give consideration when the Government actually agrees that this is the method they want to use to what has been raised by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I certainly believe that we should have major statues. We should also have other forms of memorials for Barbadian National Heroes. 1 think that so far we have not been able even to honour some of the most outstanding of those National Heroes and it is something that needs to be put on the agenda and dealt with, more significantly.

Sir Garfield Sobers. He has international recognition and therefore while the Gymnasium may be a useful site, I remember I think it was Mr. Eddie Grant who always felt that the roundabout outside the airport is the place to put a statue of Gary Sobers because he was a person of such international fame and a lot of the tourists who come to Barbados would already have known Gary Sobers. That was one recommendation I remember him making. There may be other more visible sites than the Gymnasium.

My own view is that the Gymnasium may be a bit too detached and that the statues of our National Heroes should be put in locations where there is a large volume of traffic where people can see them and where people can reflect on their contribution as they pass them.

Our recommendation would be, yes, that we need to have these kinds of things done. I hope that this year and future Estimates will reflect a very strong commitment by the Government supported by all Barbadians to have suitable memorials to outstanding National Heroes and beyond that to other citizens who may make a contribution and who should be honoured in other ways as well.

Hon. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a short intervention on this Head with respect to a few matters pertaining to the staff of Members of Parliament, Members of Parliament themselves and the allowances payable to Members of Parliament when they leave this Chamber.

With respect to the constituency assistants I am glad that there has been a slight improvement in their remuneration but unlike the Personal Assistants, there are in a somewhat different position. I do hope that this slight improvement to the amount allocated under the Management Commission of Parliament will be the beginning of improvement in their terms in that they receive a salary every month, A person can be a Constituency Assistant for the entire career of a Member of Parliament, say, 30 years, and at the end of that period he neither gets a payment like some people under contract where they get 20%, a gratuity, nor does he receive a pension in keeping with pensions which are paid to civil servants and other persons in the public sector. I hope that by the next Estimates, or even before, that this matter will be addressed.

In terms of the constituency branches, the position with respect to the upkeep of the constituency offices is a matter which should be addressed. It is hoped that this could be Mressed by the next Estimates as well in that we all have cert? in equipment. As a matter of fact, the allowances which are given to Parliamentarians in terms of the equipment assume that there should be somebody on the premises not only to take care in terms of cleaning but for security reasons. One would hope that the additional person in the form of a maid, messenger or security personnel will be added to the constituency office because what has happened now is that most of us have this additional person. Certainly I can speak for myself and what is happening now is we are paying for the person out of our own pockets.

At the moment as I speak in my constituency office there is a rnaid paid for out of my pocket. There is also a person who has to be on the premises, technically 24 hours a day, paid for out of my pocket. There is certain machinery in my office in order for me to conduct my constituency business in the way that I believe that all Parliamentarians should conduct their businesses. There are computers. There are fax machines, televisions, a photocopier and cabinets.

I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would bear testimony to the fact that someone actually broke into his office at some particular point in time. I would hope that the Management Commission of Parliament could look into this matter so that during this session we can have those matters addressed.

Speaking on the question of allowances, the question of pensions to persons who have served in this House for two terms, I do not even agree that there is an anomaly, the question of interpretation of the existing legislation - I do not recall which Chapter it is - whereby persons must serve for two terms but there is a condition that those two terms must be a minimum of eight years.

Now, you could serve three terms, according to that legislation, and do not put in the eight years and you would not be entitled to pension. Already there are a number of persons who have been in this House even in recent time - the former Member for St. Michael East, Mr. Tudor. We have Mr. Leroy Brathwaite, Mr. Joseph Payne, Mr. Cyril Walker, Mr. Bobby Morris, Mr. Harcourt Lewis, Mrs. Mazie Barker-Welch. 4.45 p.m.

Those persons are not entitled and speaking about such persons one must not forget persons who have made a contribution in this House for a very long period of time who, because of the fact that they have been unfortunate in that they were in the House of Assembly at a time when you were not paid, they made a contribution. They made the sacrifice. They did the same thing that we are doing but they did not even receive the stipend for it. Persons like Ermie Bourne who was in the House from 1951-61,ten years, a woman who became a Member of Parliament at a time when women were just regarded as housewives - that was a remarkable achievement - she is still alive and suffering, Mr. Chairman.

I believe that it is the duty of this House, a responsibility of the members of this House, to look into the plight of people. I am not just concerned with people like Mr. Tudor who just left but I would put Ms. Ermie Bourne ahead of all of those persons. We must ensure that those persons do not walk about begging.

I would hate to see the Honourable Member for St. John or the Honourable Member for St. Lucy having to beg notwithstanding the fact that we know that they are both fairly wealthy individuals. But it is possible.

The other issue, Mr. Chairman, that I find somewhat difficult to accept is the position with respect to Ministers and to parliamentarians who are not Ministers. In most jurisdictions if a person is a Minister he is still entitled to his parliamentary salary. You still have to perform your functions as a normal MP. As a matter of fact, it is even more difficult on a Minister to perform his duties than it is on a Member of Parliament because the Member of Parliament is not distracted from his duties at the national level.

So you have a situation, Mr. Chairman, where Ministers have to work 24 hours a day. They cannot be employed elsewhere. You have people on the Back Bench and this is no reflection on anybody on the Back Bench as I speak but they will be able to get their salaries as parliamentarians, to have four and five jobs and Ministers are only entitled to have their Minister's salary and it is a little unfair. It is an anomaly which I believe should be corrected. I do not even think that we should wait until the next session. Parliamentarians are entitled to payment as parliamentarians and the fact that they are Ministers and receive it as Minister's salary should be disregarded.

Mr. Chairman, I think that these are matters that should attract the attention of the Management Commission of Parliament. We are not begging for anything which we find unreasonable. Most of you, and Mr. Chairman you would know that most of us, certainly I can speak for myself, we spend about as much as $3 000 in the constituency. People like yourself probably might spend about $5 000. We spend between $3 000 to $5 000 in the constituencies doing constituency business and we should be a little more considerate to ourselves and address these matters with some urgency.

I recall the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West when he was in this House he was somewhat surprised when he realised the salary of the Members of Parliament. I am not saying that he did not understand that he would be making a sacrifice seeing that he came as a lecturer from the University but he had to supplement his income as a member of the Opposition.

Members of the Back Bench supplement their income.

Mr. Chairman, I anTonly saying that these are matters which should be addressed. Ministers should not be placed in any worst position than any other normal Member of Parliament and I believe that this is a matter that should be addressed in this sitting. I am obliged to you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I am appropriately speaking from the Back Benches on this matter. I am speaking as a Member because the House is correct in saying that in this House the Honourable Member for St. Peter is just like any other member, and to keep the House focussed on the appropriate rule that any Committee of Parliament has the right to recommend to Parliament such proposals as it may want Parliament to adopt. The Management Commission of Parliament as a committee of Parliament is fully within its right to recommend to this House any set of proposals affecting the rights, terms and conditions of Members of Parliament that it would want the House as a Parliament to adopt but the Rules, as regarding how even recommendations of Parliament should be brought to the House as money resolutions or bills, are already clearly defined in the Standing Orders of this House. It says at Section 63(1):

"Except on the recommendation of the Cabinet, signified by a Minister, the House of Assembly shall not-

(a) receive any Bill or proceed upon any motion for leave to introduce a Bill... that makes provision for imposing or increasing any tax, for imposing any charge on the Consolidated Fund."

So I just want to bring back to the House the fact that any matter involving public expenditures will still have to go to Cabinet for ratification and come back to the House under the signature of a Minister. It is a good thing, Sir, that this should be so. The subvention to Parliament has risen substantially but that subvention has to be taken in the context of Government's overall fiscal position.

The Minister of Finance has a responsibility to Cabinet and to the country to make sure that commitments entered into in the name of the Government of Barbados are commitments that can be sustained financially and therefore things proposed by Parliament affecting the function of Parliament have as much to be the subject of careful scrutiny with respect to implementability as any other agency of the State.

I just want to reinforce that point, Sir, because there are Standing Orders of this House which must be followed. Sir, the House is in a mood to be generous and it has been generous but we have to be careful about the message that we are sending to the rest of the society. I would just want to impress that point on the House because everybody who has to be paid from the Consolidated Fund is drawing from the same pool and we have a social contract in place where we have committed the Government, the private sector and the trade unions in this phase of Barbados' development to exercise moderation in the way in which we settle claims on behalf of any group in the society.

It cannot be denied, Sir, that by reason of the special responsibilities Members of Parliament and Members of Cabinet have to endure specially difficult circumstances some are reduced even to conditions of genteel poverty and, of course, a cynical public would say that those of us who come to public life also ask for the opportunity to serve because there is honour in serving and that it cannot therefore only be measured in these terms.

I would not want the entire society now to be galvanised by a new bout of unreasonable requests for increased payments from the Consolidated Fund arising from a perspective that the Members of the house have broken for themselves. I am therefore asking the House, even as we speak to this issue that has been such a difficult issue to deal with for such a long period of time, to place it within the context of where we are in space and time. There is no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that the first step has had to be made to make the conditions under which all Members of this House perform a service better and more professional. 4.55 p.m.

The allowances that have been given, have been given to allow Members of the House to better perform their functions as Members of Parliament and better perform their functions as Members of Cabinet.

Sir, let us remember still that there is the question of sending signals and we will have, I suggest to you, a very important difficulty in convincing other persons who were to draw frpm the Consolidated Fund, of a Government's commitment to moderation in income settlements if one group paid from the Fund which has control over the Fund, was to reward itself at a rate that the rest of society saw as being both discriminatory and distinctly to its advantage.

The point is, Sir, that the improvements to the conditions of service of Members of this Parliament is something that Parliament should contemplate dealing with on a phased basis over time rather than seeking to correct long decades of neglect in one fell swoop.

That really is always the problem in all Parliaments in our jurisdictions in dealing with payments for parliamentarians. That irrational phases are gone through, as happened for example in the 1986 election when there was a decision to cut MP's salaries just to prove a point. MP's then fell behind the curve and then on the eve of the 1990 election although there was a policy in place that said that Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers should get the same wage increase as other civil servants paid from the same Consolidated Fund, a DLP Cabinet decided that it was not going to give itself the wage increase before the elections. Then it came after the elections and gave itself the same increase. A lot of irrational things are done.

In other Caribbean countries they have been so terrorised by addressing the question of the payment of Cabinet Members that their salaries are now shockingly low. By having allowed the situation to get out of hand and accumulate for a long period of time when it has to be addressed, there is such a redress that has to be made that people dc not focus upon the service that is being rendered but on the exaggerated nature of the financial claims that have to be made on the public purse.

Sir, I would just want to suggest, therefore, to the House, speaking as an ordinary Member, that yes, the conditions under which Cabinet Members and Members of Parliament have to provide their service need to be improved but that we should conceive of doing it, Sir, not in one fell swoop, but a carefully considered programme that bears a relationship to the Consolidated Fund's capacity to pay. That it is set in the context of the signals that we want to send to

conform to the competitive position of the Barbados economy.

Sir, I know that this will not always find favour with those who feel that MPs are struggling - and they are. Members of Cabinet are not paid for what they are worth but we must not be the first persons to jump off the ship. If we do, Sir, we are going to make the country a bit ungovernable.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I can only render the advice to the Management Commission that I think a phase-in of the improvements make sense and that they coincide with capacity to pay, must be a criterion that must not be departed from so that the rest of the society could enjoy the confidence that we have done what we had to do because it was just and affordable rather than because we were inspired by considerations of greed. I say that, Sir, mindful of the fact that there are other persons equally deserving whose status have not been changed for a long time who will be making great claims on the Consolidated Fund for a similar process of redress. I have a responsibility as Minister of Finance and also as the Minister of the Civil Service to say that, yes, we recognise the justice of your case but let us always proceed with a judicious consideration for the capacity of this country to sustain any initiative that we adopt no matter how worthwhile might be the initiative.

Sir, I am not at all, therefore, going to oppose the general tone of the debate that supports a claim for improvement in conditions. The reality, Sir, is that between my coming into this House as a Member in 1984 and now, there have been improvements which I think have been located in the correct places. The improvements have not been for the enrichment of Members of Parliament or Members of Cabinet but have been to enable them to better perform a service on behalf of the persons on whose account we are here by providing us with a wider range of facilities at the public expense to be able to discharge our responsibilities to the constituencies that we have to serve. I think, Sir, that the House will agree that the facilities that we are committed to provide are now better than they would have been ten years ago and there is still room to go in that direction, Sir.

There are other sections of the Barbados' society, Mr. Chairman, where the situation has been even more acute. The Judiciary, for example, Sir, laboured under such conditions in Barbados that it would have been impossible a few years ago for us to be able to attract anybody from the private Bar to the Judiciary on the strength only of what we were paying and that anomaly has been redressed by a recent improvement in the conditions of the Judiciary.

I hear the House and I support the general tone but also remind this Parliament that whatever we do as a House cannot be so disconnected with what happens in the rest of the society as to embroil this Parliament in a controversy that would cause this session of Parliament to stand out in the infamy of Barbados' politics.

Those are the cautionary remarks that I would want to make as the House deliberates on this most delicate and sensitive issue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate at this time and I want to make a couple of observations.

Right now as it stands, Sir, a Member of Parliament must serve two terms and that two terms must be eight years. I want to say that I totally oppose that because the two terms is at the discretion of the Prime Minister. That is, whenever the Prime Minister decides that he wants to call an election, he can call an election and that can cause an effect on a particular Member of Parliament.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: My suggestion, Sir, is that the two terms remain and the eight years be removed. We cannot have a situation ....

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Two terms of any length. This thing about eight years I do not support. Because it affects the lives of politicians, Sir, who sometimes have to spend large sums of money and they cannot tell when a term will last. 5.05 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Another suggestion I would like to make, Sir, is that in rural Barbados where a car has to travel on roads that sometimes cannot be described as roads, it does not make sense to tell an MP that he must get a car loan for five years when the car cannot last for five years and $35 000 to buy a reconditioned car when you are opposed to reconditioned cars, Sir?

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, when you look at a constituency like the one I represent, where you cannot find a tenantry road of any good condition that you can drive through to visit your constituents, I cannot see how you can expect an MP to have a car loan for five years and can drive around a car in those conditions.

I am making the suggestion, Sir, this foolishness that the loan must purchase a car must stop because it should be up to the discretion of the MP to dictate what he wants to drive through his constituency. When you consider the roads

in St. Lucy where we have not been able to get one tenantry road, I feel you should be encouraged to buy a van and I want the stipulation about a car to stop. I would suggest a four-wheel drive because the roads are so bad, or even a helicopter, because when you consider the condition of the roads...

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the conditions for the car loans must be addressed. And I am not going to put a case only for rural Barbados, I am going to put a case for everybody because I am fair. When you look at the condition of the roads in rural Barbados, it is not fair to ask a constituency assistant not to get a car loan because the constituency assistant is also expected to do things within the constituency.

How can a constituency assistant get from Crab Hill to Pie Corner without having to catch two or three buses, Sir? I am saying that provision should be made for the constituency assistant to get a car loan. I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is not in here because when you consider the hills in St. Joseph, I know I will get support then.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: And St. Andrew, so I will expect you to get up and support my suggestion.

Mr. Chairman, these matters cannot be taken lightly and I think sometimes, Sir, that on certain matters like the argument I heard before where Ministers are suggesting that they should get a separate salary because there are Ministers and back benchers, they also have to remember that that is also up to the discretion of the Prime Minister and today you could be a Minister and tomorrow you could be a back bencher.

So because you are putting a case because you are on the front bench, it does not mean that when you get on the back bench that life might not be hard. So if you are looking at a package, look at it in fairness and not where you sit.

I also want to say, Sir, that we have been fortunate to get some equipment but I am a bit concerned when you consider the Y2K problem that most of the equipment you have in your constituency office and the expenditure that you are expected to service out of your pocket, I do not think this is fair. The equipment does not belong to you, it belongs to the Parliament of Barbados and I believe that Parliament should service that equipment.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not worrying about the insuring aspect of it now that can easily be discussed, what I am worried about, Sir, is that that equipment can be damaged and the cost can be very high and no MP should be asked to be responsible for that equipment. These are matters that we need to look at.

Even the salary level of the constituency assistant, I cannot see why they would put them on a sliding scale at this time, because if something is low already, address it, Sir, and if you need to put it on a sliding scale, you need to do it later and not now. Those people have work to do and you are asking those people to be computer literate which means you are expecting certain standards of them, so you need to pay them fairly. If you are not going to do that, it is a waste of time putting proper equipment in constituency offices, because you cannot get proper people to work in the constituency offices if you are going to offer them pittances.

I have always represented the interest of the under privileged in this Parliament and I will speak on their behalf. That is why I am saying that the Management Commission must look at those proposals that I am putting to this House this afternoon, because those people have a very important role to play. We sometimes must not believe that because what we do, we consider to be important and what other people are doing is not important.

I leave those couple of suggestions with you, Sir, and I hope they will be addressed shortly.

Thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Head 12 - Parliament has, over the years that I have been in here always evoked or provoked on very passionate discussions. In the context of the second reading speech made by the Minister of Finance yesterday, it behoves all of us to be conscious of the need for restraint or moderation, but at the same time, this Head has always provided an opportunity for some Members, in my over 20 years of experience in here, to speak frankly and for others to speak with a deal of hypocrisy and a fear of the public. We have had two contending views over the 20 odd years that I have been here, Sir.

I think that the public of Barbados still, in 1999 does not fully appreciate the nature and the extent of Parliamentary responsibility. Unfortunately, the newspapers in this country have never examined as a human interest story, a day in the life of an MP, worse yet a day in the life of a Minister.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member the Attorney General, it was attempted in case about myself about three years ago with a cameraman and a journalist. They gave up at 3.00 p.m. when I told them I was about the start the night shift, Sir. They could not last a day.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am grateful for that clarification, Sir. It would make fascinating reading and it would eliminate the public minds if people truly knew what MPs went through and what are the responsibilities.

Let me start at the level of a Minister, because the one occasion when I had to speak about this was on a programme many years ago. I think Win Callender interviewed me. It was a night programme with music and we were talking about various things. 5.15p.m.

Let us look at what happens. You get Saturday and Monday, Sir. Your telephone rings as early as 5.30 in the morning. By the time you leave home at 8.30,1 have one of these phones that registers the calls and many mornings, any member of the Press could come home at me and get the phone and check. By the time you leave at 8.30 it is registering 32 calls, 38 calls, never less than 30 in a morning between 5.30 and 8.30.

You go to an office and you do work. You have a series of meetings. Problems to solve right through the day. Monday finishes at 5.30 - 6.00. You then have to get to your party headquarters for 7.30 for a meeting of the parliamentary pact which will go on to as early as 10.30, very often later.

You get your papers for the House, Bills, Resolutions, Order Papers, the lot. You have to read them because by seven o'clock the Tuesday morning you have to be here. As a Minister, invariably you might fit in a meeting with somebody before you come here but certainly you go to your office and you do files and then you try to get in here for 11.00, and you are in here for whatever time the House finishes usually until after eight o'clock the night.

By the time you get home at nine o'clock there is not a lot of time to do anything other than if you are a Minister you have taken home files and you probably work on them.

Wednesday morning, same routine, phone, office, work right through till three o'clock. Wednesday afternoons you get a file usually about that thick with about 18 Cabinet papers that you are expected to read, digest and make sensible comment on. So you got to work the Wednesday night.

Thursday morning, phone and then Cabinet at 10.00 to consider those 18 papers. You work through Cabinet and you finish about four or five o'clock.

Some people have constituency offices to service either the Wednesday night or the Thursday night going to free clinics, those can run you up to ten, eleven o'clock. The Honourable Member for the City is in hers sometimes to after 12 o'clock.

We come back then, Friday is just another day of work. By the time you hit the weekend now every time a bell is to be rung somewhere the MP is expected to be there. Bajans love funerals on Saturdays now and when you would have thought you can have a Saturday afternoon off with your family, no you got to go a funeral then hang about the constituency, go by the house and so on. So the Saturday is not yours again.

Sunday, some church wants you. A harvest or whatever and it goes on like that right round. Constituency branch meetings, once a month meet every second Sunday in the constituency for the branch meeting. Every second Sunday that I am id the island and I go to Sharon or Holy Innocents or wherever we having the branch meeting. That is your life and it goes on.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Up to now I have not got to the hospital to see constituents in the hospital, you are expected to do that. Go on the Wards and see your constituents.

The same funeral I spoke of on the Saturday evening, you got to pull your pocket and contribute to the turnout.

In the week of course you are getting the odd person genuinely in a state of penury who has a light bill that they cannot pay and you have got to help out. A water bill, money for books. By the time you see June and all the schools are having speech day you are buying books at all these bookstores to give as prizes. All of this is out of your parliamentary salary.

We did not talk about sports, Sir, you know about sports, Sir, you got to give all the gear, the basketball every couple of months, the footballs, cricket balls, the bats and playing gear, all of that, and you are getting a salary as a Minister and the only thing that saves you is that that salary is topped up by a few allowances.

Now, when you add the salary and allowances, I do not know about the others, but I can tell you about my cheque, I work for $222.58 a day, including allowances, salary and allowances, $222.58 a day.

When I act as Prime Minister, I get a $100.00 a day ..I want that in the record.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, you do not get any benefits. We do not get any health benefits. We pay our own national insurance. We buy our own cars with duty not free of duty. Mine is about eight years old now running hard to that.

I think the worst of all, the Laws of Barbados provide in the Holiday with Pay Act that every worker in Barbados is entitled to a holiday. The only worker that the Law does not prescribe a holiday for is a Minister. There is no law in Barbados that entitles a Minister to a holiday. The only thing you will find is Section 67 of the Constitution that says that the Prime Minister can appoint a temporary Minister if a Minister is sick or is out of the island.

There is nothing, so that the last holiday I had, hear this, the last holiday I had was in 1993 when I went to the Commonwealth Law Conference in Cyprus.

I was looking forward to a holiday in 1994. Sandiford announced the election in June, I was campaign manager, I could not leave. Election was called in September. Win on the 6th, sworn in on the 7th, straight to work on the 7th and it has gone like that ever since. Not since 1993 have I had a holiday.

Last year I was so tired, I begged the Prime Minister after I have been to a lot of meetings in June and July in Europe. I begged him for ten days and I got ten days last year, that is the most.

Every other worker in this country is entitled to a minimum of 28 days, three weeks, 21 days. You see if you are a Member of the Opposition or on the Back Bench when Parliament goes on recess in the summer, you can take your holiday, you can go abroad. But a Minister cannot. You have to be on the job 24 hours every day.

It cannot be like that, as long as there is an anomaly in the law that will be put right because a Minister is a worker like anybody else and he should not be disadvantaged and I believe that all Barbadians will be shocked to learn that the Law makes no provision for a Minister to get official holidays. 5.25 p.m.

In all the countries it is so.The British Parliament shuts down. A lot of their Ministers go to Spain and all over the place and cool out in their villas.

Now, I want to give the House the assurance as Leader of the House that all of these anomalies that I have referred to will be brought to the Management Commission of Parliament. Some of them have been mentioned already.

The point about pensions, Sir, we discussed the point about pensions at the first meeting of the Management Commission. Unfortunately, Members of the Opposition could not attend and they told me. The point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is important. As he said, your entitlement to a pension - you have been in here two terms - is dependent upon the Prime Minister's whim as to what date he calls an election.

There is also another anomaly. After 12 years, the person who has served 12 years, he is entitled to the same pension as somebody who has served 30 years, or 25 years, or 18 years. There may be a case for having your two terms then having it graded to half, 75% of pension and so on. Those are things that the Management Commission can look at and I am going to ensure, Sir, that the rights, privileges and entitlements of Honourable Members are dealt with by the Management Commission.

I believe that all Parliamentarians understand, Sir, as I began this contribution, that first of all Parliamentarians must never march too far ahead of the other members of society. Secondly, that the question of the financial rights and benefits of members should be dealt with when the whole society, and particularly the public service, is being looked ?t

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I know we are not public servants in the sense in which a public officer is described in the legislation but I am saying that the conditions of Members of Parliament should be looked at, the time when other members of the public service are being looked at and their positions are being evaluated.

I was concerned to get it in the records of this H;.;UL^, as I have done before. I have been very frank about these things before that, it is a very very taxing job. It destroys your family life. Public service destroys your family life. There is no doubt about that. I always say you should ask yourself the question. How many MPs have had children that have won Barbados scholarships? You might find two. In here now you might probably find only one, the Honourable Member for St. George South. There is a lot*of sacrifice and the absence of the father from home on a consistent basis like we have to be. Sixteen hours a day is common for most of us in the front bench, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: These are some of the realities of politics and politics in a small society where politics is highly personalised. The people want to see the MP. Very often they do not want to see the Constituency Assistant or the Personal Assistant. They must see the MP. We are in that kind of milieu and we understand it, but operating in a parliamentary system in a small society is a completely different thing from a larger society.

I just mentioned, Sir, that Canada gives 75% of its salary as pension after 16 years service, but after 30 years service, 20 years service, anything above 12, you get 50% in Barbados so it is not a bed of roses but we do it. We do it out of a sense of altruism and because some of us passionately want to make a contribution to our country and get satisfaction in our lives from having made a contribution and trying to help lift our society. That is what motivates us, the

desire to render higher service and public service but it is not easy. The associated perils are not understood by the average person in society. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAkOLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, this is one subject that I have heard many different viewpoints over the course of the 25 or 30 years that I have been in here or in the Other Place and I want to say, Sir, that sometimes it produces very peculiar reactions.

There was one famous Member of this Parliament that never participated at all in any debate on salaries or purposes of office but was always the first to draw when the other Members had to incur the odium of the community by making a decision at whatever level. That illustrates that there is always a degree of inconsistency between the spoken word and the action that follows, or the failure to speak and the action that follows.

There can be no doubt about it, Sir, that the subject of parliamentary salaries and parliamentary conditions of service is one that in a small community like Barbados generates a tremendous amount of feeling. In 1976, prior to the 1976 election the feeling after a Government was in office for about 15 years was such that in the appeal of the Barbados Labour Party in that election the party pledged itself that it would not review salaries except after an independent review by an outside body. I believe the consensus has been that that was the worst decision politicians ever made because it permitted people to show their true feelings about the worst of politicians.

I think since then we have had a measure of consensus that, for instance, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has mentioned that in the context of Barbados it would be a foolish Government that would decide to increase Members' salaries except coincident at the time when there was a general salary review of public servants. Because in the public's mind parliamentarians and Ministers are public servants and they do not deserve to have a change in conditions of service until the other similar people are having. 5.35p.m.

Secondly, there is a relationship which has been established between Ministers and other public services and other institutions in Barbados. I know, for instance, that there is a relationship between the salaries of Ministers and the salaries of Cave Hill, not Mona, not St. Augustine, but certainly at Cave Hill because I have heard many arguments put forward by the ladies and gentlemen at Cave Hill that there is an established relationship between the political directorate and the educational directorate.

Again, there are some bench marks that have developed in this society. Of late in this society there has become increasingly a recognition of the fact that in truth and in fact public servants, including Ministers, lag behind the level of salaries that are paid in the private sector. It is becoming increasingly recognised that that is so. On the other hand while that has now become recognised there are those who feel the cynical attitude or express a cynical attitude that nobody tells or compels anyone to run as a Member of Parliament or to take up an oMce of Minister. That is another viewpoint.

On the other hand, it has become increasingly recognised that if Ministers and others are not paid a reasonable wage scale and enjoy reasonable conditions, having regard to the extraordinary conditions under which they operate, that you have problems of accountability. That is well recognised. Barbadians recognise that.

I believe that there is an attitude that is prevalent in Barbados that the level of remuneration for Ministers and parliamentarians should be fair, within the context and within the parameters that I have spoken of, and should be timed and paid within the context of the periods that I have spoken of but, at the same time, I would caution Honourable Members not to allow the situation to develop where the goodwill which exists and the pretty settled relationship and parameters which have been established in our society by attempting to introduce changes now which would appear to be over generous and self serving.

I want to say this. All of us recognise that there are some anomalies in the system that should be corrected. I think it is now very clear that the concept of no holidays for Ministers and others is wrong because it only forces the situation to develop where when you are abroad that you have to delay your return so as to be able to get a holiday. That is a fact of life.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. That is not possible. When you go to meetings, Sir, you are paid for the day before the meeting and the day after the meeting and you are expected to leave the day the meeting finishes or the very next day at the latest and get back to Barbados. That is the rule in this Cabinet. You cannot get any extra time. You may ask for three or four days but that is at your expense because those extra days you have to pay for.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN: Sir, lam all in favour of conditions of service being made known and I am prepared to justify it to anyone in this community that Ministers and others should get the same regular holidays as any other person in Barbados. There is no question about that. I cannot see that public opinion could be so unreasonable as to suggest that that is not so. That is one thing.

The second anomaly in my opinion is the anomaly that arises from the lack of schemes relating to health and matters of that kind which are normal conditions of service now in Barbados. I was in a Cabinet where this issue arose and I believe at that time the Cabinet had decided to insure the Cabinet as a group because of the fact that we had the experience of people having an accident or something going wrong with them, Ministers, when they were abroad, and the Government had to foot the hospital bill and the hospital bill was considerable.

Just as one would expect that if you are in the course of your business abroad and an accident happens that your employer should have some coverage for it. So, too, Cabinet at that time decided -1 do not know what the rule was but at that time I know that investigations were ordered with a view to secure a group policy for health and accident insurance for Ministers when they travelled.

Again I do not think that it is unreasonable for Cabinet as part of the Ministers' remuneration to state that part of the conditions of service is that in addition to a health policy that you too will have an accident and insurance policy and hospitalisation policy if those are still in existence and, if not, they have to be fixed. I feel that Members of Parliament should not feel any sense of shame by letting the public know that they expect that those are minimum terms and conditions.

Now we come to the question of pensions. I was in this Parliament when there was no pension scheme at all. I well recall it but we have moved from that system. There was a time when there was no payment at all.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, the position with that is that after a long period of debate and tremendous amounts of arguments on both sides of the House, we developed a pension scheme. There is no question about it that the pension scheme is a contributory pension scheme and that is something that many members of the public do not understand. It is a contributory pension scheme. That is something that many members of the public do not understand, that there is a contributory pension scheme and that it is a number of anomalies. I remember the eight-year rule. Nobody ever contemplated that in the context of Barbados that two terms would be less than eight years. 5.45 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Nobody certainly never contemplated that a Government would have defeated itself.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: As a matter of fact, that is unprecedented in the Commonwealth. Because of the peculiarities of human nature and that new political experience, it is obvious that that point has to be looked at because that is a new experience and it is has produced an anomaly.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: No, no. They could not agree on who was to succeed Sandiford and he certainly was not giving away to the Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Is the Honourable Member for Christ Church South implying that he gave way to his family, Sir?

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, there is no question or doubt about it that if you have a rigid eight-year rule and you have a situation that has arisen where through no fault of Members of Parliament, they are not allowed to have the reasonable expectation of a receipt of the salaries and pensions that they would have got in normal circumstances - I have seen pensions from a study of the legislation relating to pensions, that periodically in Barbados on more that one occasion with all legislators, special legislation has got to be passed to deal with anomalies. We have gone through this, Sir. If you look from the Local Government time, if you go through the old laws of Barbados, you will see that there were special Pension Bills passed for individuals because of abnormal circumstances. We had one in a couple of sessions here. People forget that, that a special piece of pension legislation was passed in favour of one of our national heroes who lately departed. That is a position that you have to take into account.

I have my own views, Sir, and I do not believe that the public would regard as unreasonable a closing of some of these anomalies. One must have some understanding that there is a strong public view there, that Members of Parliament and Ministers cannot have extraordinary generous pension schemes and at the same time have remunerations that are greater than the general norm of the public services. That is a fact. You have to trade off one against the other. If you want generous pensions you have to take it in the form of a reduction in monthly emoluments. You cannot be too far out, there has got to be a balance. That is the nature of the society in which we live.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: People feel that to be eligible for a pension after eight years is extraordinarily generous.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The last point. Of course, Sir, this does affect me because the greatest anomaly of all, unfortunately, I am the victim of. I cannot get a salary and a pension, that is the position. But I am perfectly prepared to take that sacrifice. There are other Members in here who have been in this House for many many years and whose pensions will be based on a ministerial pay which is 20-25 years old. That is also an anomaly that has to be dealt with, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: He is qualified in accordance with any norm for a pension but the rules restrict you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise in this debate to reflect, just as many of my colleagues on both sides of this Chamber have done today under this Head and there can be no doubt that there is fast approaching the time for a comprehensive review of not only the terms and conditions of parliamentarians and Ministers but indeed of the role of parliamentarians and Ministers in a society that has changed tremendously over the course of the last 20 to 30 years. Only yesterday many Members were remarking that this job, to a large extent, has in fact become a full time job. The requirements of us range from that of serving constituents in the most basic levels in terms of local representation to that which requires more national representation and, of course, to the conduct of one's Ministry which may reflect both domestic and international participation on behalf of the Government and people of this country.

One of the sad things for me has always been, as the Honourable Member for the City pointed out earlier, the lack of access of proper research within this facility. It was only yesterday that I spoke to the Clerk of Parliament and indicated that really and truly that this Parliament does not do itself justice by not having available to every Member of Parliament direct access to the Internet for research, whether it is during the course of the Parliament meeting or outside of the sittings of Parliament because very often there are times that we would wish to be able to have access to information and we cannot because there is no Internet access readily provided with this Parliament. Further, for those of us who would not have had the luxury of collecting Hansards over the years, the inability of having ready access to the Hansard particularly in the way in which it is bound, makes it very difficult for us to be able to do the type of comprehensive research that we would like to do.

It really is a matter of some concern that in days where technology is available to place old volumes of materials on CD ROM that we do not have the capacity to be able to look back certainly at the debates since the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage, at least on CD ROM so that Members can prepare in and out of the Parliament as well as members of the public can have the opportunity to be able to access these debates in a more user friendly manner.

I sincerely hope that part of the funds which have been granted for Parliament this year will start the project by allowing us to have at least the last two parliamentary terms because we can work back - have the last two parliamentary terms reduced to readable CD ROM that would allow us the opportunity to be able to more effectively prepare our research before coming into these debates.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that the issues as they pertain to constituency assistants were well put before this Honourable Chamber today. They do some of the most gruelling and arduous work on behalf of MPs, along with MPs, in terms of trying to service the needs of their constituents. Indeed, the regrading which took place this last year is welcomed but in my view still does not put them in a position where they should be, given the requirements of their office. Particularly for those who have to do a lot of travelling. They not only travel within the constituency but most of them are up and down to Government departments on a daily basis. I believe, Sir, that we truly have to look at whether we are in fact being just and fair in respect of their compensation.

I accept, Sir, much of what has been said in respect of the concerns and I also accept as a basic fundamental that no Parliament should ever seek to grant itself terms and conditions that are so out of step with the rest of the society, with the rest of the public services so as to bring not only itself into disrepute but so as to skew the system in such a way that the society becomes ungovernable. 5.55 p.m.

And I accept, Sir, that in that context the principle that wage increases should be linked to those that take place within the context of the public service, certainly in terms of timing and review. What I believe however, Sir, is that apart from the issue of wage increases, there are other anomalies in the system, just as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, has just addressed. What needs to be urgently addressed is the issue of persons having served in this Parliament and leaving this Parliament without a pension. This is one that I believe that we should urgently address. It is not fair for them to have contributed to a pension scheme and that by virtue of the fact that a Prime Minister called an election a week or two before they would have become entitled that they cannot now draw the pension to which they would have been otherwise entitled, and indeed which reflect the contributions that they would have put into the scheme in the full expectation that they would have drawn that pension.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I imagine that I have covered the substantive issues raised by these Estimates but it falls to me to deal with another issue of crucial importance if the House is to take an informed decision as to the direction on which we are embarked financially.

I was speaking to the issue of capital expenditure to indicate that in the year ending March this year we will spend less on the capital account than we spent in the year ending March 1998. A year ago we spent $257 million for capital purposes and the year ending March this year, Sir, we will spend $243 million and in the years to come we will have somewhat of an expansion of capital investment insofar that capital expenditure will increase to $318 million.

Sir, as I said already, much of this increase is because we have to give effect to a number of large projects all foreign funded which are vital to support the continued social and economic development of this country because if not carried forward it will see us incurring commitment fees of the kind that I want to avoid.

Too much of our financial resources are devoted to meeting commitment fees rather than meeting real activity. Therefore I wish to point out that even though we are going to start projects we will not be executing them on the scale initially envisioned. For example, Sir, EduTech, the first year, was intended to cost about $50 million and could have gone higher than $50 million but in the light of the reserve position we plan to spend only $35 million.

The airport expansion project schedule suggested that we should be spending $50 million. This year I think we will be spending about $28 million. The South Coast Sewerage Project and similar projects we are seeking to phase the projects so that the capital programme taken together with the current does not put us in a position where the overall fiscal deficit is more than 1.5% of GDP this year. I want to stress that point.

Government's financial policy this year is predicated to support a deficit of 1.5% of GDP. The House will recognise that I had hitherto said that we could go up to 2.5% without doing irreparable damage to the economy so that the 1.5% takes into account the fact that there are wage settlements and other wage related issues that still have to be brought to account. Therefore we have gone out as far as we can go with these Estimates in advance of making allowance for wage increases. The policy is after you net off amortisation which is larger than last year and net off income of net enterprises, the fiscal deficit is intended to be no more than 1.5% of GDP and that compares to a deficit of 1.4% of GDP for the last fiscal year.

Sir, whether Government is in a fiscal expansionary stance or not is dependent upon the relative size of the fiscal deficit as a proportion of GDP and this deficit suggests that Government is stabilising the economy rather than seeking to make an expansion of public expenditure part of the general expansion of the economy.

It is not our judgment, Sir, that there should be expansion this year and I have explained the ratio of deficit to GDP that guides the fiscal policy. The key again is the manner in which the deficit is supposed to be financed. In that respect, I would urge the House to go to Table 10 of the Memorandum: Summary of Government Operations and Financing at the very front of the Estimates of E:•'{>.;nctitiiiw. Last year, the deficit was met largely from domestic financing but we propose this year that in view of the fact that domestic credit creation has already started to put pressure on our foreign reserves that the bulk of Government financing of its deficit should come from foreign resources. •[s] jnce you will see. Sir, that Government is making provision for the next financial year to reduce its dependence on local financial institutions for funding to support its overall activities to the extent where the domestic financing which amounted to $199 million two financial years ago, $184 million in the year to end in March is projected to be decreased to $125 million in the next financial year. 2.10p.m.

Government proposes therefore to reduce its dependence upon the domestic financial sector to support the overall fiscal position. This is understandable if we follow through on the initial analysis that domestic credit creation had started to create a problem with the reserves and therefore Government this year should not stimulate domestic credit creation if we want to keep the economy growing at a stable rate.

By contrast, Sir, whereas last year we raised only $40 million in net foreign financing to support Government's fiscal position, this year it is proposed that we should raise $219 million in foreign financing. Of that amount, it is projected that $114 million will be in the form of project loans. I have already indicated the major project that will attract that financing and this year we propose to go back to the market to arrange $105 million in commercial financing. Government in the next financial year will use foreign

financing to the extent of $219 million of which $114 million will be project loans and a loan to be raised on the foreign capital market in the amount of at least $ 105 million.

Sir, the policy here is that we want to raise by way of a foreign commercial loan an amount that is enough to cover the foreign amortisation. The House will remember that I earlier said that this year we will face a situation where the repayment of the foreign debt will feature a spike in the rise from $429 million to $483 million. As you can see, Sir, within that $483 million of debt service, amortisation will rise from $182 million to $282 million or by $99 million. Foreign amortisation itself is going to rise from $66 million to $105 million. We will go therefore to the policy where we will raise a foreign loan equivalent to the amount of amortisation so that the debt strategy will be that we will not therefore increase the commercial component of foreign debt. We will raise as a loan an amount equal to that which we shall repay. That, Sir, will cushion any effects of this capital programme but it also has to be seen in the context of the fact, as I have said earlier, that three major hotels will be out of operations this year. Not because of market circumstances but because of their investment programme.

1 therefore feel if we are going to support a 3% growth in the economy that there is a need for an inflow of foreign resources. I want to say to the House and 1 would like the support of the Opposition on this matter, Sir, that before the end of the week the Ministry of Finance should be in a position to bring to the House the relevant Resolution to support the raising of this loan. The House will rest after the Estimates and come back in April. The matter is delicate and as the House is aware the international capital market is virtually closed to new sovereign debt. Barbados has maintained relationships with institutions and our name is still good in the market and there are at least two institutions that have provided us with competitive bids which we are now evaluating and we will be bringing to the House by the end of the week an amount to allow us to raise that loan, Sir.

I think it is necessary principally because, as I have said, in this year three major hotels will be out of operation and even though we will have the benefit of the activity in terms of construction activity, we will not have the access to the foreign exchange that they generally create and it is necessary for us in such circumstances as a short term measure to support a pool of foreign exchange available to the country by raising this loan. I would imagine therefore, Sir, that the amount should be about U.S. $75 million that would allow us to cover the amortization and meet any shortfalls that arise from the operations in the tourism industry.

Broadly, Mr. Speaker, those cover the main financial issues that these Estimates are intended to reflect. We are operating a stable deficit at about 1.5% of GDP leaving a little bit-in hand to bring wage settlements to account. We are seeking to finance the deficit differently this year in view of the fact that, as I have said, domestic credit has started to play not havoc but create problems for balance of payments. If we proceed with this fiscal programme, Sir, I can give the House the assurance that once we stay on this programme that we can realise a 3% growth without any attendant balance of payments fall-out In fact, if we were to raise foreign financing of $219 million that should contribute to an increase of the reserves. The Central Bank of Barbados projections are that the dip in reserves last year of $ 14 million will be countermanded by a surplus this year based upon private capital inflows as well as these official borrowings for both project and for commercial purposes.

This series of scenarios that I have painted, Sir, in relation to the size of the deficit, the level of expenditure, the composition of expenditure and the composition of financing of expenditure and its mix as between local and foreign, are all part of a broader economic and financial programme to support the stable, continued and sustained growth of the Barbados economy at a rate of 3% per year without inducing any additional balance of payment problems. It is in that context, Sir, that I commend them to the House.

Before I close, I should want to speak to one contentious issue, Mr. Speaker. This economy has come far based upon the dint of efforts of the people in the society as a whole over the course of the last virtually seven years. I do not, Mr. Speaker, propose to do anything to return Barbados to any dismal past. Sometime in the foreseeable future I would love to pass on the responsibility of managing this economy to somebody else but pass over an economy that is as strong...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Or stronger than the economy that I inherited. It does not behove us at all ever to put this economy back in a hole because we know better. I know what has had to be required to bring it back and to keep it stable.

The Government is genuine in its determination to pay decent wages, Mr. Speaker, but in all our doings the management of any addition to domestic Spending power must continue to be the benchmark that guides us in determining whether policies are good or bad. There; is no point, in circumstances where domestic spending is growing too quickly for us to be unleashing massive increases in purchasing power not supported by foreign resources on this economy at this time.

I am in a position to speak to an increase in capital expenditures because the increase in capital expenditures

Equally, I also believe that the whole issue as it relates to the proper staffing and furnishing of offices within the constituency is one that we need to look at. To provide office equipment once every ten years does not in anyway reflect the reality of the situation of the life of office equipment or the life of the technological equipment that is used.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Now, that really is unrealistic because very often that equipment cannot have a ten-year span and we will find ourselves addressing this issue again.

Equally, I also believe that it is unfair that Ministers should do the work of a Member of Parliament and not be paid for that work done as a Member of Parliament. It is not a case of asking for an increase in salary. It is a case of simply being paid for the job of a Member of Parliament. We have a situation where back benchers and Opposition Members receive salaries of Members of Parliament and are allowed to earn independently to provide for themselves and their families.

Ministers do not enjoy that luxury. You are paid simply as a Minister and you do not receive any salary whatsoever for the work that is done as a Member of Parliament. When that work, if you properly service your constituency can take up as much as 30% to 40% of your time and I am not talking about an eight-hour day. I am talking about a 12 to 15 hour day, seven days a week.

Many of us do not know what it is to have a Saturday or Sunday off. It does not happen and I think the fundamental point has to be made that this case does not require a salary increase, it is simply a question of correcting an anomaly that has seen to it that Ministers have not been paid as Members of Parliament during the course of their lives, serving as a Minister. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, of any other category of worker in Barbados, who does work and is not paid for the work that he or she does, unless they are giving volunteer service.

In respect, Sir, of the other aspects of the debate which were brought before this Honourable Chamber in respect of the National Heroes of this country, I perhaps should inform Parliament that we have commissioned a book on the ten National Heroes which is now being prepared by Mr. Francis Woodie Blackman. This book will reflect articles on each of the National Heroes done by ten different scholars and thinkers across Barbados that will in fact be available shortly, not only for the public, but will also be published separately in a format that will be used in the schools. This will allow the children in our schools to get a better and fuller appreciation of the sacrifice and work of our National Heroes during the course of their time.

I am ecstatic, Sir, that we are moving to a point where we can properly recognise the contribution of these National Heroes by fully discussing the possibilities for the establishment of a national heroes square and a National Heroes Centre. I think that it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we are capable of reflecting in our physical landscape the images that can reinforce those persons whom, as a society, we have deemed to be important enough to hold up as an example for the rest of us who come thereafter.

The question of activities for this year will be addressed shortly, but suffice it to say that we hope that the portraits which were done, and which have been properly kept during the course of the last year, will once again be hung this year. I think that visual statement during the month of April is critical to begin to sensitise all of us that this is a time when we should start reflecting on those things that would have caused these people to become National Heroes by virtue of their commitment to excellence, their sacrifice, or by their courage.

Indeed, Sir, one of the things that we are looking at this year is an attempt to mobilise communities and people to offer at least four to six hours of volunteer service back to their communities in the spirit of appreciation that reflect that we believe that their contribution back to the society is in fact worthy of emulation and that as a country, we would seek all to be able to give back four to six hours on that day and hopefully perpetuate it over a longer period of time.

So I look forward, Sir, to our participation of those events. It is likely that because the National Heroes move into the season of Emancipation that we are going to be coordinating those events so that there is a cohesive view in terms of the activities as well as the themes between the two.

I believe, Sir, that the things that we can do in respect of statues have to be done, but one recognises that it is impossible for the Government to build all 10 statues all at once. Therefore over the course of the next few years, it should be our intention to ensure that each of the National Heroes is suitably commemorated in his or her own right by a statue or some other major commemoration for them that can remain there in perpetuity.

I look forward, Sir, to the one being unveiled of Sir Garfield Sobers, as the Right Honourable Prime Minister indicated that one has already been commissioned and I look forward to the other one which I believe is being worked toward, by a private grouping that of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow also being done within the next few years, so that we can meet the task of ensuring that all of these ten National Heroes are suitably commemorated.

With those few words, Sir, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I wish to lend my support to a proposal put by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew in respect of the Parliamentary Assistants. I think over the years we have not treated them well. We expect these people, as he has said, to be computer literate. They have to be up and down the length of their constituencies.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is reminding me that he too spoke to this. I am glad that he has gotten support on both sides of the House. When Members of Parliament cannot get to the hospital, when they cannot get to a fire, an accident or wherever, this is the work of Parliamentary Assistants.

I know what it is to see my Parliamentary Assistant at 3.00 a.m. at a fire with the baby on the hip. Their work is like ours. Last year, I had three Sundays out of 52, to myself. I do not expect to get a weekend like other mortals, I do not know the last day I had a weekend to myself, but at least let me have a Sunday. They too work like us because they work alongside us and I think it is only fair that the personal assistant gets access to a car loan and gets a gratuity at the end of a period of contract service. I think it is really horrendously unfair that these people get nothing of that kind, nor do they get the opportunity to contribute even to a pension scheme. As has been pointed out, if somebody like that stays with you, because when you train somebody and that person is up and down the constituency and knows every household, you are not going to change a person like that in a hurry to start from scratch again. 6.05 p.m.

It can stay with you for over twenty years. Parliament cannot be the worst employer of all employers. Sir, that does not speak well of us. We cannot be the worst employer and that is what it is coming to.

So I very much want to add my voice to those who are asking for better terms and conditions of service for the parliamentary assistants who work so hard in the constituencies.

But I want to say a few words, Sir, in respect of a matter to which I have spoken many times in this House but i feel I must speak again. The terms and conditions of service of Parliamentarians and Ministers as distinct from other Parliamentarians.

It is not good, Mr. Chairman, Sir. As Ministers on the front bench, we find that we are neither fish, fowl or good red herring. In other words we are not civil servants but we are made to pay our own national insurance, but we get no claims, we do not benefit from it but we have to pay our own national insurance. The only workers in Barbados, and you know we have no trade union to represent our interest, we have no shop steward to represent our interest.

I hear the talk about the social partners and a certain arrangement that we have, but nobody knows what the head of the other social partners earns. Nobody knows what the General Secretary of the Workers Union earns. Nobody knows what the head of the Chamber of Commerce earns. But everybody knows what the Prime Minister earns.

It is an interesting thing if we would do a comparative analysis between what we earn and what our colleagues in Trinidad and Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean earn. They may not be as well paid dollar for dollar but these are people who have cars, houses, security officers and so much more at their disposal. None of these perks we have, but I have to say that I think I am hard done by as a worker in Barbados that I have to pay my own national insurance. That I get no holiday with pay. That I have no health coverage. I make my own personal arrangements and one or two other people have but it is not fair. You are better off now on the back bench than you are on the front bench.

I picked up the legislation. Chapter 12(A) which speaks of retiring allowances, legislated service and in the definition of salary, Mr. Chairman, Sir, it speaks as the basic salary paid to a person by virtue of his being a Member of the House of Assembly, at law this includes her, during the period of such service etc., etc., and that is the basis of the argument of most of us including myself, Sir, who feel that it is wrong, that those of us who are Ministers and Members of the front bench and also the Leader of the Opposition are not paid as Members of Parliament. But we do our work as Member of Parliament.

After I had my lunch in here today, Sir, I went down to Collins Drugstore to buy a few items and a gentleman stopped me at the bottom of the steps, (I was still in the precincts of Parliament) to beg me. He is most probably earning more than me because it is not difficult to do that but he stopped me to beg me.

I have a motor car, Sir, which a young gentleman, it had not even occur to me on the road a few weeks ago was neck and neck with me. We stopped because the traffic was tight and he looked through his window and said to me, "you ent ready to sell that yet." I said I have not thought about it but maybe I should. He said, "yes, if you are thinking about it I will be interested in buying it."

I went home and thought about it, Mr. Chairman. I cannot afford to sell my car because of what I still owe on it. If I have to buy a new car, I would have to buy the cheapest Suzuki. Now, I have moved from MG Leyland to Honda. What you are saying now, Mr. Chairman, is that I have to go to the bottom of the market to Suzuki. But even if I was

going to buy the best Suzuki, I still cannot sell the car now because I have to pay off more of the loan for that to make economic sense to me.

Mr. Chairman, you see where I am at. You follow me. So what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that we are greatly disadvantaged. How can we, be sitting in the highest committee in the land, the Cabinet, and be the worst treated employees in the land and at the same time sitting in this Honourable Chamber in the guise of employer and we are also the worst employers in the land? Something is very wrong, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Something is very wrong there. We laugh at these things. Sir. We laugh at these things, but those persons who find themselves without a pension to which they have contributed, any other employee would have taken action.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister makes the point that we make sacrifices. Indeed, we do. Sir, tremendous sacrifices in here. Is it a wonder that Prime Ministers have dropped dead in here. Two dropped dead and one with a broken heart have now left this Chamber. Is it a wonder? It is counterproductive.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Sandiford had a broken heart. I mean physically broken. Mr. Chairman, Sir, something really has to be done about it. It is all right to make these large gestures and these large statements, but we have to face reality. It is counterproductive.

Working fourteen hours a day at least six days a week with benefit of a vacation, a two days here and a three days here is no good. It is amazing that some of us have not already dropped down with one illness or another. It really is and we are going into a second term, we are asking for trouble, Mr. Chairman.

I really do not believe, I am not one who is afraid of the people who put me in here because if I cannot afford to put my hand in my pocket to give them what they are asking me for, they curse me. They tell me how much fool I am. They put me in here to be in a position to help them. So it is no excuse. They all tell me, Miss Miller stop crying, all you does do is cry, cry till I do this. I said well all right take it, take it and I have a dress with two pockets. I am not like an MP who is now a former MP who had suits made without pockets. That is a fact, Sir. He did not remain an MP for too long. He is known to Honourable Members in here. I will not call his name,

Asides,

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, he had the suits made without pockets. But what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that people do not expect us to go over the top and to be extravagant and to be lavish.

But people expect a certain quality of life for the persons who they put in this House and they expect us to be able to represent them in a certain fashion. I cannot be late for my constituency office because my battery has a dead cell as happened a couple of weeks ago and the car will not go. They do not expect this of us and 1 think we have to stop being afraid of the people we represent and be fair in all the circumstances.

A lot of people do not know the circumstances under which we work. When I say to people that I pay my own national insurance, they are shocked, because although I am drawing a salary from the National Treasury, I am paying national insurance as a self-employed person and I cannot get the benefit from it. I cannot risk to make a claim, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and I think that we really have to deal with this now. We were talking about it for a long time. 6.15 p.m.

I think it is not dignified. We do not want to be going into a new era with this kind of baggage. We stay up in here every year and we make these same speeches over and over again. It is not within the dignity that is expected in this Chamber. It does not speak well of us and nobody gives us any credit for it. It does not bring votes. It does not win seats or anything of that kind and I think we really have to look at the circumstances.

I am not saying that I want what the Trinidadian Ministers or the Jamaican Ministers get. I do not want a man outside my house. I do not want a flag planted in my front house. 1 do not want any of that but I am saying, please do not put me in a position of disadvantage.

We are already in a situation on the front bench that back benchers are better off than we are. It can happen. It has happened in this Parliament. There are people who used to sit on the front bench who voluntarily went to the back bench, one who is an Honourable Member in this House to this day and told you straight. It just was not going to be possible to remain decent and honest.

One of the things that goes well for us in this Barbados and in parliamentary life is that there have not been spectacular cases of fraud and corruption and so on among Ministers and Members of Parliament, and Chairs of statutory corporations. You pick up the paper any day outside of Barbados and you will read about it. It does not happen here. Our Judiciary is above that. Our Parliamentarians are above it. So why should we be penalised for it, Sir?

I sat in what used to be, it was not a Management Commission then, but it was the Debates Committee when this whole question of two terms or eight years or three terms or 12 years and I made the point then as an attorney never write down a number like that. It breeds anomalies. Just leave it at the two terms.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South says "yes". Nobody contemplated that you would have had what happened in 1994, but even the Bible tells that is what is life. What does not happen in a year happens in a day. It happens in a morning. That was wrong from the beginning. If you start wrong, you are going to end up wrong.

Any other worker in Barbados who would have contributed to a pension scheme and then been prevented through no fault of that person from drawing a pension off that scheme would have gone to the court already but we feel that we are Parliamentarians and we must not appear to be fighting over money.

I have lived to see in my time already, Mr. Chairman, Parliamentarians come to what the Right Honourable Prime Minister describes as genteel poverty, brought before the court, brought low, cannot pay burial expenses. There is no case to be made for it, Mr. Chairman. I think we have to decide on formula, put it down and stick by it. In other Parliaments they do it. This Parliament is not different from any other Parliament.

I remember clearly when Margaret Thatcher first went in as Prime Minister. She dealt with these matters one time and was a Prime Minister for 15 years. She was finished with that. What we do is to put a tentative thing down and we want to pick at it every five minutes, pooch ing back from it, peeping up under ourselves all the time and every single time you have to bring it up...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, No, Mr. Chairman. There is nothing unparliamentary about that. I am quoting one of the most distinguished Members of this Parliament, the late Owen T. Allder.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, seeing that you have a good command of the English language, I would prefer you to keep your language...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Peeping up under yourself, Sir, a well-known Bajan phrase. That is what we are doing all the time in here because we are afraid to deal with the issues. The time has come for us to decide on a formula for the payment of the Prime Minister and the Governor General too. Mr. Chairman, that Head is coming up and I do not want to hear any foolishness in here about you cannot talk about the Queen's representative. The Governor-General, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Leader of the Opposition, all MPs, we have to decide on a format for payment of these people, a process by which they will be paid, a vote from which they will be paid once and for all and let us go forward.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have one minute to wind up.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank you, Sir. Let us go forward so that we do not have this debate going on every year we come to it.

When I first came in here, we used to spend three hours debating the Governor-General's motor car and one day we said this is foolishness. This is a waste of the people's time. This is not worthy of debate, not to be elevated to that status and now nobody says a thing about it because you know that the Governor-General has to drive about in a motor car looking a certain way as does the Prime Minister.

What is it going to come to now, that one day we will have to put the Prime Minister in a Suzuki too? Oh, Mr. Chairman, please! I hope that we are going to bring some realism to this debate and face the fact that those who would point the finger at us a lot of them are living in glass houses starting with the social partnership.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the matter that is engaging the emotions of this Parliament has to do with something that is common throughout the public service of Barbados. It is called a regrading. I believe that we have to see this matter as leaders of the country, the matter of regrading not only within the context of our own peculiar circumstances, however merited, but within the context of what is facing us as a country.

May I begin, Sir, by putting something on the Table. I believe that the terms and conditions of the Prime Minister's office should be reviewed to take away a housing allowance that I do not think a Prime.Minister should have an option to exercise, which he can if he so chooses, by pretending not to live in the official residence. I would like to begin by putting that on the Table because that is something that is there as a reality. A Prime Minister of this country if he so chooses can profess not to be living in the residence that goes with the office and draw a housing allowance.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not going to comment upon it as to whether anybody has done it but it is there on the Table. I do not draw it, Sir, but it is drawable by people professing not to be living in the official residence so there are anomalies on both sides.

The reality is, Sir, that there have been two regradings of Members of Cabinet in the last 20 years. There has been a regrading also of Parliamentary Secretaries. In fact, I would want to say, Sir, that if somebody's case has urgently to be addressed, it would be Parliamentary Secretary if we are talking about serious regrading.

A Parliamentary Secretary has to function like a Junior Minister but is paid less than a Deputy Permanent Secretary.

It is distressing. A Minister's case for regrading bears no relationship to what Parliamentary Secretaries who sometimes, and I was one, Sir, who had to pull some real weight in the Ministry of Finance. There the anomaly has to be recognised, Sir.

Sir, the regrading exercise that faces us recognises that the complexity of functions will change over time and that the technical requirements and other demands required to perform the task that has been of long standing will also change. The same thing that applies in the case of Members of the Cabinet applies in many other sections of the public service of Barbados where people are being paid from the same pool. That is why I am urging this House, whatever may be the merits of the case that obtain in relation to Members of the Cabinet, we cannot disconnect the full case from that which exists for the public sector and many classes of it as a whole. 6.25 p.m.

Any attempt to deal unilaterally with the merits of the case for Members of Cabinet will collide with the first principle of good governance that there should never be a disconnection between Government and the governed. We are talking about regrading.

Government has become more complex and we treated in an anecdotal way how many funerals we attend; but there is a greater complexity to the task of governance. Governance has more functions. There is a need for a more assiduous service but the situation that faces Members of Cabinet is absolutely no different from that which faces many important categories of persons paid from the public sector of Barbados.

The House should not agree to any unilateral regrading or ^classification of any section being paid from the Consolidated Fund. I say that, Sir, because this society has also become extremely indulgent and in the same way that Members of Cabinet and Members of the House are staking their own claims we also have great claims coming from other sections of society for all kinds of allowances that they are now professing relate to the complexity of the functions that they are being called upon to discharge.

In the last round of wage negotiations, in addition to the request for wage increases, requests for improved terms and conditions exceeding $100 million were put to the Government. In some instances, Sir, people are now claiming things called cow itch allowance. A man is claiming a cow itch allowance. Water boots allowance, hazard allowance and all categories of allowances. In the Police Force, Mr. Chairman, you have a range of allowances that are so large that it is quite possible that some police officers earn more from their allowances than they earn from their basic salaries. Then they will pick one special allowance that has not been used recently and create a controversy over that, ignoring others.

That is why in recent weeks, Sir, I have been making the plea for us to resist partial regradings without reference to what it will trigger. In some institutions and I will speak very bluntly this evening, Sir, in the Central Bank you had a partial regrading that saw the persons at the bottom and middle management regraded and reclassified, brought too close to the people at the top and that triggered requests for changing the people at the top.

In other institutions, in the Sanitation Service Authority, you have requests coming the other way around: regrade the people at the top and then when they get their regrading the people at the bottom will say you have helped the people at the top help us too. It is all going to add up to an increased payroll that will become unsustainable unless we see the whole thing in its totality.

The same Government that is urging for us to have a holistic view of this business of regrading of its institutions cannot now treat Cabinet as an extraordinary special class which should not be subjected to the overall discipline.

I am saying, therefore, that if there is to be a regrading of Cabinet it has to be looked at in the context of regrading of the entire class of persons who are paid from the Consolidated Fund but there can be no other basis for which it can feasibly be undertaken.

I would like to see the stage come where Parliament before it closes a session, votes the salaries for the Parliament to follow it so that people will come to Parliament knowing what their salaries are and they cannot say that anybody is breaching their expectations as to what they were to be paid when they become Members of this House.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where as it stands nobody has a reason to say that they did not know what their terms and conditions were before they came to Parliament. Those were no secrets but we all chose to come here. I know what faces me not just as a Minister of Finance but as Minister of the Civil Service.

All across the public service of Barbados we are being bombarded with demands for improved terms and conditions for regrading and for increased wages and if you were to add all three together this country is going to go back to a situation where we would have put Barbados in an unsustainable position. I, therefore, recognise the merits of the case that Members of Cabinet and Members of the House have to work hard and that the responsibilities have increased as we have improved in facilities for Members of Parliament.

Members must not believe that there is not a relationship between improved facilities and expanded expectations. In the days when MPs did not have offices paid for by the State and so on there was no demand that MPs had to go to constituency offices every week but as we improve the facilities and institutionalise them you are increasing

public expectation as to precisely the range of functions that you should be exercising on their behalf. The more the public hears about constituencies, assistants and research and so on the more they will feel that you are in a position to perform functions that you would not be expected to perform in the past.

Be that as it may, Sir, a case for the regrading of Cabinet Members and the Members is the same for everybody. The functions have become more complex and more demanding and it all should go into the pool and be dealt with in the same fashion because the case is legitimate and what we should not do is treat it as an exception when it is in fact part of an overall norm. I feel that we should proceed with this matter in good order.

There have been regradings of Cabinet Members in the past, but do not let us do it in a flush that separates us from those that we govern. Then, no matter how justifiable it is going to be it would fail on the very grounds that we are asking other people in this society to show moderation in support of the common good.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Members of my Cabinet and Members of this House work hard but there are some people who work in my Ministry who are paid distressingly low but who certainly at certain times of the year have to work under the greatest and most intense pressure that bear a relationship to what some MPs have to endure. To get these Estimates to this House, for example, requires people to have to work at least three months in a year every Saturday and every Sunday and every day of the week until the wee hours of the morning, and they do it, Sir, uncomplainingly but they do it without being able themselves to change the terms and conditions under which they function.

We have the power if we were so minded to change arbitrarily those terms and conditions but we set standards that we expect others to follow. I know what I am telling this House, Sir, that I know what is before me as Minister of the Civil Service and the request for regrading and improved terms and conditions would add easily another $200 million to the payroll which is unsustainable.

There are some requests for improved terms and conditions and improved regrading which we will just have to say we are sorry we cannot go this far at this time. I would urge the House to understand that I certainly am in a position where as Minister of Finance and of the Civil Service I have to see the totality of the picture and to tell Members of the Cabinet and Members of the House that however merited let us do it taking cognisance of the standards we are setting and the capacity of the country to pay.

I would suggest, Sir, therefore that in the same way that we had a regrading exercise done on a serious basis for other departments that have shown that it is a complexity in the functions or whatever else and have measured the extent of the complexity and what they are worth that the House should have that similar exercise undertaken and a body to doit. 6.35 p.m.

Let us have it done properly. For the time being, Sir, I feel that we should pay Parliamentary Secretaries better. They get paid less than a Deputy Permanent Secretary. It is a shocking thing, Sir. It is a very bad thing. In fact, they get paid at the same level as a Senior Assistant Secretary and they are struggling. There are many instances where Parliamentary Secretaries have to work sometimes head to head with Ministers and they pull real weight. I would want to see them adjusted quickly. Let us phase in, as I have said, how we treat regrading of Cabinet and also take along with us the whole Parliament. I insist on that too, Sir. It is not just that Cabinet functions have become more complex. Constituency representation as a public function is far different from what it was when I came into this House fourteen years ago. The extent of my involvement as a Member of Parliament is such that as Prime Minister, I find myself in my constituency at least one day a week for sure and on every occasion that I get the chance to during the course of the week once I am in the country. There are things that I simply have to do that nobody else can do for me in St. Peter and the functions grow and grow and grow and become more complex and more exacting and that is fine. Do not let us do it for ourselves because then we are going to put, I am telling you, Mr. Chairman, a whole other process of regrading in the rest of the public service in jeopardy and the Government will not be in a position to offer any sensible defence upon those who can, like MPs and Members of Parliament, argue quite legitimately that their circumstances warrant an improvement in the conditions under which they are paid from the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Chairman, I heard Members on my Side, I have heard in Cabinet and I respect the view but I am going to urge in this case, let us put it within a sensible framework that suggests that good governance is obtained.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the back-benchers would also, if they were given the opportunity speak, to the ways in which service in this House imposes an onerous set of obligations on them. I am sure that their circumstances are not so dissimilar from Cabinet Members that we should, in speaking to the issue make a distinction between carrying Cabinet Members and carrying all other Members of Parliament into a new framework that coincides with the responsibility. Let us also do the same thing for all other persons who are paid from the same pot. That is the only point that I am making to this House. When that is under consideration at the end of the day what we would have succeeded in doing is what is sustainable.

Sir, I have spoken in these terms not because I want to suggest that there is a division in Cabinet but that this whole

matter cannot be seen as just a Cabinet Members thing. There are many thousands of loyal Barbadian officers of the Crown who have put in yeoman service who are underpaid and are forced to work under exacting and difficult circumstances and their case is as legitimate as ours. I am pleading with Parliament that Parliament can lo what Parliament wishes but that it is a good thing to have the power of a giant but it is tyrannical to use that power like a tyrant. I am urging, in this instance, that Parliament should see the overall good and let us let good governance continue to obtain, do the right thing in the right way and there is a right way. I know that with the will of the House that that right way of doing the right thing will be found. Members of my Cabinet will have heard me over four years keep pleading that very often you can do the right thing but by doing it in the wrong way, the effect is lost. There is no issue about the need for improvement but let us find the right way to do it. That is my only concern that 1 express to this House. I would urge the House to treat it with seriousness, Sir.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention. I am not qualified to speak with any authority on the making of demands for improved terms and conditions because from the Back Bench for less than three months, I believe I would be running into serious conflict with my employers. I believe that they expect me at this time to serve my apprenticeship here.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Therefore I cannot join with those who had different experiences and long experiences and probably understand the importance of settling these matters at this juncture in their political lives.

However, my major point would be in relation to a National Heroes Square. Before I arrive at that, I would like to suggest that I am supportive as a consequence of my short experience here of the necessity for us to have a library in place almost like yesterday. Up to yesterday now, in fact, when I was here I discovered the difficulty of not having access to material at intervals during the course of the debate. If the library was in close proximity - a library of Parliament...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: This is what I am suggesting that we need to have one. We need to have a library in place as soon as possible. This is a discussion that has been going on for a decade in Parliament...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: If people really recognised the importance of having a library - I believe it goes right back to people not understanding their history, not having access to important changes in the law in the international arena and having special types of documents that can be advantageous to us during the discourse in Parliament. I tend to believe that in a very vague way we take the aspect of a library into consideration but it is very, very important for a modern Parliament to be able to make significant and important contributions to discussion.

There is also a reservation about a librarian. Most of the time people debate on the qualifications of the librarian and what type of librarian we should have. If we can just have a Clerk monitoring the situation within the library or paying for a qualified librarian to be put in place. I do not consider this to be a big issue when it comes to just one employee to do such a task, I do not consider it to be a big issue. Although we can have a library for reference purposes and monitored by some clerical officer so that the books will remain safe within the library if we have any doubts about the safety of the books. These are things that we can look at. A library would have given most of us access to material that would have made us understand the importance of the debate surrounding a National Heroes Square.

If we had access to materials like "Capitalism and Slavery" by Eric Williams then we would understand the importance of the displacement of the present statue in Trafalgar Square and being replaced by a statue that we can all feel a sense of pride identifying with. Because Eric Williams was very clear and by inference clearly indicated to us that if Nelson had his way in the early half of the 19th century then most of us that are sitting in here this afternoon would not be in here because he was strongly opposed to the Emancipation of black slaves. He opposed the benevolent voices of the day in Great Britain, men like William Wilberforce. Then, there will be no reservations about us displacing him and having creditable admirable heroes so that even the unborn can look back to see the contributions that we have made to our own personal development and civilisation in general.

I believe that heroes like Lovell need to be recognised because he too has made a significant contribution. Because there is very little literature available on him, we cannot understand the significance of a hero like Lovell but we have knowledge about a character like Nelson. That is because we do not have the research facilities sometimes available to us. 6.45 p.m.

I am not talking about the public library. I am putting a case for a library in Parliament. If we had these facilities, I believe we would be in a better position to speak passionately about the changes that have been suggested today under this specific Head.

I felt that it was necessary for me to make this short intervention. As I said, there are other elements like the importance of health insurance which is of importance as well and nobody can fault that. Any reasonable man in the society can understand the significance of Parliamentarians

having a health insurance package. This is a necessity because none of us can predict when we are going to be sick. When we are sick, we cannot work in order to have income to pay a doctor. That is simple so nobody will fault that in here.

But I believe it was necessary for me to make the brief intervention to place emphasis on the importance of having that library in place as soon as possible. In addition to that, I am very supportive of moving expeditiously to have that National Heroes Square in place.

That is the essence of my brief contribution. I would not venture to enter into the other areas, because I would be subjecting my lucidity with being questioned by the general public for a man who has entered this House within the last three months and now asking for certain forms of income. I must be honest, and although I understand the importance of largesse, my feelings about my presence in here goes beyond the accumulation of wealth or the accumulation of these opportunities.

If I had to come here free and work on the outside for an income, I will be prepared to do that. I have been functioning and expressing my views in the public domain day in and day out. It is not because I come here that I would ask for that but I could understand the demands by constituents or Parliamentarians and the need for Parliamentarians to have things in place. But, to work in Parliament itself, I would not make any demand for any major plus for that exercise because talking is something that I believe we all enjoy and what might be lacking sometimes is contributions of substance that would bring about any meaningful change within the economy or the social life of people within this society. But I have no problem with those who believe that they have a case to advance. But, I speak from the point of view of an individual and a representative of the people of St. Michael East and I do not believe that I have reached that stage of qualification that I can make the same demands as other Members, but I can understand their cases.

I asked you for the kind ear and you have given it to me and I am pleased that you have actually entertained and enjoyed my presentation with that smile that you have.

Thank you very much.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the debate went beyond what I anticipated it would have. But the principal point that I do not want to be lost in the entire debate, as a Member of the Management Commission, and a diligent Member, is that there are matters already resolved which to my mind, even though I do not have the knowledge that the Prime Minister has of what demands are being made by various sections of the community, those matters that have been resolved are sufficiently fair and reasonable as not to go outside of what in the context of salary negotiations, or any other negotiations for regrading or whatever, would affect the outcome. The point being the need for research assistants for the two parliamentary groups or research grants, the need for the establishment of a library, the need for the establishment and servicing of standing committees of Parliament, the need for a look to be taken at the Pension legislation and there are other issues. For example, the question of regrading of the position of executive assistant in the Opposition Office and there were other smaller matters which do not go outside of the ambit of the discussions which may very well be taking place between the Government, the private sector and the trade unions.

The other considerations are also important and that is a decision for the Government. The point being that the longer one stays in the Cabinet the more these pressures come and you are always playing financial catchup. But, what is worse that unlike a back bencher when you are a Cabinet Member you have to start all over, plus pay off all of the other obligations that you may have incurred while you were trying to catch up. I believe that Members are cognisant of that. I do not think that I have ever heard a case being made in the Management Commission or in here that is so unreasonable as not to warrant some consideration.

I have never jumped on a bandwagon where I feel that Parliamentary salaries should be excessive and the Lord knows, the Leader of the Opposition of a Party that only has two people contributing to its coffers would know that that salary is meaningless, because at the end of the day, it will all go into servicing the institution, even with the subvention.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Precisely. So that we all know what those pressures are and I suppose we can all make individual cases. But, at the same time one does not wish to accept that there may be pressures which are being brought to bear on the Government at this time, such as would propel the Minister of Finance to raise those issues in this debate. But, those are critical things that can be done. I hope the Management Commission will be productive enough in the coming year and that the Leader of the House will ensure that as quickly as possible, we can get those matters under way.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, I very much regret not being here earlier when this discussion about the need for an improvement of the terms and conditions of Cabinet Members and of Parliamentarians started. I am in danger of commenting without knowing all that was said before.

This, in every Parliament that I have heard of, has always been a problem. It is never quite the right time, it is always too soon after an election or too close to one to offer Parliamentarians an increase. It is a feeling in some circles

echoed by the Right Honourable Prime Minister that perhaps an outgoing Parliament should set the terms and conditions for an incoming Parliament, but you should never set terms and conditions for yourself.

There is a feeling that in any event, Parliamentarians should not determine how much they should get, but that outsiders should determine that. We have tried that in Barbados before and the Commission that sat proceeded on premises which reflected massive innocence on its part as to what Parliamentarians do. So that was utterly disastrous. We then had, in 1978 to settle for a Committee of Parliament and that was the first regrading of Parliamentarians' terms and conditions which we have had in the last 25 years. 6.55 p.m.

It needs to be stated as a fact, that since 1978 we have not had a serious regrading or regrading at all of Parliamentarians' salaries in this country. Since 1978 we have followed civil service increases and except for last year when there was a constituency allowance, there has not been any serious revisiting of Parliamentarians' terms and conditions.

In the meanwhile, however, and I can speak for almost 20 years of experience in this Parliament. The role and the function of the Parliamentarian has enlarged to a degree that bears no comparison with what it was twenty years ago.

We are the principal job placement agency in our own constituency. We are the principal welfare agency. Everybody who is in need of a job comes to the MP, whether that is a job in the public sector or private sector. Even those within the public sector that need transfers think that they have not to address the Public Service Commission but the MP.

Every streetlight that is needed, I had personally to go across the constituency, look at the poles, take down the numbers and then try to route the request through the Ministry of Public Works or the Rural Development Commission. Every time that a bulb is not functioning, I am called and I either have to ask the caller to provide me with the pole number or I have to drive in the constituency and get that pole number and call the Light and Power.

Every time there is a dead dog in the constituency, that is a fact, nobody calls Sanitation, I am called from five o'clock every morning to be told those things and I have to undertake to call Sanitation.

When there is a mosquito problem, I have to call the Ministry of Health. The complaint is made to me and I have to call the Ministry of Health.

We are expected to be with them, the constituents when they are experiencing joy and merriment and when they are sad and they are mourning and have just come back from a funeral at St. Augustine's, you are expected to be there too.

If for one reason a household is finding difficulty in finding lunch money, it is your responsibility. If there is difficulty in buying books, it is your responsibility.

Every Club looks to you to be financed. You have to provide the trophies. Every Speech Day you have to be the main trophy giver. Every Church in the constituency, every Sports day, they look to you.

Some people see a minimum of fifty people every week. In my case I see people every day Monday to Friday once I am in Barbados.

It is enormous pressure and it has become a full-time job. A full-time job it is on the MPs. As a backbencher you can spend no less than four hours a day attending to the pressures of your constituents and their concerns.

I want to make two quick points. The first is this. The time has come in this country when we must delink Parliamentarians' salaries from that of the civil sector. The notion that a Parliamentarian is somehow to be equated to a civil servant. They do qualitatively different jobs and the Parliamentarian must stand on his own. So that the question then arises, what is he worth. What is a Parliamentarian worth given all the pressures on him and the expanded roles which he has got to carry?

I agree that we have got to be careful, since we all draw from the same pool, how we go about our increases. But we have an institution in Parliament, the Parliament Commission, the Management Commission that is ideally suited to address these matters.

We achieved remarkable unanimity in the last Parliament whereby all the issues involving improved terms and conditions for Parliamentarians were agreed upon by representatives of all three parties.

I have no doubt that the Management Commission can successfully revisit the whole issue of looking at the terms and conditions of Parliamentarians. Do a regrading exercise if you consider that necessary and indeed the case for regrading is unanswerable. One has not been done since 1978 and at the appropriate time we can have increases, improved terms and conditions such as I feel sure will meet the satisfaction of most Members.

The case is unanswerable but timing is important and I have no doubt that in the fullness of time we will arrive at the right answer and solution.

On motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to

His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, the 17th of March.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 7.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, under this Head - Head 12,1 wish to say a few words in respect of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. You may be aware, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I still Chair the Executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This is an Association founded in 1911. It is the first time a woman is in the Chair and Barbados enjoys that distinction.

When, virtually the day after Elections on the 21st January last, it occurred to me that something which could be very beneficial to this Parliament, I speak of what is now described in severe circles as a post election seminar. It occurred to me that this is something which could be very useful bearing in mind that a number of new Members have come into Parliament both onto the Front Bench and the Back Bench. This is something which was started several years ago in the CPA. In fact, I distinctly recall participating in the very first post-election seminar which was held in Grenada after the Revolution there and when the Grenadian people were trying to restore their democracy, CPA put together for the very first time a post election seminar and I was invited to be a part of it. And from time to time we have been having post election seminars and it now comes almost as an automatic thing and particularly where there is a significant turnover in the Parliament, particularly where a lot of new young Members are coming in, it can be very helpful.

It is an incredible thing, when you think about it, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that Parliamentarians are perhaps the only professionals nowadays who are expected to come to the job without any training whatsoever. There is no on-the-job training so to speak, except for the sterling work that the CPA does in terms of seminars and other such undertakings.

Indeed, already what is known as the Westminster Seminar, I know that you have been a beneficiary of that, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think it was last year or perhaps the year before...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Last year.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, I saw you there. The Westminster Seminar takes place every year in March and they come from all over the Commonwealth. I, in my time as Chair have been asking particularly for younger, newer members to be coming. And I am delighted to say that our new Parliamentarian, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was the one who was there this year. You can hardly ever get more than one space on this seminar. It is very, very popular. Indeed, Barbados is lucky that almost annually we get a slot on it and I am very glad that the Honourable Member has been able to be the beneficiary of it and I am hoping that in the years to come, other new Members will have the benefit of it. There are many other areas in which the CPA seeks to, as it were, bring some on-the-job training to its Members and it is very useful to us in this way.

So, Mr. Chairman, Sir, having spoken to Mr. Speaker, and spoken to the Leader of the House and the Clerk of the House, I suggested that perhaps a post election seminar for Barbados would be in order. It is the first time that we are going to have one. It is something which has to be done very quickly. The Leader of the Opposition was not available to be spoken to. I tried to be in touch with him without success.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I see that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is here, Sir, and perhaps it is in order, Mr. Chairman, Sir, because he is the de facto Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In fact, the Parliamentary Leader and perhaps it is in order that I should apologise to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I did not perhaps have a word with him behind the Speaker's Chair, before I got up to make this intervention, but no offence was meant at all and I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will in fact give his support to this proposal that we should have a post-election seminar in Barbados. Having spoken to the

Leader of the House and Mr. Speaker and the Clerk and of course with the CPA Secretariat at London, we have decided that the 13th and 14th of April are the dates for the Seminar.

The format and the agenda for the Seminar have been drafted out by our Clerk in collaboration with Members of the CPA Secretariat in London. It is believed that the Secretary General of the CPA, Mr. Arthur Donahoe will come out together with two or three technicians to this post-election seminar. I would like to urge upon Honourable Members the importance of their attendance at the Seminar. It will fall, I imagine having heard the Leader of House, within the period when we will have an Easter break. It is going to be on a Monday and a Tuesday, two full days and this is very important.

The House of Assembly is not a place any longer, Mr. Chairman, Sir, if ever it was such a place where you can come and literally play it by ear. That has never been the case. Indeed, when I was a child this was a place where, as I pointed out yesterday, there was a substantial library. There was a reading room for Members, there was a lobby and it was possible, again through the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for Members to learn the business of the House and how the House proceeded, We are moving toward a new era and a new century, we have said it in here before and I will continue to say it because I feel very strongly about it. I would like to think that new Standing Orders, a different and new, more businesslike way of doing business in this House, not that we are not businesslike, but the business of the House is becoming more and more complex. Because, more and more businesses are coming to the Floor of the House and so it is very important that there are rules of procedure, the way in which we do business, Standing Committees of this House, how select committees in this House work, the way in which Members are serviced and some Honourable Members spoke to various aspects of that yesterday. The House is a place of business. This is not an occasional place where we come to legislate from time to time.

The primary business of parliamentarians in the Westminster system throughout the years, Mr. Chairman, Sir, has been the business of levying taxes and legislating. But in a modern Parliament there is a great deal more that now attaches to those old and basic functions which are still major functions of any Parliament.

We are looking toward a Parliament in a new century, Mr. Chairman, Sir, which will not only interface with its public more than it has in the past because that is where the demand is, We have seen that happen in terms of the facilities which have been made available to Parliamentarians. We now have constituency offices in the way that we did not. It is hard for some of us to remember how was it before we had these offices. It has redounded to the benefit of our constituents. We need to have a closer interface with the public sector and the other members of the social partnership. We need a closer interface with the labour movement and a closer interface with civil society.

New and modern Parliaments in the early 21st Century in my assessment, Mr. Chairman, Sir, will be doing far more of that than we did even in these closing decades of the 20th century. So that it is very important for new Members who want to be businesslike, who want to get on with the constituency agendas and with their Parliamentary agendas, because each of us is alone when it comes to the question of how we work in our constituencies. 10.20 a.m.

We are together at our various parliamentary party groupings. How we work on the Floor of the House and how we work in a partisan sense.

Then there are some matters which transcend partisanship and happily this is a Parliament where that list is growing. That there are many matters now which are not so much matters for political partisanship as for a national consensus to be arrived at and these things do not happen, Mr. Chairman by luck and chance. They do not happen because one or two people may have an interest in these matters.

These matters now are matters in which we have to be fully briefed. There are matters in which we have to educate ourselves in a manner of speaking. That is why the Lib'rary is so important and matters in which by consultation with like-minded parliamentarians working in similar Commonwealth Parliamentary democracies that we have a great deal to learn from each other.

I am hoping that Honourable Members will make the time, put the time now in your diaries for the 13th and 14th to participate in these seminars.

We are hoping to have some distinguished speakers who will address the seminars. The Seminars are going to speak not only to procedural matters which is very important for us to know. We are going to be looking now - there are new Draft Standing Orders - I certainly have them on my desk from another Parliament which we have to give our attention to these matters.

Even the way in which we format, the Right Honourable Prime Minister made reference to this yesterday. Even the way, Mr. Chairman, Sir, in which we format this whole process of bringing the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure before the House, and therefore by extension before the people of this country and the way in which the Budget is presented. All of that has to be reformatted now. Put on a more businesslike footing than normally because we do business in a different way.

It has implications not only for the domestic aspect of the business of this Parliament but for its regional and international commitments and undertakings as well. So that there are far-reaching and quite wide ranging aspects of our lives as Parliamentarians that we have to look at now holistically and look at the bigger picture. It is more than just a domestic consideration that you bring to this Parliament.

So that the work of the CPA, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is so important. The CPA is larger too in its reach within the Commonwealth because the CPA like the Commonwealth Secretariat with which it works very closely, transcends so many other provinces as well. Within the CPA we have the whole political spectrum represented. Within the CPA we have the entire economic spectrum, the whole trade spectrum, the whole religious spectrum represented and it is a credit and I think an enduring subject of some envy for those who do not belong to the Commonwealth and by extension to the CPA, that over all the years we somehow have been able to work within this framework.

It is not something we easily want to give up. Our continued membership even Barbados as a republic is in my judgement contemplating to be a republic within the Commonwealth and we would want to continue to burnish our membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am pleased to see, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that we have a generous provision being made for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and if I may make one point in closing, Sir.

In former years we used to have a very useful and the beneficial exchange of visits between the Canadian Parliament and ourselves as a special relationship between Canada and Barbados in many respects and a parliamentary one was not the least of them.

What used to happen, Sir, is that on an annual basis, a Canadian delegation of Parliamentarians would come to Barbados during the early months of the year which coincided with their winter and during their summer.

It was largely speaking, not so much as to accommodate them as to accommodate us, that our Parliamentarians, our delegation would go up to Canada. If it had been the other way around it would have meant winter wardrobes and it would have been very much more difficult to organise it.

Since I have been in the Chairmanship I have struggled to put this back on course and this year for the first time in a long time, we have had that exchange restarted.

I am happy that last month, the delegation of Canadian Parliamentarians who came down here were able to see how we work. It was very fortunate that they were here at the time when the new Parliament opened and in fact were able to attend the opening of our Parliament with all of its ceremony and its pomp and so on.

They did have the opportunity to view a number of industrial and manufacturing and other operations. They visited the schools, I believe they went to the St. Mary's School in the City and we entertained them as best as we could.

It was very unfortunate that a reporter who made it his business to literally stalk that group of Parliamentarians was able to report back to a prominent newspaper in Canada the fact that they were down here living in luxury so to speak and cavprted and literally having a wonderful time and that it was no more than a job. That is very far from the truth and I intend to answer that in the Canadian newspapers.

But I want to say, Sir, in closing that we have had the return invitation made to us and we are hoping to have a good delegation of our Parliament go up to Canada in mid-July and I am hoping that as the years go on that this will continue.

It is very important, we do not only learn and we use so often Canada, the Canadian Parliamentary motto as a model for ourselves, but many friendships have come out of that in the past and I hope that that will happen in the future and it will allow Parliamentarians who have specific areas of interest to look and do comparative analyses in respect of what obtains in Canada.

I believe that they are in the process of planning an excellent return programme for us. Again, I hope that all Honourable Members who are new to the House have in fact joined the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is not an automatic thing. You have to join and that you will make yourselves conversant with how it works and that from time to time when invitations are issued to all members in respect of various Commonwealth Parliamentary Association visits and seminars and workshops that you will put up your name for them.

We try to be as fair as possible moving them around all Members and particularly newer Members and in both Houses as well.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Branch in Barbados has as its Chairs, Mr. Chairman, Right Honourable Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and as its Co-vice Chairs, the Speaker of our House and the President of the Senate. So it is at that level that our branch enjoys the confidence and the support of the leadership of both Houses.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think you should wind up now.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, thank you Sir. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to reiterate that I am pleased to see that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Branch in Barbados is alive and well.

As its Chair, its would become a little embarrassing if one's own branch did not appear to be well run and to be vibrant, and so it pleases me greatly that all of the signs for a good branch operation are reflected in these Estimates.

I am much oblige to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on this particular Head. 10.30a.m.

I want to go back to the debate on National Heroes and to say that it is regrettable that the parish of St. Lucy brags of having the most national heroes but when one looks at the infrastructure that has been accorded to that parish for the last four and a half years one would not recognise that as a community that has the most national heroes. We do not understand the economic significance of that factor.

When one looks at the residences of the various national heroes in St. Lucy one cannot understand why the National Trust cannot recognise the fact that if they are going to be developing areas of special significance, when you consider the way the houses were constructed, why a place like where the Right Excellent Errol Barrow was born they could not take that on as a project. It is regrettable.

When one looks at what is happening previously that at Cane Garden that area could not be developed and I am calling on the Minister of Tourism to have a word with those who run the National Trust to let them know that their work should not be seen through the eyes of politicians and it should not appear to anybody that the work they are doing is to please politicians.

I want to say, Sir, that if we want to develop Barbados we must develop Barbados for all, and the National Trust should not believe that the land mark at Codrington is important because it is in St. Michael and that Cane Garden in St. Lucy is not important.

1 also want the National Trust to understand that it must not be the colour of one's skin and that is a very important point. They must understand that locations in Barbados, whether it be rich or poor, once it has significance it is important and should be highlighted. In other words, an old house somewhere in Barbados that belongs to some poor person, once it has a historical value, it should be regarded and treated in that particular manner.

I say so much so far. I also give the warning to Government Ministers who feel that they can construct roundabouts in certain locations and beautify roads and buildings for certain people but when it comes to the constituency of St. Lucy they feel that they should not do it, a warning to the wise is good enough. A warning to the Prime Minister the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I want him to understand that he has to remember where he is grounded and it is very much in St. Lucy. That is why I am saying to the Honourable Ministers on that side that when they spite St. Lucy they are spiting their Prime Minister. I would expect him to make the necessary demands on his Ministers to ensure...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St Lucy cannot accuse the Government of spiting St. Lucy. The Government can only respond to requests made by Members of Parliament and the only request made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for any infrastructural works is for us to build a stepney airport in St. Lucy which is beyond the Government's resources. When he has led us to what his needs are we will respond constructively.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would just ask the Honourable Member to rephrase that statement.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will rephrase it, Sir, I would like the Ministers of Government to understand that the money voted by the taxpayers of this country is supposed to be spent on the people of St. Lucy and not only the seats they control. I am saying also that roads leading from Well Road to Little Bay that pass near to the residents of the Mahon's in St. Lucy are also important roads and they should be constructed.

I want the Minister to understand...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I rise again on a point of order. There are Rules to this House governing relevance. We are dealing with a matter concerning Parliament. There is a Head pertaining to Public Works. If the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has matters pertaining to roads in St. Lucy they cannot properly be dealt with under Head 12. I would urge you to enforce the Rule regarding relevance to the debate.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter must understand that this Head allows for national heroes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I gave you a little leeway but do not go overboard. Please stick to the subject.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, you are well aware that I do not stray. I always stick to the point and we are dealing with national heroes and they happen to be from

St. Lucy which allows me to deal with certain things in St. Lucy that affect the naming of national heroes without necessarily giving them the necessary infrastructure to live up to that particular name.

You understand that quite well, Mr. Chairman. So do not be misled by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. It does not make sense to name someone a national hero and do not go on to attach those finer things in life to that particular name and also to uplift the environment and the area in which those people were born.

Driving through St. Lucy nobody can tell you where the Right Excellent Errol Barrow was born. I am saying that this is an indictment on the people who run the tourism industry along with the National Trust.

We in Barbados talk a lot about national heroes but when we look at what we are doing to promote their names we are doing nothing. That leads me to other things, Sir.

You have a situation that there are people you will never know if they may ever be named national heroes. You take the late Sir James Tudor. All we do is to take those people's bodies and dump them in holes and leave them there as though they made no significant contribution to the country. I am saying that this Parliament must look after its leaders and a Deputy Prime Minister who should have had some kind of significance to this Parliament, but we get in here and we talk about wages and salaries but we do not understand that there are past parliamentarians who made a contribut m to this Parliament.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy I am sure is trying to criticise his leader for not attending the funeral of the late Sir James Tudor. I do not think that that is fair for him to do so in his leader's absence.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like the House to understand that we will not wait on the Government to do the job he should do for national heroes. We want them to understand that in St. Lucy churchyard it is not a hole anymore but it has been completed the way it should have been completed.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Barbados National Trust has in fact identified the site of the birthplace of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and has intentions I am aware of converting it into a heritage site and are seeking to find the resources to do so.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, what you said was clarified and a statement was made to the effect that something is being done to make sure that that something would be done shortly about the area where the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow was born. So please do not go down that line because the Minister has made a statement to the effect where it would be done.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am a bit surprised that you would entertain and go on to repeat that the Minister has stated that something would be done. 10.40a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is not the Minister's prerogative, Sir. The Minister said that the National Trust... but the Minister cannot dictate to the National Trust when they will do something. I beg you, Sir, to be guided on this particular matter by me and not by the Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I believe that the Government of the day is doing something about it and a statement has been made. Do not mislead the House. A statement has been made that something is going to be done about it. Press on, do not start any confusion here.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I want to thank you, Sir, for telling me that the Government will do something about it. I will use this opportunity to find out how much money they will be spending and when they will be doing something about it. I am grateful to you, Sir, for telling me that they will be doing something about it.

I want to move on now to the CPA, Sir. For the last four and a half years I have observed the workings of the CPA. I am a member of the CPA but I want certain Members of the CPA to understand that this is not a special club and that the CPA should not be treated as a special club. If you ask me to be a Member, I expect to be accorded the same rights as anybody else and I expect that the privileges accorded to the association will be accorded to all Members.

I have said already in the lunch room that if the foolishness continues, I will make it an issue on the Floor of the House for the public to understand what we deal with in here. I do not think after sending the warning now that there will be a need for me to do it because they know that I will do it. I am saying to the Members who organise the various things to make sure that equality is important and they should not be seen as a special club for too few.

I am also saying, Sir, that the CPA - I agree with the Honourable Member for the City, it is true that we do not often agree on many things but I must agree with her that the CPA should be used to enlighten certain new Members and the format should be done in such a way that vital^ information that can be found in other countries should easily be passed on to other Members so that information should not be in one Parliament or in one library and then we

have to find somebody to get it for us. There should be a way that that information can be passed through the CPA to various Parliaments so that that information can be available to Parliamentarians.

We must understand that we are going into the 21 st century and if we want to be politicians we must equip ourselves like those going into the 21 st century. It is true, Sir, that there are some who will be far ahead of time and there will be some who will never catch up. We cannot, Sir, blame Parliament if the information is available and it is not used.

I want to say that in supporting this particular Head, I hope the concerns that I have raised that they will be noted and dealt with. I hope, Sir, that the commitment that you gave me that the areas in St. Lucy where the national heroes lived will soon be dealt with and I will be able to go and tell my people of St. Lucy the next time I hold a constituency assembly that I have been given the commitment by the Chairman of Parliament that those areas will soon be dealt with.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to comment on the issue of the CPA in relation to the Members of Parliament being allowed to attend the seminars of the CPA. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Members of this Parliament and also on behalf of the people of St. Michael North West for allowing me to make that journey to gain a little bit of experience as far as parliamentary procedures are concerned.

I first would like to express my observations of the seminar. I was very pleased to say that Barbados is held in high esteem as a Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I was extremely proud as a Barbadian there among twenty six other countries when I relate to the fact that our Deputy Prime Minister happens to be the Chairperson of the Association. One of the highlights of the seminar and of the visit was the fact that the Members were there at a time when the Commonwealth Week and Commonwealth Day was celebrated. This gives you the right to be able to meet not only the delegates that are there with you but people from other countries as well who have attended some of the functions.

What I would also like to place on record here is the fact that those of who have attended the seminar and those of you who would have had the privilege before I did, I think there is a gap, a vacuum, a space there that makes us as Barbadian representatives feel a little bit out of context in the sense that> yes, you are a Barbadian representative there but only in rmme. I say that to say this. Your point being there represents the fact that you see the other delegates from the other countries identifying with their country either by the form of ties, pins or by call cards. I find that when the exchange came, it was a case where you were receiving pins from various countries but unfortunately, Barbados was not in a position to at least do the same. I would hope that in future seminars that the Barbadian representative would be given the right to travel with some form of material that Barbados could be seen as a country of giving and not as a country of receiving. That is one of the points that I hope would be looked at for future representatives of Parliament who are going up to the CPA Conference.

I do not think that CPA Conference should end there or that it should begin there. I believe that as young Parliamentarians in Parliament here in Barbados that it should be the right of this Parliament to set up what I would consider to be local seminars that would enable the young politician to learn from the senior politician a lot of the parliamentary procedures that are necessary. As you walk into Parliament as young politicians you are thrown almost to the lamb.

I think that we should set an example here in Parliament and use Senior Parliamentarians from both Sides of the House to train and teach the person who have just entered Parliament, what are the procedures of Parliament so that when that person stands on the Floor, not being given the opportunity to go overseas because some of us will and some of us will not. Those who are not fortunate should be trained and brought up on line by the senior politicians here in this Parliament.

I would like to continue based on the fact that I have heard the discussion on the library yesterday. During my visit to the Westminster Palace it also gave us the right to have a day's visit to the library at the House of Commons. It was an amazing thing to see the tabloids, the various volumes and what was there as far as literature was concerned that could be used by any parliamentarians that wanted to use that material. I was also able to find out from the librarian that because of the e-mail system, if Barbados is in need of any material that would assist the young parliamentarians that the library of House of Commons, because of the e-mail which I have brought, would be able to assist Barbados and the young parliamentarians with any volumes of parliamentary procedure that would be necessary.

I must express here that when we visited the House of Commons Research that we were also told that they would be willing to assist Barbados in any form in terms of setting up what they would consider to be a research department for the benefit of Commonwealth parliamentarians or for the benefit of Barbadian parliamentarians as explained.

I am saying that the opportunity is there under the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and for those of

us who have the privilege of being part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I am extremely proud that as a young politician entering Parliament that I had the privilege of not only being a representative for Barbados but being in the position of making several friends from various countries across the world.

If I may come back a little bit to the point of heroes under the same Head and deal with it. I must say that at this point, that as far as our national heroes are concerned, I would agree that there should be monuments and statues of our national heroes. I would also say that placement of these monuments or these statues or busts, whatever they may be, they should be well placed in a position that gives the particular person and Barbados the full recognition.

I say that to say this. If you take the Life of Barbados roundabout which is named the Sir Garfield Sobers roundabout, my feeling at this point is that if you are going to place a statue of Sir Garfield Sobers, I do not see the reason why we should put him at the Gymnasium when it will be hidden in the back and seen by only those people who would have had the privilege of going to the Gymnasium for an event there. I think that the placement of a statue of Sir Garfield Sobers should be placed in the roundabout just outside of the Gymnasium which will enable not only Barbadians but will enable visitors to our shores to see the greatest cricketer ever, Sir Garfield Sobers. 10.50a.m.

Likewise, there are several roundabouts across Barbados that carry the names of various Parliamentarians or various Barbadians who have excelled in this country. That could also be looked at. There is a Sir Frank Walcott roundabout as well. So my feeling about placement of statues and placement of busts, that the roundabouts, instead of being a grass situation where when you look at the roundabouts in Barbados, you ask yourself why they are kept in the conditions that they are kept in. Some are badly kept, some need to be upgraded and I think that by putting the statues of those Heroes in the respective roundabouts, then there would be a lot of respect given to the roundabouts in Barbados.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, I think that one of the important areas as far as Parliament is concerned is that I am extremely proud to hear that the name Parliament Square would be given to our square here now, instead of Trafalgar Square. I have been listening yesterday and I understand that part of the debate dealt with the renaming of Trafalgar Square with National Heroes Square. I am extremely proud of that in a sense that we are likely to be removing ourselves from that image which we carried all over the years - the colonial image and will give us the right now to have our national image.

So in supporting this Head, Mr. Chairman, I hope that what I have just said in relation to the CPA, will be taken by those responsible for the CPA to look after providing the delegates with the material that will enable them to be proud of their country. Also that if any assistance is being told to be given to assist the young Parliamentarian by way of training by our local Parliamentarians, I hope that that would be put in place as soon as possible.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to make comment on this Head in relation to the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I first of all want to salute the Honourable Member for the City who, as the first female Chairman of the CPA has performed with distinction and has done not only her gender proud, but certainly Parliamentarians in Barbados.

Sir, the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association already has and can continue to add value to the development of our Parliament and Parliamentarians in Barbados. I too would want to join her in making the call for Parliamentarians to recognise that this is their professional organisation and all Members should consider it as essential to join this association as Members in other professions join their professional associations.

But my concern, Sir, and my recommendation is for the CPA to fully seize its role as being the organisation which consists of a long history and indeed a great deal of knowledge of democracy. Also its very approach to matters of democracy has been borne not on the long history of its development, but also a long history of successfully being able to amalgamate and to encourage cooperation between democracies all of whom have different approaches to democracy, There is plurality of approach to democracy and that is important, Sir.

We need, Sir, as Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and especially the long democratic history, to let the rest of the world know that in 1999 they cannot come to teach us about democracy. And why do I make this point, Sir? There is a new language within the international community, a new call and a most clearing call to this matter of good governance.

What do they term as good governance? One of these loose terms, Sir, and as the case with language development, those who control the media, those who control the main organs of international opinion, Sir, control the use of language, So that a few organisations in the world have now embarked upon bringing the world around to their view of what is good governance. So whether you are talking about relations, for example, the Inter-American Development Bank as far as loans and other matters are concerned,

whether you are talking about the non governmental organisations and their commentary on democratic systems around the world, this notion of good governance comes into play, Sir.

The uninitiated, Sir, would tend to believe that the only example of democracy and of good governance rests in a few of the larger well-known democracies in the world, for example, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. But, across the Caribbean Region, we are the only part in the world where a vast number of countries have been able to maintain the democratic system of Government on a sustained basis over a prolonged period. And that is a point which we need to ensure and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has a primary role in helping us to ensure that the rest of the world recognises that.

So rather than the leaders in international thinking these days, seeking to think that they can teach us about good governance and democracy and that it lies within either their power or their responsibility to seek to tie to economic agreements, loans and other international forms of cooperating, notions of good governance to bring us into line, perhaps the reverse will be true. We should be teaching them about how to run democracies. We should be teaching them about how to involve the civil society and we should be teaching them about human rights.

I want, Sir, to urge the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association both at the local branch level, as well as the international Commonwealth Parliamentary Association level to take up this very important plight. I will give an example of how perverse this notion of good governance depending on whose mouth it comes from can be.

Mr. Chairman, the notion of good governance as it relates to civil society, to human rights and so on depending on who it comes from can get very strange. For example, I met a parliamentarian from the Isle of Man at the CPA conference and his concern was about what we call an absence of democracy within the CPA and why did he make that point, Sir? His notion of human rights and democracy is that unless gay rights is enshrined within the framework arrangements, then that organisation and that country are the worst offenders.

What he was saying, Sir, is that the fact that he was not able to be accompanied...

Aside.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The programme for CPA included the fact, Sir, that one could be accompanied by one's spouse. In the jurisdiction from which he comes, a spouse can be a same sex spouse and he was not amused that his partner of 15 years could not accompany him as part of the official delegation. And while that may be an individual point, Sir, what is happening across countries in Europe and other parts of the world is that based on their own national perspective on the death penalty and on those matters, they are seeking to import or to export I should say, those values, which are the values within their communities on the matter of the death penalty as far as it relates to democracy, human rights and perception of our freedom. 11.00a.m.

In the UK for example, they have formally changed law and they are too totally out of it as far as the death penalty is concerned.

We must not be surprised, Sir, when the European Unions would want to put pressure on us, for example, within the context of renegotiating LOME or other international agreement to change our view on the death penalty to theirs. And they would want to suggest, that because there is a different view in this community generally speaking, where a poll was taken and 80% of persons polled indicated that they were in favour of the death penalty, that in order to be in the good international books as a democracy and as a country in which true democracy was practised that we would have to go along with their notion.

What the CPA has to do, is to assist us in this point of recognising that whilst there are fundamental principles of democracy which make democracy an identifiable system of government, that there is room and that they have the good examples of countries that have been able to also respond to the will of their people.

So, Sir, in closing I want to urge Members to continue to support the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I will make the point that money voted in this year's Estimates is money well spent, Sir, and to urge all of us to ensure that we recognise that we are not in a position where the world has speeches about our democracy but that we should in fact be seeking to export our version and our view of democracy to the rest of the world.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Peter, who wishes to speak on Head 12.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I have done so. Sir, and I want to thank the House for a very robust debate on this particular issue.

I would think that we would leave this discussion of this Head that these principally, the Parliamentary Affairs is very clear that the presentation and the sustaining of our democracy comes now at an increasing price.

The subvention to Parliament has in short order grown from $3.9 million dollars in 1997-98 to $5.2 million in

1998-99 and $ 6.1 million in 1999-2000. It is not to say that the money is being poorly spent. The money has been used to enable people who use this Parliament to better discharge their responsibilities to the society.

I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we are in an age of public sector reform where there is now an increasing awareness of the need to relate increased expenditure to better performance.

We are requiring various government departments to install customer charters such that they have to be responsive to the people that they serve and 1 just want to say to the Parliament that the request for increase provision for Cabinet Members and Parliamentarians in general will be met by an increase requirement that "to whom much is given even more will be expected."

Members of Parliament will have to understand, that as we provide the facilities to make their offices fully professional, that the public that they will serve will expect a service commensurate with the facilities that are being provided and that nothing less than an improved service to the public can justify the increase provision that they are here making, Sir.

I would have said enough yesterday to let the House know that I am not unsympathetic to the request for increases to the House in general, because 1 feel that Members of Parliament like Cabinet Members are carrying an additional load. But that I insist, Sir, that we cannot disconnect the governed from the government and that I would want that to be the framework within the procedural matter, Sir, that we uplift ourselves in the same context and within the same framework that we uplift all others who are paid from the Consolidated Fund.

Once the House stays in this mode, Sir, then we will have a moral and sound financial basis for any decision that we make about further and future improvements. We will not proceed with them outside the context of regradings for the public service in general.

Sir, I just want to say that I am very glad that the notion of the renaming of Trafalgar Square which is yet to be formally put before us, but which I am putting out as a proposal, has met with a receptive response.

1 envision, Sir, the notion of a National Heroes Square involving the centre of our major city. We already have aspects of the city that are already honouring our National Heroes. There is already the O'neal Bridge. There is already an Independence Arch that really is the Errol Barrow Arch, Sir, and I believe that Independence Square as it presently stands is a disgrace to the notion of Independence and should be incorporated into that Square in the centre of our major city that uplifts the image of our National Heroes.

I could therefore see the entire centre of our major city being properly developed. We have to rename the Chamberlain Bridge as well for its support, Sir. But we have the O'neal Bridge. We have the Barrow Arch, Sir. We already have in Trafalgar Square, Sir, a monument to some unsung heroes, the war vets of Barbados and the whole thing can be put together properly such that the centre of our city is used in a manner that uplifts the mirror image of all Barbados.

I am particularly excited, Sir, with having a National Heroes Centre where our young people can go to be better educated as to the values of the people who have made Barbados the great society that it is emerging to be.

I give the House the assurance, Sir, that once the concept is accepted, that the Ministry of Finance will fund the resources for us to properly develop the West Wing of Parliament to be a credit to the Heroes of this country.

I believe, Sir, that it could become an important heritage asset as well, that will more than pay for its way, Sir, and I envision that the entire precincts of Parliament could be brought back to their rightful place in the pantheons of our national affairs, if we see the relationship between the Parliament itself and the Heroes as representative in the place to which we will put them for the rest of the time that there is a Barbados.

These precincts therefore, must never be allowed to degenerate. The West Wing has degenerated for many years and I am excited by what can be done to build a heritage asset in this country that would be an inspiration to our youth.

It could be a foreign exchange earner as well, Sir, but can also assist in uplifting these general precincts within whose walls so much of the work to build the modern Barbados has taken place.

That is the concept that governs our proposals in this matter, Sir. The matter is out for public discussion and I hope that we will have a lively and informed public discussion.

Our intention, Sir, is not to tear down but to build and to lift up and I know there are going to be people who are saying that the agenda is laid down but this society must go forward and we can only go forward as a society if we are confident about our identity as a people and who we are.

All of these proposals are intended to help us to build that society based upon a secured sense of our own identity.

That is my contribution, Sir, to this public debate. I hope that the debate is positive and will enable us to take all of the rancour out of where we should site a National Heroes

in my view in an around the National Heroes Centre or in public places which appropriately symbolize their significance to the extent that the public place is in itself a place of significance. 11.10a.m.

The planning of a statue to Sir Garfield unfortunately started outside the context of the planning for National Heroes. It started as part of the gymnasium project. I understand that there is a committee that is involved in the planning of the statue for the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. We want to create purposefully within one common framework for dealing with the preservation of the heritage of our heroes. I hope that the *ad hoc* approach to conceiving statues can now be put behind us and that we focus our energies on reviewing this and doing it in the proper and best way.

I commend Head 12 to Parliament and beg respectfully to move, Sir, that Head 12, Parliament, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE- $37337901

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Head 13, the Prime Minister's Office includes a number of substantive public functions including Defence and Defence Force which accounts for $23.5 million of the vote of the Head. It also includes a line item that provides for us to attend regional meetings and CARICOM conferences and such CARICOM related activities. I will imagine that in committee, members may want to speak to some extent on matters relating to CARICOM.

The full responsibility for CARICOM matters resides in the Ministry of Trade but to the extent that Barbados' Prime Minister since 1989 has been designated as the Prime Minister in CARICOM with lead responsibility for the creation of a single market and a single economy and if it is the will of the House, Sir, we can engage in a debate as to where we are and where we are going with that but the real responsibility for CARICOM is in Trade, Sir.

The one major addition this year is a provision for a Commission for Pan-African Affairs. For too long we have had focus on our international relations that saw our relationships as being a North Atlantic relationship. We have had diplomatic presence in North America, Canada, the United States of America, in Europe to a limited extent, but Barbados has not ever had a structured relationship with Africa.

The Commission for Pan-African Affairs is not intended to be a diplomatic Commission as such. It is a Commission that recognises that the next century could well be the African century. There is a renaissance in Africa that is young but we must not believe that Africa with all its potential is going to remain in a state of relative under-development forever. Across the continent there are scurryings of new forms of democracy and new forms of economic engineering. There is great hope for Africa. South Africa stands out now as a beacon as to what can be achieved on the political scene.

Barbados is the first country that has established a Commission for Pan-African Affairs. This was a recommendation that had been mooted for some time but we need to build economic, cultural and social political relationships with people of the African Diaspora wherever they are and stop being defensive about it and being apologetic about it.

Nobody was concerned when we built a tourism trade based upon the incomes of the white North Atlantic people but there is tremendous scope for us to start cultivating the black community across the world and put our tourism potential to them. There is tremendous scope for cultural relationships with the black people of the world and for us to become proactive in how we infuse our own sense of national development with a creative relationship between people with a similar outlook on life.

This is not to say, Sir, that we are involved in any form of reverse racism. It is to say that we recognise that sometimes we have to call a new world into existence to address some of the imbalances of the old. There is nothing that we should be defensive about in seeking to have a Commission for Pan-African Affairs to have a wide scope of functions to help build economic, cultural, social and political exchanges and relationships between our nation and the people of the African Diaspora.

Already, Sir, the Commission has drafted a very ambitious programme that will have beneficial economic effects, cultural and educational effects that warrants us to support them at the level of $1 million in the first instance.

I will say, Sir, the Commission is not a consular department. It is a Commission that recognises an opportunity, a historic necessity as well and seeks to respond to it in a cost-effective but enlightened way.

I strongly support the affairs of the Commission for Pan-African Affairs. I know it has been the subject of some political controversy but I truly hope that people could give this Commission a chance to function and to show its worth.

We in this country are far too inclined always to doubt ourselves and to tear down anything that is new but I think

that within the next few months when the public sees the scope of the work envisioned by this Commission, many of which initiatives will be of tremendous economic benefit to tourism and other sectors that they will understand that this is an effort that is very well conceived and will be to the benefit of the country.

Head 13 also makes provision, Sir, for us to start planning celebrations to herald the 21st century. Under the Operating Expenses in the Prime Minister's office, Sir, there is provision for a Barbados 2000 Project. My idea of a good project, however, has always been that we should endeavour to carry this country into the 21st century as a beautiful and clean country. I have always felt that beautifying Barbados 2000 was at the core or should be the core of our planning within which to herald the next century. There are a number of other ideas that I am sure the House will want to speak to as regard the best way in which we can herald the new millennium.

The Head, as I said, Mr. Chairman, is bulky to the extent that it provides in large part for the functioning of the Barbados Defence Force and its associated programmes among which is the Defence Force Sports Programme, provision for which has risen from $800 000 two years ago to $1.3 million today. I want particularly, Sir, to salute the work of that programme as a programme that is both instilling much needed discipline among our young people and serving as a reservoir for the training of some of our sportsmen.

This Head also provides for the Prime Minister's official residence, Sir. I have already said yesterday that I really feel that we should remove the provision under which a Prime Minister can both have access to an official residence and be able to draw a housing allowance. It is an anomaly. I certainly have never used it. I feel the Prime Minister should live in the official residence and that the official residence should be positively identified in the minds of the people of Barbados not as a palace but as the people's house.

Even as I speak to you, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will be pleased to hear that there are school children from Half Moon Fort Primary School at Ilaro Court because that is the house with which they have to become identified. There is an Ilaro Court Foundation which generates funds to help maintain the property and which has been very useful in helping us to keep the cost of maintaining the residence to a minimum. That Foundation will continue to function because maintaining the property is very expensive. This year we have to replace electricals at Ilaro Court because there have been a number of occasions where the fire service has had to be called in because the system is antequated; and there is no red ghost running through it. The noises that people heard was the red button going off and the noises of the fire alarm tripping. That is what Mr. Sandiford heard when he heard a noise emanating from something red. I am saying that there are no tall, red ghosts. There is a red button that goes off and keeps a noise and that is what Mr. Sandiford heard.
11.20a.m.

We have to replace the electricals at Ilaro Court as well as in the case of Government House. The Government believes that we should have water conservation practices followed as a model across the country and this year we are providing for both Government House and Ilaro Court to have water storage facilities so that they can both reduce their demands on the public potable water.

Generally speaking, Sir, this constitutes the thrust of the expenditure this year and I commend Head 13 to the House and we will await the debate from other Members on the matters that I raised.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I thought my intervention on this debate would be short but there are some issues which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter raised which would make it a bit longer than I anticipated.

The first is that I would support even a further amendment to the Head to make adequate provision for the library at Ilaro Court. I notice in the Auditor General's Report that in the Prime Minister's library the provision of $500 was inadequate. He overspent the vote in that year. We believe that he should have access to a good library just as I believe Parliament should. So you should not feel ashamed to move in adequate sums.

I know that I spend more than $500 a year with the family on publications some of which could not be justified for purposes of Government but every senior official of Government should have access to a minimum of information. $500 includes magazine subscriptions and that would probably be the limit. I only raise that because as I said the Auditor General spoke about it in the 1998 report.

I would like first of all to say that at least for my part and for my own Party's part there has not been any big difference of opinion on the need for the establishment of more contact commercial, economic, cultural and otherwise with Africa. I believe that that has always been part of our agenda, maybe not as structured in the way conceived by the Government but we believe that the Pan African Commission itself has to build its own relationship, establish its integrity and relevance to Barbadians. That is not something that I can do. It is not something that even in this presentation today the Prime Minister would have achieved. It is something that will take time.

I think it is a pity that it is not part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but I presume that is where the real

controversy may exist and not between us and the Government. I have my doubts whether the Honourable Member for the City would welcome that Commission under her purview. There Is no divide. The frank view of the Democratic Labour Party is that this could be a very good thing not only because of the positive things that are happening in what the Right Honourable Member described as the African Renaissance, the fact that the question of good governance although defined externally to Africa has now become more relevant in relation to the programmes and the participation by African States in international issues but more so because I think that for our population in which the vast majority of our people are black and have African roots we must be particularly concerned about what is happening on the African continent, the wars which are taking place, the genocide, some of it depicted every day by the International Press, but beyond that, it is something that has been of great concern to African thinkers in the diaspora, not just those who reside on the continent.

I do not think that Barbados as a country, that CARICOM, is doing enough to speak out and also to assist and draw attention to this. We are bombarded of course in the International Press with the conflict in Kosovo every day and with other information on other conflicts which are taking place but I do not think that in a country like ours that we have done enough to speak out or even for that matter to assist in some of the conflicts which are taking place on the African continent and vast amounts of people are losing their lives in horrendous and brutal murders in countries like Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

I still think that it is something that should attract our attention and we should constantly be sensitising Barbadians to why these things are happening lest they form impressions which are foisted on them by the International Press and beyond that to sensitise them to the fact that we also have an interest, not just in the conflicts which are promoted by the International Press in Europe and in South America, but we have a keen interest in ensuring that world peace and harmony and people working together on the African continent is also vital. I think that is important.

These are things that need to be talked about because we live in a world dominated by a superpower, what some have come now to accept is essentially a rogue superpower and, therefore, unless we are conscious of that we are going to constantly be defensive and feel that we ourselves have to bend to the will of that rogue superpower.

This brings me on to the point I assume we will get to when we are discussing the trade issues and in times of crisis attention in relation to things like trade tend to increase. Therefore when the banana issue so called started, what was happening in East Asia was not as pronounced, the severity of it. In fact, I do not think that the market crashes they experienced had even occurred.

As a result of what has happened it means that the United States itself, heading towards an election year, is going to be flooded with cheap imports from those countries. They, too, will become more defensive while calling on others to avoid protectionism. They will become even more reactionary and probably even more protectionist as jobs are lost in some of their key sectors and as they externally push the idea of open markets but become more and more protectionist or the pressure to become more protectionist arises.

One of the candidates that has recently been announced in the US presidential party race at this stage has been pushing essentially a protectionist line and obviously there are going to be people and even prominent thinkers in the United States who are going to latch on to that and we therefore have to apply the techniques which have been used against us, the concept of divide and rule and also whenever we can find those weak points to press our own case, particularly as we are heading towards another US election year.

This brings me on to the point of CARICOM and I think the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter should give us an indication of the pace toward the single market, what has been achieved so far. What are some of the obstacles? Beyond that, last year the debate would have been dominated by a pledge made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter regarding Barbados' relationship with the OECS. A number of events have taken place since then but I still believe that it would be of interest since December, the deadline for consideration of the Task Force as well as consideration of Amendments to the .Treaty of Basseterre which would facilitate some formal entry of Barbados into the OECS even if it did not accede to all of the provisions which other countries acceded to. I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter should give us an indication on both of those fronts of what is happening. 11.30a.m.

The last point that I want to raise is the question of disaster preparedness. Even though that may be under CERO there has been concern raised in the newspapers and the media about the impact of these underground eruptions and these underground volcanoes. We have also seen in many of the Central American countries the very devastating effects of hurricanes during the past year and it is anticipated that the weather conditions and weather patterns which gave rise to those disasters are not going to change significantly. One of the agencies which is responsible was recently 'hauled over the coals' for not adequately advising citizens of the impact of these underground eruptions off Grenada. I want to know whether resources have been made available under this Head or otherwise to deal with issues of national emergencies in countries both with the RSS and also within the region as a whole.

I think those were the key matters that I wanted to raise. Beyond that, perhaps before I sit down, I would like to have an idea from the Government when it is likely that the work programme for the Commission on Pan-African Affairs will be published? What they see as their objective and what they are going to be engaged in over the next few months? How the $1 million which has been allocated to them will be spent in building these relationships in economic, trade and in cultural matters?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. John has raised a number of issues that require a well structured response. As regards the single market and single economy, the House will be aware that there was a special consultation in Barbados in June of 1996 where a number of fundamental decisions were taken to accelerate the work towards creating a single market and a single economy.

Mr. Chairman, when the concept of a single market and single economy were first conceived as far back as 1989, it was from the outset agreed that the major elements of that single market and single economy should be put in place by 1999. Those elements, broadly speaking, involved the removal of inter-regional tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade which have largely been accomplished except for a few remaining issues such as licences by a few countries on goods coming from other countries but that has largely been accomplished.

The erection of a common external tariff in four phases, the fourth phase of which would involve the common external tariff being reduced to 45% where it was then to 20% by April 1,1999. Many countries have been following the programme fully. Barbados will fully implement the phased reduction in common external tariff. St. Vincent, I think, is also in a similar position but that has not generally been followed but countries are seeking to comply, subject in some instances to revenue considerations. The countries of the OECS in particular, Sir, who do not have value added taxes cannot rely on sales taxes and the sudden removal of import duties could be a problem so they have stopped to evaluate the revenue implications, Sir.

Sir, those are the market aspects of it. To create a single market by having free inter-regional trade and a common external tariff. The single economy itself involves a number of specific elements - harmonisation of incentives, harmonisation of agricultural and industrial trade competition policies and the like. The putting in place arrangements for the convergence of the performance of national economies and the creation of conditions for convertibility of currency and for the eventual creation of a single currency in the region.

I want to say, Sir, because this is a point that is not understood by the public, that from the outset of the single market concept it was agreed that eventually the Caribbean should look to have a single currency. Obviously though, Sir, before we reach that stage a lot of work would have to be done to establish the economic pre-conditions to create that single currency.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of the market related integration has been accomplished by the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to inter-regional trade and the erection of a common external tariff but the fundamental work to create a single Caribbean economy in the sense of which we understand a single economy, that is where a lot of the more detailed work since 1996 has been located.

Mr. Chairman, the old CARICOM Treaty at various parts had provisions in it that affected the possibilities for the creation of a single economy. The instruments of CARICOM, for example itself, the unanimity rule affected the capacity of a single economy. There were various parts in the economy where reference was made to policies that could affect industry, agriculture, trade competition and could provide protection for specially disadvantaged countries like the LDCs. As the House knows, Sir, one amends a treaty by the creation of protocols. In the post-1996 efforts, it was agreed that there should be a deliberate effort to amend all of those provisions in the existing treaty that could affect the possibility of a creation of a single economy by the creation of protocols which would be brought into Parliaments to be the instrument by which the treaty will be amended.

The point, Sir, is that we want to give the new single economy of the Caribbean a legal identity by putting it better within the context of the treaty itself, by definition in new protocols of the provisions that can make a single economy function. Hence Protocol I which has already been approved by all Heads of Governments and ratified by this Government, revisited the organs of the integration movement and the manner in which decisions were made and completely revised them so as to enable those organs to better support a single market. There was not a Council of Finance Ministers before but once we start talking about a single market, a single economy, Sir, rather than a single market which is more of an issue, there has to be a Council of Finance Ministers. The community council was changed and more importantly, Mr. Chairman, the voting powers in CARICOM were amended such that the unanimity rule which could have been a deterrent to process was replaced by majority rules at the level of the respective councils. 11.40a.m.

Secondly, Sir, the House is aware that under the old Treaty there was no provision in CARICOM for the free movement of capital, there was no provision for rights of establishment of Caribbean enterprises in the region, nor there was no provision in the old Treaty for the provision of

services. And hence, Protocol II was conceived of to provide a legal framework for the first time for the movement of capital within the Region, to provide a framework for the right of establishment of Caribbean enterprises and to provide a framework, Sir, for the provision of services.

The old Treaty only dealt with movement in goods, Sir, the new protocol deals with the movement of services and it was conceived of such that member countries under Protocol II agreed that they would not introduce any new restrictions on the movement of capital, or rights of establishment of companies or the provision of services and that they would conceive of a programme to come into effect from July 1 to start removing existing restrictions or movement of capital, provision of services and rights of establishment and that is what Protocol II is all about. It is creating an environment within which a single market within the economy can evolve by putting a stop to new restrictions on these important things and requiring countries to put in place a programme for phasing out the old and I will come to how we have to carry forward that right, Sir.

The Members are aware, of course, that under the old Treaty there were orders and agreements and what we have done is sought to provide a broader framework for agricultural development and cooperation in the Region under a special protocol pertaining to agriculture, which will replace those parts of the Treaty that dealt only with agriculture. Again the old treaty spoke to aspects of industrial cooperation. We are now taking those old articles out. We have replaced them with a whole range of new policies in relation to coordination of industrial policy.

Trade policy has also been a matter, Sir, that was addressed in the old protocol. The Caribbean countries, as you know, Sir, are bound by the provision of the Common External Tariff to provide levels of protection for Regional production, but we are also committed to cooperating in coordination of our external trade policies. And a new set of trade policies for the Region were conceived and set out in a protocol pertaining to trade policies. But that met with some problems because there are some countries in the Caribbean which I would not want * o refer to, which wanted to have the right to enter bilateral trade relationships with countries outside CARICOM and that proved to be contentious.

I would use Trinidad only as a hypothetical example, Sir, that a Trinidad good that is being sold in Barbados enjoys in Barbados, the same protection from competition from goods produced in the Dominican Republic as a Barbadian good. There is a 20% tariff on Dominican Republic goods imposed by the Government of Barbados. And a good from Trinidad comes into Barbados duty free and in Barbados it enjoys the same protection as the Barbadian good, from competition from the Dominican Republic. If Trinidad was to unilaterally have a bilateral trade or free trade relation with the Dominican Republic, it would mean that Trinidad goods would continue to enjoy protection in our market from competition with the Dominican Republic goods. But, our goods in Trinidad would have no protection whatsoever from competition with goods produced in other parts of the Region. And, there are some Caribbean countries that feel that they should be allowed to go forward more quickly in developing their bilateral trading relationships without reference to the CARICOM businesses and that wish on the part of some, slowed the process of our being able to put the trade policy protocol in place.

Happily however, Sir, the issues have been resolved and may I say, Sir, that there is a system in place for the preparation of these protocols. There is an Inter-governmental Task Force which our Ambassador Barrow heads that does the technical work. It then goes up to the Council of Trade which does the appraisal and it goes to the Attorney General for legal ratification. So all of the issues pertaining to trade policies have now been resolved and the Heads should be in a position to go to the next Heads of Government meeting, to sign a new protocol governing trade policy in the Region.

The House is aware, Sir, that the old CARICOM Treaty recognises the notion of NDCs, LDCs and treated Barbados as a special hybrid economy. And Chapter 7 of the Treaty provided special concessions for the LDCs, namely OECS countries to be able to derogate from the ordinary responsibilities that attend to participate in a free trade'area, meaning the removal of all duties, tariffs and barriers to goods coming from other Caribbean Regions. So that the existing Treaty recognises that there were some countries in the integrating area that had to be provided with special concessions to protect them from the adverse effects of participating in the integration area itself.

But, a lot has happened, Sir, since 1973 when CARICOM was conceived. As I said, in 1973-1974 Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana were treated as the NDCs and treated separately. Barbados was treated as a mix between NDC and LDC and there was a classification of countries called the LDCs that says who, under Article 56 of Chapter 7 were entitled to special benefits.

We have now sought to put the concept of protection for special countries in a new context, recognising, Sir, that countries can be specially disadvantaged before they come into the area, and recognising also as well that countries can experience disadvantage from the operation of the Integration Movement, we have now redefined the concept of disadvantage to include prior disadvantage and disadvantage arising from participation.

We want to recognise, Sir, that not only countries but that regions and industries can face disadvantage and hence the intention is to replace Chapter 7 of the Tffeaty with a new protocol - Protocol VII, that would provide a special regime for specially disadvantaged countries, regions and industries. But the issue, Sir, is very contentious, in large part because the OECS countries were the beneficiaries of the special provisions under the old treaty and it is noW for the Region to recognise that there has been a change in the status of countries. That we have now in our midst a country like Guyana which is not just a LDC but is tiOw recognised among a new class by the international community, among a new class of the special disadvantaged called "a highly indebted poor country". At the last meeting of the Heads in Surinam, we argued -1 hope persuasively, that the Caribbean Community cannot ignore a classification of poor country that is recognised by the international community and that any country that is classed as "a highly indebted poor country" by the international community should be recognised as a country within our Region and a country that is entitled to special and differential treatment within the context of our Treaty.

The OECS countries see it as having to give up some of their relative protection to Guyana, but the truth is, Sir, that if we are going to make our Regional provisions consistent and compatible with international standards, we cannot have international standards that the Caribbean is scoffing at. I am hopeful that once we can pass that hurdle, we will be able to bring some order to bear as to how countries will be classified. If you stop being "a highly indebted poor country", Sir, you will stop enjoying the benefit of protection under the new Treaty.

I. am also saying, Sir, that industries have to recognise us as industries that can experience special disadvantage from participating in an integrated area. Barbados for example, Sir, has not ever removed licences on our soft drink industries, because we have seen our soft drink industries as a sensitive industry and the reason is clear. When the integration process was conceptualised, it was imagined that you would have a whole stream of domestic industries competing with other domestic industries of our Caribbean countries.

It is a different thing when a domestic enterprise is forced to have to compete with branches of multilateral enterprises scattered across the region. I want to illustrate the difficulties. Coca Cola had a presence in the Caribbean and then it pulled out, Sir. 11.50a.m.

It came back into the Caribbean as part of its response to globalization buying back into enterprises in Trinidad and Jamaica and elsewhere. They had a flavouring plant in Barbados.

The facts are, Sir, that Coca Cola was selling its sweeteners developed in Barbados to a Trinidad plant, its subsidiary at a cheaper price than it was selling the Barbadian enterprise that was not owned by Coca Cola, but producing Coca Cola under licence, although the product was being produced in Barbados.

The multinational corporations have this astonishing way of involving themselves in transfer pricing to make free trade become a nonsense, and we have therefore because of that practice, urged that our soft drink industry has to be treated as a sensitive industry. Because our soft drink industry is locally owned enterprises operating under its licensing agreement, competing with subsidiary of transnational corporations who are using transfer pricing for a product produced in Barbados, Sir, to the disadvantage of the Barbadian industry.

I know we might have had meetings this morning even with the Jamaican people on the matter, Sir, but Barbados is pressing the CARICOM region to agree that once you have those kinds of what I call disarticulations in the structure of enterprises in the region, that we have to be careful about how we treat some of our sensitive industries.

The playing field is not level if Coca Cola can sell the same product produced in Barbados to different entities in the region at different prices, but to the disadvantage of the Barbadian independent producers.

So that, there are still a lot of issues to be resolved which I hope will be resolved in sufficient time so that the region can have a new protocol dealing with specially disadvantaged countries and regions and so on.

There are other protocols. There are nine in all. Sir, I am going to deal with resolutions of disputes and settlement of disputes and the like. There will be one of competition policy.

But the point, Sir, we want to have the provisions for the single market put within new legal context and the main legal provisions for the single market, put in place by the end of the year 1999 and that work, Sir, has gone on base and we have a structure for preparation and decision making. A new structure that is working, that could give us the confidence, Sir, that that aspect is going to be achieved.

Now, Sir, it is one thing to put the single market in legal context. The next is to make it work. I will illustrate the point I am making, Sir, by reference to Protocol II. We need to create a framework within which they can be a free movement of capital that all countries of the region have the same provisions for the rights of establishing companies for the provision of services. The Protocol II says that we should not introduce new restrictions and once you have done that

which all countries have agreed to do, therein after you put in place a programme for the removal of existing restrictions.

All of this will involve amending laws, amending regulations, Sir, amending practices that are deeply embedded affecting sometimes the exchange control and the like.

The difficulty has been that while the task force has been involved in drafting the Protocols, we need a mechanism in CARICOM to oversee the implementation of the process.

I pointed out, Sir, and have required CARICOM to review the role of the task force, because somebody now must take up the work of putting the programme in place for the removal of existing restrictions. A country will have to be told that this part of your Companies Laws Act represent restrictions to the establishment of companies and so on.

I made the point, I come back to a point I made in the so-called Massa Days Speech in Trinidad, Sir, that we need a system of governments in the region. I am not talking about one government now, Sir, but a system of government that can more effectively oversee the implementation of the provision of the single market.

The Caribbean Governments have simply to agree to involve serious executive authority to its Secretariat, to give people the responsibility to function on our behalf and to have a Secretariat, Sir that is equipped like a modern government.

I would not, Mr. Chairman, and I am not being caustic about the Secretariat, Sir, because there is no fault of theirs, we have wonderful people working at it, Sir, but the CARICOM Secretariat, Sir, if it is intended to be the institution that is responsible for the management of the affairs of our region is woefully lacking provision in terms of institutional capabilities, in terms of headquarters.

Sir, we have to start talking about these things, Sir. It is time that the people give the CARICOM Secretariat a headquarters that befit the status, Sir. I am not only getting to that point. But we have to be serious, Sir, and I made the point in that speech, that it is fine for us to put it in the legal context, Sir, but somebody now has to sit down for example and manage the process of putting a programme in place to remove those restrictions, a lot of which might involve a lot of complex work and the like.

Now, Sir, the most interesting part of it is the fact that at our meeting in June '96 we recognized that integration in the region was not just about trade because I have done most of the trade things, Sir, but had to give a greater investment focus, a greater production focus and required our Ministers of Finance to participate more in the process.

I have had the most peculiar experiences as a Minister of Finance where I have had to chair in other countries meetings called "Council of Ministers of Finance" because the countries' Ministers of Finance did not come to the meeting.

There is an arrogance on the part of Ministers of Finance in this region, that is so astounding that I have complained to my colleagues' Heads about it. They do not believe that they must be part of the process of regional integration because they see it as a plaything.

Ministers of Finance feel that we should meet in Washington. This will shock the House, I have been quarrelling about it, Sir, because I have attended all. The other Councils have met and are taking their responsibilities seriously, but we have not been able to properly convene Ministers of Finance meetings in the region.

I attended one in Jamaica recently, Sir, and the Minister of Finance of Jamaica was there because it was in Jamaica. I went to the meeting and we had to summon the Minister of Finance from Trinidad to the meeting and beg the Prime Minister of Trinidad to make him come. No other Minister of Finance attended the meeting and that was the umpteenth time that we tried to convene these Ministers of Finance meetings. They are arrogant people, Sir, because they believe generally that they are above the process.

It has gone into tHe Heads of Government meetings twice now because I have raised the issue that Heads must tell its Ministers of Finance that they are, (I cannot use the words that I would like to use, Sir), but they are treating themselves as if they are some superclass Ministers. I am not going to be attending any Ministers of Finance meeting of CARICOM in Washington where some people feel we should meet on the fringes of World Bank meetings and so on. That is I think, Sir, a debauchery of this process.

A lot of the work of creating a single economy will depend upon the serious work to be done by the Ministers of Finance.

Sir, we need the harmonization of statistical and other incentives. Since 1973, Sir, there used to be a harmonized process of incentives in the region, Sir. That fell into abeyance. We need a new harmonized scheme of incentives for the industry, agriculture and tourism, so that we will not have a cut-throat competition in the region, Sir.

The Central Bank Governors have been managing a conversion project because if we are going to have a single market, a single economy, the policies of the respective

countries have to be brought together. But we cannot just bring them together, Sir, in a reporting sense. Ministers of Finance in the region must meet at the start of the year, review the performance of the regional economy, take account of where it is likely to go and set in place measures complementary to each other that will bring the regional economies together. That is not what is happening and that is what we are trying to achieve.

In the area, Sir, of currency, we have put in place an arrangement whereby countries with fixed currencies can have their currencies convertible into each other's currency because you know the rate at which we can convert. And we have put in place an arrangement whereby the floating rate currencies can be traded within the region on the understanding that the banks will have to carry in many respects the risks and the benefits of so trading.

We intend to remove the barriers to convertibility of currency, Sir, but there is obviously the exchange risk agenda. There is a conversion project that is intended, Sir, to bring the economies closer together but is also intended to create the conditions eventually for a single currency in the Caribbean. I do not believe that we can rush the creation of a single currency. It has taken Europe over twenty-five years to move and they still have not got it right. 12.00 noon

It is still an objective and a lot of intellectual and conceptual work has gone on as to how we can do it, Sir, but for those who doubt us, the countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States have long ago established that a group of countries can create conditions under which they have a single currency and manage it well, keep it stable and run the economies relatively well. There is a view in the Caribbean that the notion for single currency is something like a Holy Grail shining bright and far in the distance that cannot be achieved but our experience says it is not true.

Sir, the conditions will have to be worked at very closely. I want to say that I would not know how to agree to commit Barbados to a single currency without having a single Minister of Finance in the region who can make sure that countries of this region do not independently do things that could put that single currency at risk. I keep making the point, Sir, that I have come to the stage where I can no longer distinguish between the economic integration and the political integration but, at the end of the day, it is all about governance and people see economic matters as just economistic but it is about governance of our affairs.

Sir, there are other projects, the harmonisation of the capital market developments and so on where a lot of work is going on. A lot of our insurance legislation, our capital and securities legislation are benefitting from the work that has been done at the regional level to harmonise.

There is a regional project designed to harmonise the Companies law. The point I am making, Sir, is that you can only create a single market, a single economy in the region if you have a common legal infrastructure governing the function of the companies and whatever else, like has happened in Barbados. You must have the same Companies law and follow similar policies. That work is going on but it requires a far more proactive role of Ministers of Finance in the integration process.

Sir, as regard the OECS, I think I have covered most of the points. We are moving apace and a lot of good work is being done by a lot of the people in the Caribbean. The Inter-governmental Task Force has brought together Caribbean technicians. Our Ambassador Barrow has done such a spectacular job that they have virtually designated him as the unofficial Chairman of the Inter-governmental Task Force and Miss Herbert from the AG's office sometimes to the chagrin of my Cabinet colleagues has had to be called off to spend a lot of time working on the protocol.

My Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and my Attorney General have had to go to many meetings to deal with these things. The system is in place and is working. I feel that we can make substantial progress to putting the elements of the single economy in place by the end of this year but we need to be more energised as regard the work we are doing once we put the elements in place to bring those elements alive. That is the real task that will require some imagination.

As regard, Sir, the OECS there is a Barbados/OECS Joint Task Force that has been put in place to consider the options of Barbados and its closer inter-relationship with OECS countries and to look at the possibility of either our joining or seeking some form of confederal status.

We already have a relationship with OECS countries through the RSS that draws from the aspect of a confederation. A confederation is when a group of countries devolves responsibility for an issue of common interest to a central authority and manages their affairs for that common function through that common authority.

We have a Regional Security System that provides for the common security of the countries of the OECS and Barbados that has been in place since 1983. It has been working well. It was the basis from which we got involved in Grenada, in which we involved ourselves in helping to solve the problems in St. Kitts, so we have done that, Sir.

I urge upon this House, Sir, that there are very many pragmatic reasons why we must create such authorities. I make the point every time I get a chance that we want to collaborate with the OECS not because of sentimentality because there are simply a number of things which we must

do that we cannot do unless we do them jointly. I start with the most important, our economic space. Our most important economic space is not our land but our marine resources.

We have an exclusive economic zone that interlocks with that of the OECS countries and none of us singly will ever be able to maximise the use of the resources that we have in that exclusive economic zone unless we do it together. In that zone, Sir, there are a lot of energy resources and fisheries resources. We have a common marine environment to protect and the sooner we agree to establish a marine authority to jointly develop our joint exclusive economic zone, the faster will be the rate of growth of development of Barbados and the OECS countries. Similarly, Mr. Chairman, there is every good reason why in instances where we do not at present have a presence in the world that Barbados and the OECS countries should try to share a diplomatic presence in the world.

We, as I said earlier, Sir, do not have a presence except along the North Atlantic corridor and minimally so in Latin America, but we should have a presence in Geneva to deal with the WTO because the WTO is a members' driven institution that where decisions are taken on a consensus and where numbers matter we have to be there. In the last round to trade negotiations we were disadvantaged because we were not there. We did not show up at the table of negotiations when decisions about world trade had to be taken and if you do not know what are your responsibilities you have to live with the world that other people create in your image. We have to be there.

The House knows that Geneva is one of the most expensive countries in the world. We have told the OECS countries, Sir, Barbados will go. We will establish the presence, we will share facilities with you, send your people and let us agree to share facilities in Geneva.

Similarly, Sir, we have no presence in Asia. We have no presence in Africa. We have a very minimal presence in Europe. We have no presence in Berlin and Eastern Europe but we have vital interests to protect in those places. In Latin America our presence, I think, is acute. We have a presence in Venezuela but no presence in those parts in Latin America where the emerging growth has been strongest. We cannot do it from our limited resources alone. We should do it jointly.

I am also satisfied, Sir, that Barbados and the OECS countries should jointly develop our service economies. In a sense it is happening because a lot of our companies are extending into the OECS countries but it should be done by way of a deliberate plan, carefully conceived by the two sets of countries. The area that excites me the most, Mr. Chairman, is the joint development of our social services.

There is no doubt that these Estimates are telling us that the cost of social services in the region and in Barbados are slowly spiralling out of control. There are a lot of things that we would love to be able to do that the rest of the world regards as normal, high-tech things that we cannot afford but that we will have to afford because our society will say, why do we not have those. We have to find a way of rationalising the creation of new facilities in the region such that we do not duplicate inefficient and ineffective facilities but create centres of excellence through a process of rationalisation, in education and health so that everybody do not end up having the same ineffective inadequate facilities but that we sit down and say you focus on this. Barbados will be the centre for eye care and you will be the centre for something and we build centres of excellence.

I really feel that in the same way we planned the RSS we can plan those things. That is why I have been very convinced of the need for a confederate relationship in this country and the OECS and it is not based on sentimentality. The OECS countries, as I say, share common marine boundaries with us but they are the only countries in the world with whom Barbados has a trade surplus. We have a deep vested interest in the orderly and strong development of the countries of the OECS.

The Task Force, Sir, will continue to work. Obviously there are a number of electoral matters that involve decisions having to be put on pause since Administration might be a little bit distracted in matters of the moment.

The OECS authority also asked us to put things on pause while they themselves sort out the future of the OECS. They themselves are looking to restructure the Treaties of Chaguaramas and Basseterre under which the OECS itself functions. 12.10p.m.

I give the House the assurance that the task force chaired by Sir Henry, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, and drawn from the social partnership in all parishes will get on with its work because this is a matter that must not fall to the ground. I am not talking here now about sentimentalities. There are serious pragmatic things that will not be done in this region unless we do them together.

I feel that the way in which we approach integration is not going to be fanciful but dealing with those things that you know you cannot do unless you do them jointly. That is the kind of mission that we try to give our own members of the task force that we must get on with the task of building that relationship because it is part of the new governance and the better governance of our affairs.

As regards the issue of CERO, CERO is really under the Ministry of Home Affairs and not under the Prime Minister's Office. I thought the Honourable Member for St. John was going to ask me about Ecclesiastical Affairs

because I have taken unto myself responsibility for the performance of the task of Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. I feel, Sir, that the Prime Minister's Office should be the place where ecclesiastical affairs should be located. They are high affairs. We are dealing with some high folks.

More seriously, Sir, there is a need for us to keep the church as an institution relevant and purposefully in the flow of our governmental affairs.

I would look to treat it as part of my Ministry's work to take very seriously but there are also some very serious matters with the Anglican Church that will have to be resolved. The Anglican Church has been disadvantaged and within this term I would want to put in place a framework for treating the financial issues that are there between the Government of Barbados and the Church.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There are things that must be done: the question of the properties. There are long standing matters that we simply have to bring sensibly to some happy resolution. 1 have told the Church that I would want to treat it again without losing sight of fiscal prudence but it is an issue that has to be dealt with and I hope in the future I will be able to tell the House how that particular issue is to be addressed.

I hope, Sir, I have covered the grounds such that the Honourable Member for St. John is in a better position to follow where this matter is. I feel we have to reach a stage now where the Heads of Government must make provision for Opposition members and there is nothing to stop it really from being part of the delegation. If we can reach that stage at the Heads meeting in July, it is perhaps the way in which we can share information without my having to come to the House; because there is nothing that the Heads deal with that is so sensitive that the Opposition should not be part of it. I would like to put that on the Table, Sir, as a process of regional decision making. I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter because as you know, Sir, for two years I have been calling on the Ministry of Education to rectify that particular problem and it is clear to me that the problem between the Government and the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church and the Moravian Church was a matter that the finances of the Ministry of Education could not handle at that point in time. I am glad to hear that this problem has now found itself within the ambit of the Prime Minister who happens to be the Minister of Finance and that we will not have this problem any more where you cannot find the necessary funds to help eliminate the problems that those churches have suffered over the years.

I am extremely grateful, Sir, that come the next Budget that we will see an announcement by the Prime Minister that those three churches will be able to receive at least a part payment and it would have shown that the request by the Opposition was well founded and it was not an empty request.

I am calling on the Prime Minister to make sure that the necessary amount is put into the Estimates, to make sure that those churches which now have financial problems that that will help to eliminate those problems.

On the Head dealing with the grant to the Commission for Pan African Affairs, I am happy to see this also but it worries me because this Head has also to deal with the foreign affairs of this country and we need to be sure that we are not sending two signals out to the world at the wrong point in time.

We have to make sure that there is some type of cooperation or coordination within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I want to find out from the Prime Minister whether the Honourable Member for the City will be reporting to the Commissioner for Pan African Affairs or vice versa. We must know as a Parliament. We cannot have two people out there speaking on our behalf on matters that relate to the foreign affairs of this country and we seem to be sending two signals.

We need to protect ourselves from a matter like that. We must understand that affairs that affect the African countries are important and they might not necessarily be the ones that would affect places like the United States. We have to be sure, Sir, that we are sending the same voice. As it stands right now we could embarrass ourselves in the world and we need to ensure that there is some type of direction given either to the Minister of Foreign Affairs or to the Commissioner.

I must get a commitment from this Parliament that we as an Opposition when we support this that we are not supporting something to embarrass Barbados, that we are supporting something that would help develop the foreign policy of this country. It is a serious matter. That is why I expect the Minister of Foreign Affairs to speak on this matter or the Prime Minister who should better command the attention of both and who can better explain what will happen to the two Ministries, how they will be able to relate to each other and whether there will be some conflict.

I see no need for conflict so I am not making the assumption that there will be but I just want an understanding from the Party that this will not create problems for Barbados.

As I say, Sir, if it is going to create problems for Barbados then we need to change the Commissioner and make him an Ambassador. It is as simple as that. It does not change his role. It might be better, Sir, to make him an ambassador to Africa.

We as a Parliament must take this matter as a serious point. We must deal with it in this way, if not, two or three years from now the Honourable Member for Christ Church South will come in here and warn that he told them so before and they would not listen. So I expect, Sir, that this matter will be treated at the highest level and with the urgency that it dictates. 12.20p.m.

I want to say, Sir, that we, sometimes as a small country feel that we must be dictated to by bigger countries and what they do we must follow suit. I am one of those politicians who believe that small countries must do things to make other larger countries understand that they have a voice and they are just as important too. As you know, Mr. Chairman, I have said in this Parliament already that the dictates from larger countries must not be the dictates that we follow. I honestly believe that it is time that small countries issue dictates that the larger countries must follow. Too often I am finding policy that seem to come down and not go up. I am saying that if we brag about how capable we are, it is time that we do things to make other countries follow what we are doing.

I am saying that the larger countries in the world whether they be the WTO, the FTU or whatever you want to call it, when they put them in place, it is not for us. Those things are done in their interest. We must be careful that when we hear about free trade organisations and world trade organisations, it does not necessarily mean that they are putting something in place to protect us in the Caribbean. What they are actually doing is putting something in place to protect themselves. When we go and blindly sign these arrangements, we must first understand that at the end of the day if we do not play the ball right we are affecting our own economies. That is why issues like these cannot be seen as issues for political parties. When I say political parties, I mean governing political parties. These are issues that should be trashed out between the political parties of a particular country because it affects the whole country, Mr. Chairman, and it is very important, Sir, that we separate those issues that we regard as issues for a Party and we need to see the issues that we feel are issues that will affect the whole country and that the wide masses of people within Barbados be brought on board.

I am calling on the Government to make sure that we are going into the 21 st century and we are not going to make the same errors.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister also said that he is responsible for taking this country into the 21st century and dealing with the celebrations for that. Something came to mind, Sir. I thought that if we were going into the 21st century and we could see the problems down the road, every time you turn on the television you are hearing about the Y2K problem and I thought it would have been better for this Government to implement....

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: This is very important, Sir, I am told and all the speeches I have heard pertaining to Edutech have given me the impression that EduTech 2000 is about computers and the changing of technology. I want to let the Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East understand that in my personal opinion, seeing that we are going into the 21st century and we are expecting a Y2K problem, it might be better to take the resources for the EduTech fund and put a computer in each house in Barbados. At least you will know that the technology that is being placed in those houses, hopefully, should be technology that will be compatible to the 21st century and we will not have the problem of the Y2K problem. A word to the wise is enough, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It cannot be costly and I will tell you why, Sir. If you are telling me that we went out there and we borrowed large sums of money to finance the EduTech 2000 programme and now we are hearing in this Parliament that this year instead of increasing the sums to the Ministry of Education that we are cutting it back, it tells me one thing, Sir, that EduTech 2000 is exactly what I said it is. EduTech is about foreign exchange. I want to send this warning to the public of Barbados because if you have budgeted and you have financed a programme and now you are telling me that you are cutting back on that programme, the only logical conclusion I can come to is the foreign exchange aspect that you are after.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. You cannot cut back what did not exist before. There was no vote in excess of $35 million ever in this Parliament for EduTech 2000 before. The $35 million represents the cost of implementation for Phase 1. What we had hoped to have been able to do was to merge Year 1 and Year 2 together. We have decided now not to do it that way and just to move along with Year 1. There is absolutely no truth in the fact that there is any cut-back.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful for this intervention. When one considers that the year 2000 is one year around the comer and EduTech 2000 is supposed to help us deal with that

particular problem, instead of cutting back, you should be increasing to face the particular problem you are supposed to be confronted with the Y2K problem. I think, Sir, if there is anything to help us correct the Y2K problem it is the good programme of EduTech 2000. If you are not going to use EduTech 2000 to deal with the Y2K problem something tells me that the programme cannot be well-grounded.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I am delighted to hear the Honourable Member's interest in the subject of EduTech 2000 and the Y2K problem but I think that he should reserve his wisdom until we get to Head 34. As I understand it, we are under Head 13, the Prime Minister's Office. We are not really on the subject of EduTech 2000 at the moment which comes under the Ministry of Education. Therefore, obviously, it is a subject that the Honourable Member must reserve his comments for a bit later.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member just keep the straight and narrow path. I gave you a little leeway but probably you have gone a bit too far.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, what you are saying is that you gave me the same leeway that you gave the Right Honourable Prime Minister. Thank you, I am extremely grateful to you, Sir.

I am saying that we need to make sure that we go into the 21st century with our technology and our teachings all grounded in the same basics. As you said, Sir, maybe we need until we get to education and I will deal with that then, Sir.

I am also saying that the Commissioner for Pan-African Affairs, we need to understand what is his dictate and who is dictating to him and whether Pan-African Affairs is seen as a financial matter? I want to know because if it is a financial matter, it is right under the Head of the Prime Minister and if it is a Foreign Affairs matter then I expect to see it under the Head of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I am extremely grateful to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.30p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left and Chair and Mr. CHAIRMAN took the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee of Supply.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak specifically under this Head in respect of the creation and provision for the Pan-African Commission. I think that it is important, Sir, that we place in proper perspective the reason for the creation of such a commission and indeed the focus of its work.

There is absolutely no doubt, Sir, that a country that continues to ignore aspects of its heritage causes itself to be lacking in the confidence that is necessary even more so in today's world in respect of how we interact with other people across the world. I believe, Sir, that we have the confidence and maturity as a nation to recognise that the assertion of aspects of our heritage does not necessarily equate with allegations of seeking to be discriminatory or racist in our practices, but one that simply says that our people, our focus and our behaviour as a country and as a Government must come to grips with establishing relationships whose background historically, or whose fortunes are similar to those of ours.

Indeed, Sir, geographical locations and proximity have long been used as a reason to bring regions together in pursuit of similar objectives. Size has also been such a reason in respect of the fact, particularly in today's world with the growing movement toward the cooperation among small island states within the Commonwealth. We recognise the validity of that commonality with respect of size.

I believe, Sir, that our historical circumstances and our demographical circumstances should also be used as a valid reason for developing strong and binding ties with other people or countries across the world, who have had similar historical and demographical ties such as our country. And to that extent, Sir, this Government has been bold in the assertion of these beliefs and has sought to operationalise that commitment through the creation of the Pan-African Commission.

There is no other developing country that I know of, Sir, or developed for that matter, that seeks to place the development of affairs and ties and the building of economic, social, cultural and political relations with persons within the Pan-African diaspora on the same footing, by the creation of such a Governmental entity such as has been the case with this Government.

I, Sir, find it particularly unfortunate that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy seems not fully to understand the purpose of this institution and is prepared simply to equate it with a body that must find itself within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that must conflict with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Suffice it to say, Sir, that he clearly has not given it thought, nor has he any intentions of doing that. It is of particular concern to me because as an Honourable Member of this Chamber dealing with matters of the State and dealing with the fact that the creation of this body is a landmark exercise for countries such as ours, that he should perhaps spend the time and come to grips with what essentially is intended by this Government through the Commission of Pan African Affairs.

Sir, this body is meant to be multi-sectoral in its existence. The reality is that its focus does not lie strictly within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it has a mandate that seeks to cause it to focus on the building of relations that may be cultural in nature, that may be economic in nature, that may be educational in nature and that may be political in nature. And, indeed, Sir, as a result of that and as a result of the fact that it would be required to work across and alongside numerous ministries, its proper location in my estimation, Sir, and submission, is within the Prime Minister's Office, not the Ministry of Finance, but the Prime Minister's Office which has an overview over all of the affairs of Government and which can give it the credibility that is necessary to bring it into a central position in respect of the work of all of the Ministries within which it will interact.

We have, Sir, to recognise that while the business of Government may require a lot of day-to-day activities that do not necessarily cause us to focus on any one grouping or area, that a commission such as this can complement the work being done in many Ministries and bring to it a focus that will allow us to have an overall national achievement of building those linkages with African peoples and peoples of the African diaspora.

Sir, my understanding with working with this Commission on its creation, is that it will do a number of things and I want to spend a little time dealing with a few of them so as to give you an idea as to the multi-sectoral approach that is being undertaken.

One of the first things that we believe to be necessary, Mr. Chairman, is the establishment of linkages with other thinkers across the black diaspora. Because to a large extent, the level of thought that goes into the developmental process is all the more necessary at this juncture in our development than perhaps even 30 or 40 years ago. We are being confronted with challenges that will see very often issues of sovereignty and development being compromised in a world that is being described as one that is moving more and more towards globalisation. The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that those things which make us distinctive as a people, those cultural differences that demarcate who we are as a people must come into play in any construction of a developmental model as to where we would like to go as a country and as a people.

The capacity to bring about great thinkers from throughout the Pan-African diaspora is one therefore that we believe that Barbados should play a leading role in. The reality is, Mr. Chairman, that Barbados as a black country is probably the leading developing black country in the world and we feel that we have a moral responsibility to take a leadership role in bringing to the fore those issues that occupy many of our countries and peoples for resolution as we move into the 21st century.

To that end, Mr. Chairman, the Pan-African Commission would be establishing a powerful international Think Tank capable of generating novel and practical ideas for the development of the nations of the Pan-African world and this is not something, Sir, that has just come about. There have been Pan-African flora throughout the whole of this century. The concept of persons of the black race in the world coming together and being able to put their heads together to advance the causes of black people throughout the globe, is a concept that has been central to many black nations and regions throughout this century. And we feel that we should position ourselves to take a leadership role in respect of the shaping of ideas and the thoughts that go into focusing on new developmental practices as we move into the 21st century in this country.

I look forward, Sir, to the first meeting of that international Think Tank that the Pan-African Commission will assemble during the course of this next year. And, I look forward also, to the thoughts that will flow from it in a hope that it will assist not only this Government but indeed all other Governments in coming to grips with those very fundamental and developmental issues that are now facing us as we move into the 21st century.

Additionally, they will be seeking as a Commission to address themselves to a number of issues that have not traditionally been the focus of this Government. You heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister address himself to the issue of tourism and the fact that we have traditionally seen tourists come from the North Atlantic region. While we welcome that, Sir, we believe that there is merit in seeking to

target as a group of tourists, black people from throughout the diaspora and from Africa to come to Barbados and to be able to see this as a model of development for black people. Something that black people have achieved in building, a nation indeed, Sir, whose human development index is widely recognised among the United Nations systems as being one of the best in the world and one whose governance and structures can give us the confidence that there is nothing that we put our minds to as black people that we are not capable of achieving.

Indeed, Sir, given the history and the legacy which we received upon our independence, the fact that we have been able to achieve what we have achieved and to be able to broaden the base of access to rights and to approve the quality of life for all of our people is almost nothing short of miraculous when you consider the experiences of other countries across the globe, both black and white during the course of this 20th century. 1.45 p.m.

Of course, Sir, if you are going to talk about developing tourism within the black markets, you have also to address your mind to the critical issue of air linkages. It is a shame that nowhere in the Caribbean, as we move into the 21st century, has direct air linkages with the continental Africa.

When you consider that Barbados is the first land mass that one comes to after crossing the Atlantic. We really. Sir, have a serious responsibility in building the linkages that can create the movement of information and the movement of people and those linkages rely on transport and communication to a large extent.

I believe, Sir, that they should be a concerted effort in seeking to establish serious linkages with airlines such as South African Airways and with other airlines coming out of West Africa so that they can be movement between the two without having - and this does not only go into our entry into Africa because it also applies to Asia.

Because for many countries there are direct linkages between Africa and Asia. But if we want to get to Asia or we want to get to Africa, we have first to travel to North America or Europe and then come back down to the South. And I believe, Sir, that the concept of establishing or the work towards the establishment of serious air linkages with at least one airline - and we need to start with what we can achieve - with at least one airline, particularly given the fact that it has been unknown for South African Airways to fly into Barbados to refuel on their way to North America.

I sincerely hope, Sir, that the Pan-African Commission will work assiduously with the Ministry of International Transport towards the development of those air transport linkages between ourselves and the continental Africa. Indeed, Sir, once you start to deal with issues of transportation and issues of communications, then it becomes easier to create the trade in goods and services between the two countries.

I want to use the example of Education, Sir. I firmly believe that Barbados has probably the strongest and the best educational system in the black world today.

I also believe, Sir, that part of the major difficulties that have been facing Africa have to do with the inability with education both in terms of access and quality, and that the recognition of that within the last decade or two will eventually bring about the solution that leads to the improvement of the quality of life of many people living on that continent.

There is no doubt, Sir, that the diversity of people and the diversity of languages makes it a little more difficult than if there were single people or single languages if we were to be realistic.

But while making it more difficult it does not make it insurmountable. And I believe, Sir, that we have a responsibility towards ensuring that those things which we have mastered and that we do well that we are capable of sharing that expertise with those other persons within the diaspora towards the building of further links between the two regions.

I think, Sir, that the development of educational resource materials which we have mastered towards a common curricula that we can start looking and distributing and sharing those resources which are perhaps more culturally relevant than those which they would obtain from Britain and from the United States of America for the education of their children.

I think the whole issue of teacher training, because it is going to be difficult to deal with the number of children and therefore we deal at the level of training of teachers. That Erdiston College for example, while only officially fifty years old but prevailed itself to the last century that that should be playing a critical role in the establishment of linkages between ourselves and other Teacher Training Colleges particularly in Southern Africa where there is a movement towards major education reform as a sign that this is necessary for the development of the economies.

I look forward, Sir, during the course of this year of working very closely with the Pan-African Commission, to seek to establish those linkages between Erdiston College and between aspects of the Ministry of Education particularly in terms of curriculum development and the development of educational media resources, as seeking to share those resources and experiences with countries in

Southern Africa and working with the Pan-African Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in being able to achieve this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. I believe. Sir, that there are medium to long-term benefits that this country will get because when you create a knowledge and a sense of who you are as a people, then it becomes easier to promote the trading in goods and services with those people.

I also feel, Sir, very strongly, that the Pan-African Commission has a responsibility towards the promotion of our pride in blackness in this country at the level of the communities and I believe, Sir, part of their work programme this year is going to be dedicated towards the creation of a sense and awareness and pride at the level of communities across Barbados, as to the proud history that black people have in respect of the making of a global civilization over the course of centuries and indeed the millennium.

I believe, Sir that they should be given full support in ensuring that our young people through these public education community awareness programmes, receive access to this information.

I certainly, Sir, have ensured that during the course of a young person's life at school that they should be exposed to a programme of study that details aspect of African heritage studies so as to ensure, Sir, that no child whether black or white leaves school in this country without an understanding of what is African and what black people have achieved as a people through their literature, through their history, through their music, through their way of life, so that we would come to understand, Sir, how best to understand who we are as a people and how best to relate to other people of similar ethnic backgrounds across the globe.

We cannot, and it is very clear in this world where the whole international economic arrangements are changing, see the 166 square miles as the domain of our existence or the domain of our trade in goods and services.

It would require, Sir, of us a confidence to go out into the world and to represent who we are and to sell our goods and services. That confidence can only come in a clear understanding of who we are as a people and where we want to go and that confidence must of itself propel us to recognise that those other nations that have had similar historical experiences will have a similar demographic make-up or whose geographical proximity would require of us that these must be the nations with the people with whom we must seek to enter the 21st century, building a strong strategic alliance, not only in terms of global political arrangements, economic arrangements but in terms of the business of trading in goods and services.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: At this point I think you should wrap up.

Hon. Miss. M. A. MOTTLEY: My time is up, Sir, but I will come again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you can come again, you can come again. The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 1.55p.m.

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE - $26 173 788

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to initiate the debate under Head 32, a new Ministry or a newly configured Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Mr. Chairman, you will recall that in September of 1994 I started off with a portfolio of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Business. A few months later that was reconfigured and Foreign Trade went somewhere else. The fact that the Prime Minister has seen fit to bring Foreign Trade back into the sphere of Foreign Affairs clearly indicates the determination of this Administration that one must be integrated into the other because, as indicated also in the Throne Speech, this will be the thrust of not only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this term of office but, indeed, the thrust of this Administration.

We believe, Mr. Chairman, that foreign relations in the early 21st century are going to be more important than, perhaps, in any other era outside of those occasions where military and naval warfare was the trigger. We recognise that globalisation and the liberalisation of trade by definition in our judgment will import and, indeed, promote trade diplomacy. Those are the two words which I am endeavouring to have resonate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

We are hoping that in the very near future that the Foreign Trade Division will physically be located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is very important that should be so because where we have come to, Mr. Chairman, is that

all members of the Foreign Ministry, all Foreign Service personnel must now be infused, as it were, with an understanding and a grasp of the foreign trade issues and *vice versa.* Those people in the Foreign Trade Division must acquire at short notice and as quickly as possible an understanding of the diplomacy, or should I say, the diplomatic imperatives which will inform the way in which we do business because we are at a juncture in our development, arid that is why I said perhaps this time is more important than any other, certainly in this century because it so happens as the Right Honourable Prime himself once put it, that there is a certain confluence of events.

On the one hand in Europe we are in process now of negotiating a successor to the 4th LOME Convention, something which we hope will mature into, perhaps, a 5th LOME Convention. It may be called something else for all we know, but the way in which that negotiating process is being undertaken is quite different from the way in which predecessor Conventions were negotiated.

At one and the same time on this side of the Atlantic we are in the process of negotiating a Free Trade Area of the Americas. We are in CARICOM, as we have heard on the Floor already today, in process again of creating a single market and economy because we recognise in the Caribbean that this is the only way in which we can sensibly hope to gain entry into the international marketplace. There are other groupings as well.

The world has, indeed, already divided itself up into significant trading blocs and CARICOM may not be the largest or the most important or the one which is constantly on the radar screen but its presence is certainly felt and I am going to come to that in a minute. We are looking toward Central America. Indeed the Central Americans for the first time are looking toward us in the Caribbean, reaching out to us and it is something that we must take notice of and move toward ourselves because the Association of Caribbean States of which we are part and of which some Central American countries are a part is going to have a summit in the middle of next month.

On that occasion, the Heads of the countries which make up the Association of Caribbean States are going to have to make some very difficult decisions. They are going to have to be very frank with themselves looking to see the way in which over the past 3,4 years the ACS has been able, or not been able, depending on which side of the fence you are looking at it from, to realise the goals or begin to move in the direction of realising the goals set by the Heads when they met in Trinidad and Tobago in 1996 at one and the same time. There is more I can say about that and probably will in later intervention. I am making a general point here. We are looking toward America as well. All of these are happening all at the same time.

We have to be very careful, Mr. Chairman, that what we do on one side of the Atlantic is not incompatible with what we are trying to negotiate on the other side of the Atlantic. At the end of the day we have to be sure that everything we do is now what is being referred to as WTO compatible.

Mr. Chairman, this does not mean that in this term and in the early years of the 21st century we do not have to face reality, that we have to be looking beyond traditional markets and looking into non traditional marketplaces to see where we can carve out niches. Perhaps some are not even yet within our contemplation but we have to begin to do this.

You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that last year in August we had a major full dress debate in here. It was televised and I think very well received by the public of Barbados. I am happy to say that it was a very non-partisan debate. In that debate we explored all of the possibilities of where foreign policy for Barbados could go in the next several years, what kind of direction we would want to take. We looked at this very matter of trade diplomacy which, as I said, is going to be the major thrust of the Government of Barbados in this term. Indeed, I think it is going to be the way forward in the early decades of the new century.

Out of that foreign policy debate and consultations which we had with Heads of Missions last August, we decided that a blue print would be prepared and that blue print is in preparation, which would look to Barbados' strategic foreign relations interest over the coming five years.

There are going to be far reaching implications for the future structure and the functioning.of the Barbados Foreign Service in that regard and that is why so much emphasis is being placed now on the restructuring of the Foreign Service because in order to carry out these additional tasks we have to be looking to do business in quite a different way from which we have been in past years. 2.05 p.m.

To this end, I have already given instructions that we must prepare very quickly to have a one-day seminar. On March 31, I am going to invite a number of Ministries for whom foreign trade has important implications: the Ministry of Agriculture - there is an agricultural component to many of these foreign trade negotiations which are underway as within CARICOM as well - the Ministry of Commerce and International Business, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Education, particularly the culture component within it.

Indeed, the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party which is already a document of this House has a small chapter on cultural trade policies about which the Honourable Minister of Education and Culture feels very strongly. She has very forward thinking ideas and she, I am sure, will address some of them in the course of this debate.

The remit so to speak, Mr. Chairman, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is going to be in the early twenty-first century a much wider one than we have seen since its creation. I have to say, Sir, that the protection and the preservation of national sovereignty and security is of course a foremost consideration as it has always been with every Ministry of Foreign Affairs wherever in the world. It has to be a number one consideration and will continue to be with us a first order of business.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have to recognise that we are living in a rapidly changing world. Apart from these points that I have made about the several negotiating arrangements in which we are presently engaged and, as you know, Sir, to this end the Heads of CARICOM with much foresight two years ago decided to put in place what we call a regional negotiating machinery. This is headed by a chief negotiator, Sir Shridath Ramphal, and Barbados is one of the base offices of that regional negotiating machinery. There is one in Jamaica and one in London and there is now a physical body in Brussels as well particularly because of the delicate state of the Lome negotiations.

What is now being described as the so-called banana issue and I was a little surprised to hear the Honourable Leader of the Opposition so describe it, in my judgment it is no so-called banana issue. It is a very real existing, prickly and difficult banana issue. I am raising it at this juncture because I think that it will be instructive to Honourable Members and will bring home the importance of the points being made that foreign affairs trade diplomacy will be at the centre of almost everything that we will do in the years immediately ahead of us.

There has been a fair amount of mischief and more than misinformation, let me put it that way, in respect of the role that Barbados has played in recent times in this issue. Honourable Members are fully aware that CARICOM heads met in an intercessional in Surinam two weeks ago. This was a matter on the agenda for them indeed as it was for officials, including the Foreign Ministers, immediately before the Heads met and took up a lot of time in their deliberations. Sir Alastair Mclntyre who is the Chief Trade Advisor within the regional negotiating machinery attended and reported to the Heads and the Heads were very frank in their discussions and very careful in the Press release that they put out.

Within hours, we could hear that it was being reported in the Press not only in capitals such as Washington and indeed in Brussels and in London and elsewhere that the CARICOM Heads were disposed to suspend a certain arrangement which they had with the United States and in other quarters suspend the Shiprider Agreement and what has happened is that a great deal of confusion has been generated arising out of that misinformation.

I want to say here again clearly for the record: Honourable Members, indeed, all Barbadians, will recall that many years ago, or they should recall because it is in our interest to keep these things before our memories a gentleman in the United States, Mr. Mickey Chantry - he is not dead - made large statements about the Caribbean banana industry and gave many assurances when the Chiquita issue first raised its head that the Americans would do nothing to hurt the banana industry in the Caribbean and particularly in the small Eastern Caribbean countries where in some cases it was not only the major but the only industry.

In more recent times, the former US ambassador to Barbados, Mrs. Janet Hyde, gave us here in Barbados and in the Eastern Caribbean for which she also had oversight assurances time and time again that nothing that was being done in the United States or by the United States was meant to harm the interests of banana producers in the Caribbean.

As I have said already in this session on this Floor, what happens to the banana industry in the Eastern Caribbean is very much within our interest. The point has been made already today on the Floor that they are important trading partners for us. Wider than that, the testing of the WTO's early rules and procedures happen to fall on bananas but tomorrow it could be rum and already there are rumblings in that quarter and even as I speak meetings are getting underway in respect of rum or it could be sugar. We do not grow much cocoa in the Caribbean now but in West Africa they grow a lot of cocoa. It could be cocoa, any commodity that has been the beneficiary of the preferences which the Lome Convention has offered over the years. So it is of great interest to us. The reality is this, Sir, and it has to be said preferably in a place like this. The Bridgetown Accord - it has a name. I am a little-resentful not because Bridgetown happens to be my constituency but I am a little resentful because other Accords, other Agreements, other Treaties have proper names and people treat them with respect. I am a little resentful that I am hearing in some quarters, well, it is either the Barbados or the Bridgetown Accord. 2.15p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is the Bridgetown Accord. That is a multilateral arrangement.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph may laugh but this will have more than a footnote in the history books.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Under that Accord and Members will recall that President Clinton came here in May of 1997 and that the CARICOM Heads were gathered here in Barbados and we fought with the Americans about what has come to be known as the Bridgetown Accord. The Americans were very keen on the justice and security issues and they still are. • We were very keen on the trade and economic issues and we still are.

The Bridgetown Accord actually has within it specific reference to bananas. It is a multilateral arrangement. What has happened since 1997 is that the justice and securities issues, I am pleased to say, led and driven by our own Attorney General, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas have gone ahead a pace and resources have been found both financial, human and otherwise but the trade and economic issues which are meant to be driven by Ambassador Benal, the Ambassador of Jamaica to the United States of America, have not gone anywhere but there was specific reference to bananas.

What the Honourable Member for St. Peter is saying is that there are two major inextricably entwined...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That was the word that we used time and time again when the Americans were here in 1997. As far as we are concerned in CARIFORUM in the Caribbean that the two - the justice and security issue and the trade and economic issue are inextricably entwined. One depends on the other and there is a mutual dependence. When we speak about the justice and security issues, of course, the most dominant of all was the narcotics trade and the trafficking which has become part and parcel of life in these islands. One is inextricably linked to the other but the Americans - you know — might is right and they have just gone, just as they have done now with this most recent abuse of the WTO process, they went full steam ahead in respect of the justice and security issues but the trade and economic issues languished in the doldrums and still do so, except for bananas.

What the Right .Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados is saying and has said to the Heads is that they are inextricably linked. If the Americans are going to abuse not only the spirit but the letter - bananas specifically referred to, Sir, - the letter of Bridgetown Accord, then we are going to have to review the Accord in its entirety because one aspect of it is so inextricably linked to the other.

Now, quite separate and apart, from the Bridgetown Accord are a number of Shipriders. What are called Shipriders for the sake of shortness and understanding but they have long complicated names.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They are known in common parlance as the Shiprider Agreements. These are not multilateral arrangements, these are bilateral arrangements and every single one of them in the Caribbean is different. The arrangement that we have in Barbados, you will recall, Sir, how hard we fought on that one, is different from the one with Trinidad. It is different from the one with St. Vincent and the Grenadines which is different from the one with Jamaica. Those are bilateral arrangements. They speak to only one aspect of the larger justice and security. What has happened is that a large area of confusion has arisen where people are using Shiprider interchangeably with certain aspects of the Bridgetown Accord and that is major, major confusion because as I keep insisting one is a multilateral agreement and the other is a bilateral arrangement.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And never the twain of those can meet. The fact is that hot only have the Americans by their most recent action flown in the face of the WTO process but they have also by that action flown in the face of the letter and spirit of the Bridgetown Accord. That is what people have to understand including the media in North America and the media in the Caribbean,

The Right Honourable Prime Minister keeps making the point that people really do need to read these instruments sometimes and not take it for granted that because you hear a little thing here and you hear a little thing there that you understand the import of it. I would have thought that the media both in North America and here in the Caribbean would have understood. It is not so long ago, May this year will make it two years but it was so hard fought here in Barbados that I cannot easily accept that people would have forgotten so swiftly the content of the Accord and the spirit which is meant to attend the Accord.

This is a perfect illustration, Mr. Chairman, Sir, of the way...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: As Lewis Carroll said in Alice in Wonderland, you must begin at the beginning and properly speaking, as in all things in life, you should begin as you mean to continue. If this is the beginning of how the WTO process will be interpreted, it does not augur well for us. Do not let us fool ourselves, Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are not on the agenda of the United States. We are not on their radar at this time.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We are not. They do not like it when I say so. I suspect that my staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may not like it when I say so because it might not be viewed as the most diplomatic statement. You will find this in Alice of Wonderland. It is a recommended reading, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They did not teach that to me at Queen's College.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have three more minutes.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What I am meaning to say here, Sir, is that what is happening now and it should be required reading for all of us in this Chamber and for opinion formers in the Caribbean and particularly the media because they have an ability to lengthen the outreach and to give louder voice to what CARICOM Heads and Caribbean leaders generally, both in the public and the private sectors, need to be saying on these matters. There needs to be a clear and a good understanding of the issues at stake. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South makes the point all the time, you cannot approbate and reprobate at one and the same time. There is another old time saying, might is right.

I do not think for a single moment that the Americans and the Europeans are going to have an international trade war over a few banana producing countries in the Eastern Caribbean. That is my personal view. There are other wheels turning within wheels and circles turning within circles which are being played out against the backdrop of this issue. I found it most interesting and I said this to an Ambassador from a country which will be nameless who I saw earlier today. 2.25 p.m.

Every day in the international community, in the global marketplace the picture is changing, sometimes more than once a day. It burst upon the world yesterday, or was it the day before that the European Commission had fallen apart. It is such an incredible thing. One minute you are in Brussels sitting down and you are negotiating with these people and then suddenly you hear that it has just disintegrated. These things do not happen overnight and I was making the point - as I find myself making very frequently nowadays, that the large developed countries, the countries who are the world leaders in trade and aid cannot have it both ways.

Now in recent years, Mr. Chairman, Sir, a great deal has been said about matters to do with good governance - human rights and the rule of law and the appreciation of these basic principles which we hold very dear in Barbados. Our stable Parliamentary democracy is grounded on our understanding and our practice of those matters. We do not get the kind of rating that we get when it comes to quality of governance by chance. We work hard on this. It amazes people that general election after general election without so much as a mashed toe, Governments change, as most recently Governments do not change, something as unprecedentedly as what happened in Barbados on 20th January that in a second term you gain a majority unprecedented, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I spend a lot of time now saying to people outside of Barbados and even to some inside of Barbados, that Caribbean peoples have never felt threatened by these major swings within their countries.

In 1986 we were three and the other people were 24. Today we are 26 and they are two. You see what has happened in Grenada.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I will stop at this point, Sir, and come back to this matter, because there is a great deal more to be said.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I wish to intervene at this point because the Minister adverted to Barbados' human rights record and the quality of governance in Barbados. I want to dwell upon one matter, Sir.

Every year the American Government, through its Embassies all over the world arrogate to themselves, the right to comment on human rights in countries around the world. It is a requirement apparently of their Congress. Every year there is quite a survey of the various rights of freedoms in Barbados and how they are being guaranteed, supported or abrogated. Every year the press of Barbados highlight some aspect of the report as though it is a new event and focuses on something to do with the criminal justice system.

Last year the report on human rights in Barbados alleged *inter alia* that a white Barbadian prisoner had been buggered in prison and beaten up by other prisoners and that the authorities in Barbados did nothing about it. Mr. Best the New York correspondent of the Nation newspaper published that. I personally went to Glendairy prison and spoke with the white Barbadian prisoner. We all knew who he was referring to and asked him if during the period of his incarceration he had ever had any improper advances, sexual advances or ever been beaten up and he was most shocked. He said, "Never." I said to him, "your father's office is just 100 yards from mine and he has never complained to me." There was absolutely no truth in the report that went up on the Internet, but the Barbados newspapers published it as it came and did not follow up.

I complained to Ms. Jeanette Hyde who was the Ambassador at the time and she apologised and told me that they did not have much to do with the preparation of the report, but that she would represent my concerns elsewhere in Washington. I thanked her and I hoped that we would have gotten a more accurate report this year reflecting on the events of 1998.

Recently they published the report and the survey for 1998. The one part of it that the press has again highlighted is that relating to police brutality and in particular the one involving two Puerto Ricans. The Commissioner of Police, after we received the report the week before the last, responded last weekend and we know what action is being taken by the police in respect of that matter and it has also been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his consideration.

Now, I wish to say that the 1998 report about human rights in Barbados is generally favourable to Barbados. But at the same time, and I wish to be properly quoted, I am also bound to say that the report's quality has been greatly compromised by two particular types of weaknesses. Those weaknesses undermine its creditability and its usefulness.

In the first place, the report places an undue reliance upon hearsay, newspaper reports and what lawyers would call 'secondary evidence', without attempting to verify facts or allegations for that matter. Secondly, and this is where I am critical of the local press, they have not read the whole report, they pick out that page dealing with police brutality and speak to that. 2.35 p.m.

The report itself is 10 pages and there is this focus on police brutality. But looking over the ten pages of the report, you will find that it is repleted with errors of law and facts which point to a very careless approach in what ought to be a very reliable document.

This is a document written about a country for the Congress of another country and there is a lot of carelessness in the report. I am going to identify twelve matters in that report and comment on them and put Barbados' position.

We are going from 1- 12, Sir. Page 1, it says:

> "On the whole, the police respected constitutional and legal provisions protecting human rights, on the whole, but there continued to be," hear these words, It continues, Sir, "infrequent reports of abuses by police."

"Principal human rights problems continued to be occasional instances of excessive use of force by police and societal violence against women and children."

Now, my comment on that part of the report is very short. It illustrates that the abuses of human rights by the police are not frequent in Barbados and to that extent one may say that police brutality is not institutionalized in this country.

Secondly, they said:

> "the local Press reported numerous allegations of coerced confessions. There continued to be credible reports that law enforcement officials sometimes used force during detention to extract confessions from detainees."

Now, Sir, my comment on that. For as long as I have been an attorney, thirty-two years, I have been aware that invariably in criminal cases, especially those going to a jury, accused persons raise allegations of police brutality. This is an allegation that is as old as the hills. All of us who have practised will have been aware of receiving instructions that confession was induced by force or otherwise. This is not a new phenomenon.

What happens, that comment of the Americans rely upon newspaper reports. What happens is that when the Press cover a case and the accused man said that his confession was induced, that it was not voluntary, that comes out in the Press.

Here is a State Department agency, acting on that report. You know what the test is, as to whether there is a large proportion of induced confessions or not. The test, Sir, with respect, is to examine the number of cases in which accused persons make those allegations, have what we call a *Voir Dire* and see if the Judge lets in the confession or not. You would find that in the vast majority of cases, the Judges exercise their discretion to allow in the confession, thereby suggesting that they did not believe that there was any forced confession.

Now, I am not getting into the policy because you cannot even test that. People talk about Judges playing an establishment role. I am not getting into any policy, Sir. I am only saying that if you do that test you will find that in the vast majority of cases the confessions are admissible.

Now, they spoke very thoroughly, Sir, to a case where a car washer alleged that he was abducted and shot by a policeman. The Press carried that locally. That case there was no cover-up, an allegation was made, an investigation was carried out, policemen were charged policemen were put before the Assizes and the Policemen were acquitted not even by the Jury but by the Judge on the basis of there being no case for them to answer. No case for them to answer.

So far from covering up any such allegation of brutality, the police themselves investigated, charged some of their own, they stood trial and they were acquitted.

The fourth matter I cannot deal in any detail with it because I believe cases may be pending but they said:

> 'Two youths were rushed unconscious to the hospital after being held in choke holds during a police raid. They said the police investigated both cases and submitted reports to the Director of Public Prosecutions. At year's end, the police awaited the prosecutors' decision regarding further action."

Now, I have discussed this matter with the Director of Public Prosecutions and he has no knowledge, no knowledge as recently as Thursday last week of these allegations.

The fifth allegation relates to the two Puerto Ricans, Sir, that has been dealt with already and I make no comment on it. The matter is subject to internal investigation within the force and I say it has also been referred to the DPP in case there are criminal aspect to the matter for him to consider, Sir.

Sixth, this is what they say:

> "In June the Attorney General introduced in Parliament an Amendment to the Police Act to set up an independent Complaints Authority. No action had been taken on the amendment by year's end."

That is not true, Sir, the report is false. The Amendment to the Police Act 1998 - 13 was to modernize and strengthen the internal disciplinary procedures of the force. It had nothing to do with an independent Police Complaints Authority.

I have said, before and since the elections, that we are taking steps to set up an independent Police Complaints Authority. A working party has been set up in the Ministry late last year, November, or early December, Sir, I do not have the final date, where we have asked members of the force, even private citizens to sit on a working party within the Ministry to advise me on the setting up of an independent Police Complaints Authority. But the statement of the United States report that the Police (Amendment) Act last year was to set up an independent Complaints Authority is nonsense and a lie, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute, you can return.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS. Seventh. They said on page 3;

> "the authorities issued firearms to special units and some foot patrols in high-crime areas in response to the 1993 shooting death of a policeman and a rise in gun and drug-related crime."

Not true again. I do not see the connection between Peter Springer's death in 1993 and an allegation about issuing firearms in 1998. Foolishness.

They say, No. 8, Sir:

> "The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and requires detainees to be brought before a court of law within 72 hours of arrest."

That is not true, Sir. This is what I am talking about, carelessness. They have not even read the very Constitution of Barbados that they purport to quote. What does our Constitution say? Section 13, subsection (3) says that an arrested or detained person must be brought before the court as soon as is reasonably practicable. There is no 10 minutes, or 48 hours or 72 hours as the Americans allege. 2.45 p.m.

Nine, Sir. They say:

> "The other judges who make up the Supreme Court are appointed on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commissions."

Imagine that. That, again, is not true - A report sent to Congress misrepresenting the Law of Barbados.

Section 81 of the Constitution of Barbados provides, and we all know this, that the Chief Justice and the other judges shall be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, not by any Judicial and Legal Service Commission. That is why I say that they are careless. I will call them ignorant too.

I will have to come back to the question of sentencing. I will want to deal with that separately. It will take me a little longer than a minute, Sir, but I want to finish with this next one. This will probably be 10. Hear them on page 8:-

> "A law, another law they say, prohibits strikes against public utilities."

That is what the Americans say about the law of Barbados. Now you show me which law. Let me just answer

it. That is not true. That is also a lie. You show me which law prohibits strikes by utilities.

You are familiar with the Giles case. That involved the Telephone Company. There was not a strike at the Telephone Company? There was* not a strike at the Light and Power Company? So what foolishness are they saying? I want the Press to do what I did, take this report and analyse it as I did. There is laziness among the Press in Barbados that they just pick out what they say from page 3 about the police, write that, create something and leave all the rest when, in fact, the report is in many respects grossly inaccurate. I will come back, Sir. I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am so much obliged to you for allowing me to continue at this particular juncture. I would say to the Honourable Attorney General we must not assume in this day and age that these things are done by mistake or it is an oversight. It is in this way that countries like ours are destabilised, Mr. Chairman, and 1 do not use that word lightly.

I want to come back to a point that I was engaged upon. I was speaking to the whole issue of good governance and the mass resignation of members of the European Commission which occurred yesterday.

Now, in the first round of negotiations which took place in February, last month, this was the negotiation for the next LOME Agreement in Dakar in Senegal. It was a good meeting, Sir, from the point of view that it allowed the two sides, the African, Caribbean and Pacific States on one side and the European Union States on the other side to get a good measure of each other. It became clear where the priorities were on both sides and it became clear too, Sir, where the sticking points were on both sides.

There is going to be a second round in July and there are some who, in my judgement, quite wrongly believe that these negotiations are going to come to good resolution and come to closure in this year of Our Lord. I do not see it. But one of the sticking points from the ACP side was raised by the European Union and it had to do with the whole business of good governance.

Now, there are certain matters which are referred to as essential elements in the agreement. They have existed in the earlier LOME Conventions - the Rule of Law, human rights, much respected by countries in the Caribbean, the African and the Pacific States as well. But the Europeans are seeking for the first time to make good governance one of those essential elements to elevate it from its status as a basic principle to which we all adhere to, one of the essential elements which means that if it is thought to be lacking it could suspend the agreement in the case of any member country.

Indeed, as we speak, Togo, which was the mother country so-to-speak of the LOME Convention, and it is thought by the Togolese to be a highly embarrassing situation, that at a time when we are negotiating another LOME Convention they find themselves in a state of suspension raised by a number of European States led by Germany I think at the time, to the effect that the recent elections there, recent meaning last year, almost a year ago now, were not free and fair.

Now, all of those observing teams who went to Togo found that it was free and fair. The matter came before me when I presided over the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and it continues because the Europeans will not allow it to be brought to closure and it has the Togolese not only in an embarrassing but in an invidious position.

Human rights, the rule of law, all of these elements go to good governance but goor[1] governance by itself is not clearly defined as those othr Clements are, is not universally accepted as those elements are. Indeed, what happened at the end of the first round is that we told the Europeans, you go back home and you define what you mean by good governance and you bring it back to the table and we will see what we will see.

We made it quite clear in the ACP that we are dedicated as a basic principle to good governance but to elevate it to the status of an essential element when somebody is going to sit in judgment over a country, and it could be Barbados, it could be any country, on either side, but, of course, they only see it on the ACP side, to say what is good governance and what is not good governance.

Look at all of the varying stages of development within the African, Caribbean and Pacific States. What may be good government in Togo today may not be good governance in Barbados. But in all of this, when the French representative got up to say how wrong it was of us in the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, and I was up on my hind legs on this point of good governance, because I was not about to agree to put a whip in the Europeans' hands to lick us with and that written on that whip would be good governance and Barbados is in good standing to speak to this issue.

The Frenchman then got up after me to speak on this whole question of definition and then there was a long diatribe on corruption. I came back to say that in my judgment, in my assessment, good governance had to be far larger and a far wider matter than corruption. Lo and behold, even before we could get back to the second negotiating table, I would receive yesterday a statement by President, Jacques Santer, the day after the resignation of the members *en masse* of the European Commission. What is the basic ground here? Corruption and croneyism.

The way you heard the talk in Dakar last month, Mr. Chairman, you would believe that those matters only could apply to African, Caribbean and Pacific States but the entire European Commission resigns *en masse* and we are told that it is based, as the President would put it, how else can he put it, on a tiny number of cases of fraud and malfunctioning which did, indeed, merit criticism. In these matters there is nothing called tiny and little. Fraud is fraud. It is instructive that this would happen not in the ACP Secretariat but in the European Commission to a man and woman. All going home. 2.55p.m.

These are the people who are trying to foist good governance, highly subjective. Nobody is clear on what the definition of it is for the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point I am making here is that on both sides of the Atlantic we are having this difficulty. All of these are critical now to the new and evolving process of trade diplomacy in a new century, a new millennium. We have to take good notice of these things. The Caribbean has over the past several years been accused time and time again of being a centre for money laundering. We have been very careful in Barbados in respect of our international business affairs to monitor carefully and be very selective in respect of the business which we do because of this repetition which has grown up in respect to the Caribbean. Again, big developed countries wanting to approbate and reprobate at the same time.

You do not hear about the money laundering which goes on in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in Continental Europe, in Mediterranean countries. But you hear about and I am not going to give it any further currency by calling names of countries in the Caribbean but you hear about "A" country and "B" country in the Caribbean as though it is something peculiar to the Caribbean and which flourishes only in the Caribbean.

These are the matters which have to preoccupy our attention and that is why when I speak of the protection and the preservation of our national sovereignty and our security and the Honourable Attorney General just spoke to a different subject matter but very much within the tale of the matter that I am discussing. These are matters which are vital and critical to our strategic interests. A long time ago in respect of our foreign affairs a former Prime Minister who is now a national hero, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, said that we would be friends of all and satellites of none. That still informs the foreign policy of Barbados and the trade diplomacy of Barbados and will continue to do so. It is not anything that was ever contradicted and it is fair to say that whoever is leading the foreign relations of Barbados have been informed by that tenet. It is one among many.

What I am trying to do here, Sir, is to set out a picture of the broad context in which Barbados finds itself in 1999 looking toward a new millennium. Mr. Chairman, there are other matters which perusal of these Estimates and certainly Head 32 will show where we in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade are going to have in this coming financial year to give high priority.

The whole business of the Caribbean Sea. This is a matter about which again I feel strongly. We are proposing, and when I say "we", I speak of CARICOM and CARIFORUM indeed that the Caribbean Sea be recognised internationally as a special area. This is in the overall context of sustainable development.

I have made this point before but it is a point that bears repetition until every citizen of the Caribbean understands the importance of the Caribbean Sea to us.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is the National Chief Negotiator. We have a regional negotiating machinery which, as I said, is headed by Sir Shridath Ramphal but we have in Barbados a national negotiating machinery which is headed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has a number of other assignments visited upon him by this administration and one of those has to do with the demarcation of boundaries in respect of our exclusive economic zone. Very important work. I think the point has been made already today that these countries are so close together, the countries particularly of the Eastern Caribbean and of the Caribbean on the whole, and I think it is the Right Honourable Prime Minister who made the point, that our exclusive economic zones must coincide. Let's face it! There are only 99 miles between Barbados and St. Vincent and just over 100 between Barbados and St. Lucia, and the sea is rich. Mr. Chairman, we have not begun to even contemplate the vast potential of the maritime Caribbean.

We talk about it but our imagination does not begin to encompass it. We live out of it, we eat out of it. Our regional tourism product depends heavily upon it as a vehicle for transport in this region. It is critical to us. It is part of an eco-system that allows us to survive as islands.

If there were no Caribbean Sea we would be a continent. We are islands because of the Caribbean Sea. We have taken it for granted. We have abused it. We continue to abuse it. Others have abused it and for years we have said nothing. We begin now to get an appreciation because we are in an era of climate change and getting a better appreciation of these elements. We are beginning to see what La Nina is doing. We know what El Nifio has done or accounted for in our region.

This is a very interesting region. Almost every natural disaster known to mankind has been visited upon this region in our time. I do not know if we rightly recognise it for what it properly is. We have a situation where in the Caribbean and particularly in the Eastern Caribbean a number of islands are really the cones of old volcanoes which we thought were extinct. It turns out that many of them are extant and far from extinct. The latest of which is Montserrat which is really an island that is growing. This is how these islands grew.

More and more it is going to happen in our time. Soufriere in St. Vincent erupted. I remember distinctly there was so much ash on Barbados that night that I could not find my own car. It was like a snowfall. You had to sweep it off to find out the colour and the number of your motor car. There are rumblings in Dominica. Earthquakes, floods, well known to us in Barbados, hurricanes, all of that we have seen in our lifetime in the Caribbean.

We need to understand the way in which the Caribbean Sea is affected by all of that and...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, there is so much that has to be said. I will allow other Members to speak. You will allow, I should say, other Members to speak but I will have to come back to this from time to time because there are many issues which have to be raised here not the least has to do with the millennium and the celebration of it that is coming upon us, not the least of which has to do with the Pan-African Affairs Commission and the interface that we are having with it in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3.05 p.m.

I want to speak to some of the foreign trade issues as well but I give way Sir and I am much obliged to you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I know the Honourable Member is not finished and therefore I will try to stick only to those issues that she has dealt with and then raise some other matters.

The first point that I wanted to make is that I was in my office when I heard the Honourable Member questioned my mis-characterisation of the banana issue as the so-called banana issue. What I meant by that, is that in my view, the issue goes beyond bananas and therefore if you call it the banana issue one would lead people to believe that it is limited to bananas.

The position, however, of the U.S. Government is consistent with a neo-liberal view of trade in which the barriers and protectionism are removed, that markets are opened up and that, entirely consistent with that, even though it is such a small issue or may appear to be in terms of the value of the trade, that consistent with that, the United States Government is going to pursue that approach because if it does so in small matters, it feels justified in doing it in the larger ones.

What I am suggesting, however, to the Minister is that they may be a window of opportunity because as we approach another election year and as the crisis, not so much in the world economy because it has not affected the U.S. economy in the way that it would usually have done so because of the high levels of consumption and the fact that there is a lot of spending power in the U.S. economy, but the crisis in East Asia is going to end up creating a situation where the United States market is going to be flooded with cheap imports. That in itself is going to create job losses in the industrial sector and it is going to push large numbers of people into the services sector and in the services sector in the United States wages are, generally speaking, much lower than in the manufacturing sector and therefore you probably will find that it will provide an excellent platform and it has already done so for Pat Buchanan and others for a context which may revolve very much around issues of trade and issues of the U.S. economy and its relationship to its foreign partners.

The point that, as I understand it, the Government of Barbados has to take at this stage is that the institutions, the IMF, the World Bank and to a lesser extent the IADB have already done enough to prise open our markets and remove the protection we would have been able to maintain were it not for these institutional programmes that we have been having over the past two or three decades. The big question is how much more can be done and how quickly are we prepared to do it in terms pf removing the last vestiges of protection. The United States Government is not going to relent because they view that as being in the best interest of U.S. business. In a sense it goes beyond the banana issue. To ask the Caribbean, which in a sense has always been a play ground for those kind of activities by the U.S. Government and has just maintained that characterisation and therefore, as I have said, what we call the banana issue, Mr. Chairman, is really a lot more than just that.

If you look for example at the latest speech by Mr. Camdessus in Paris to the IADB - I saw it on the Internet yesterday, I think it was...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He was addressing the IADB for a conference. He is now talking about the second wave of reforms. In those second wave of reforms the focus again is on trade, economic and finance. In relation to finance it is on issues like regulation and in relation to trade

it is on the question of removal of barriers and at the same time promoting regional trading blocs. Obviously, as part of the conditionalities of any future IMF and institution support, they are going to be pushing countries into these regional arrangements because they believe that that is the best way for those countries to survive the effects of liberalisation and also the effects of the kinds of problems that are facing countries like East Asia. The purpose of the financial supervision and the building up of the financial sectors of these countries is obviously part of the entire effort to control money laundering to build the capital base of institutions.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, ostensibly so. We all know at the end of the day what it is about. It is to actually have a means of monitoring the development of those offshore financial markets largely because those large countries in the world themselves are offshore centres. If they are not offshore centres, they almost designate certain states within them to be offshore centres. All of this competes very directly and create great challenges for countries like Barbados and that is why the Opposition will throw its support behind any attempt to have this Standing Committee put in place. I urge the Minister if it is possible before the end of this debate to let us start that process, identify when we can start to have those kinds of discussions because I think it will be very important.

On the question of good governance. While there is a downside to what has happened with the European Commission or the Cabinet part of it, if you will - while there is a downside and the Minister has spoken to that, there is also a positive side to it which is that it is one of the first times in the history of that institution that the European Parliament has been able to act, to start to deal with it.

These allegations of corruption are not new. We are talking in here about the Consett Bay project and the Skeetes Bay project both financed by European lending facilities, a lending facility and arrangements that have been well known down through the years for more corruption than any of the other aid facilities or finance facilities offered by these regional organisations.

The good thing is that, I think it was the Socialist group which actually required this report to be done and that consequent on the report, action was taken. Action was taken largely because those who had the greatest interest in covering it up were essentially forced into a position by their colleagues tendering their resignation. 3.15p.m.

So that hopefully it will signal a new level of accountability and hopefully, it will mean that those who sit across the table in the ACP group - and I do not know enough about it to be able to tell you whether what happens in there equates to, or surpasses what has happened in the European Union. I really do not know, but in the event that...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So that it is not the kind of monolith that we once thought it was, but institutional reform is very difficult and small countries like Barbados which joined in the effort to get institutional reform at the UN and other places would have found that that in itself would have been an extremely difficult exercise. I do not know myself, since I have not followed it, what stage it has reached, but at least with this Act at the top will probably send a signal which other institutions would be able to follow.

I just thought I would mention those two matters, but go on also to say that, I listened to the comments which were made by the Attorney General. Of course, he was speaking about a matter that was not strictly related to what the Minister was raising, but it was relevant insofar as the manner in which the Press in Barbados tends to deal with these matters, even in relation to the issue of trade.

Last week in our debate on the Supplementary, the largest portion of that debate dealt with issues of trade and new directions for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade even in advance of these Estimates debates. It is only today in the newspaper that the story from that particular debate is being carried. I think a lot more needs to be done and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I assume would have its work cut out for it, to ensure that Barbadians are aware of our international obligations, of the focus of Government's efforts and in their own way that they will see, at a micro level, it as being important to discuss these issues.

Because as I said at the beginning of this debate, many of the developments which are going to take place in the world will have a direct impact in homes in Barbados, because the way in which people work, the impact on labour and labour markets is going to be quite significant. Therefore it is important, not that you are going to necessarily get the reaction that you want, because if the private sector itself has not caught on and been as responsive as the Government would have liked, that does not mean that you should stop. I think a lot more needs to be done. People are not going to take it seriously until it really affects them, but at least you would have laid the ground work in terms of information, in terms of their focus and in terms of developing the kind of patriotism that will be necessary to give support to these initiatives.

That is all.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as we draw towards the close of this millennium, a new mix of

factors and forces have emerged in the world which together are producing a new world economic order. The distinguished Deputy Prime Minister as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has rightly identified some of these forces, in fact, that ideology as a defining factor regulating the relations between states and it is called the collapse of the Cold War, the information technology in the world, the growth of major trading alliances, the new emphasis on cross border trade, the collapse of tariff barriers and many other factors that are now indicating quite clearly that a country like Barbados and in most countries in the world must now be emphasising trade, acquisition of relevant technology, promotion of tourism, promotion of direct foreign investment into the country and the promotion of investors in our offshore financial services.

There are among the new emphases of our foreign policy. They have to be so if we are to adjust to this new world. And so, I want to commend the Minister for her initiatives starting last year and earlier in trying to get a debate in the House on foreign affairs, foreign trade matters such as this, so as to sensitise the country and the House to the new world in which we are living and will be more so in the new millennium.

I want to make as my first point, however, a view which I have heard at more than a few international conferences and that is that the collapse of the Cold War put in danger many thousands of jobs across the United States of America.

America had developed a massive bureaucracy to service the Cold War, if I may put it that way. And, in order that they should not lose their jobs they have now defined the trade in narcotics as their new preoccupation and their main bogey and they are taking countries like the Caribbean and suggesting to us that this is the area in which we now need to be investing much of our time and attention. Although it is important that we do not allow an invasion of the culture of the narcotic trading in the country, lest it destroys an entire generation of our people, we always have to bear in mind what is informing all of this energy and initiatives by the United States of America. It is happening at the same time as America remains the largest producer and consumer of narcotics in the world.

It is a very important point which we do not hear about in this part of the world, but I hear it in Europe and elsewhere when I am in attendance at international conferences and I hear it too, from Americans so that we have to see all of that in context. But one of the features of the new world has got to do with depth of any sense of guilt on the part of the former imperial powers with respect to how they had governed these colonies. Indeed, it was that sense of guilt that informed the first LOME to a large extent. We have to do something for them. It is not enough that we should set them free in a formal way. We have to do something for them.

So that donor fatigue which is now an outgrowth of the depth of that sense of guilt, is one of the features of this new world order and the rigid insistence that all countries for that matter or most, except the poorest of the poor should be graduated from any form of concessionary aid. The point that I wish to make here is - and that is why it is so important that Barbados, an educated and confident people operating in the mainstream of the English language - few people can speak it as well as we do, we are confident, educated and we are in the mainstream of the English language. That is very important because we are in contact with the best ideas in the world when you are in the mainstream of the English language which we are in.

It is important that we should take a leadership position in combatting some of these treads. That is why we have to appreciate the importance of our Prime Minister's leadership of the Commonwealth Committee, trying to find a new index to determining financial flows for countries like Barbados. 3.25p.m.

It is important that we should seize on the vulnerability index, because however much we applaud our own material development, the point is, that like many of the countries in the Caribbean and countries themselves around the world, we are vulnerable to serious movement in commodity prices.

It is forgotten that in the early 1980's the ECU dropped in value against the US dollar overnight and we lost $40 million in sugar. One member now no longer in here, who misunderstood what was happening shouted that it was no big thing. It was to give rise to price support. We are vulnerable to earthquakes. We are vulnerable to hurricanes. We are vulnerable to climate change, the effect of climate change is insufficiently appreciated. That all of this considerable investment which we have on the coastline in our tourism plant could, if the experts are correct in their forecasting, be wiped out overnight.

So that it is very important for these and other reasons that we arrive at a vulnerability index as a substitute for the gross domestic product in determining the level of financial support that these countries should have.

By way of joinder of issues, I want to say quickly that it is about time that Barbados both promote and exploit the things to which we are respected around the world.

This is one of the few countries in the world, the developing world, third world where you can have elections with no foreign observers. That we can have free and fair elections and elections free from fear. It is an important dimension that is often overlooked and that no one...

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: And I am reminded no crime and violence, says a great deal for us.

There are foreign observers in Jamaica. There are foreign observers in Guyana and in many other countries of the region.

The talk which I had heard a few years ago about Barbados developing an institute of democracy for democracy and free elections is something that we need to continue to pursue. I am glad to hear from the Minister, though it is *sotto voce,* that she continues to work on it.

We are also a country highly respected for our human development indices and all sorts of activities should be going on here. In other areas, people should be coming here to learn how to play cricket. This whole notion of an institute for cricket should be located here and it should be built around a cricket museum for the Caribbean. So that a lot of Commonwealth people who are interested still in cricket could come here and understand and go through our museum to show the growth and development of Caribbean cricket. We are known around the world for that. So those are just some of the things that we need to emphasize and exploit.

I say further, Mr. Chairman, that we need to strengthen our influence in Africa in particular and the establishment of the Pan-African Institute might not be going far enough. We can touch the lives of many thousands and hundreds of thousands of people if only they can get four Barbadian Public Health Inspectors to serve a short period, those who are in good health after retirement.

If only they could get some good Barbadian primary school teachers to serve for short periods. If only they can get some Barbadian planners in the field of tourism and in other areas and that is something that we need to pursue on a vigorous basis.

I became acutely aware of it when I was in Namibia a few years ago. I talk to great length with Ambassador Michael King about it. We remain in agreement that that is an area where Barbados' influence can be developed, if only we can get Barbadian expertise in these areas.

So these are very practical things that we can do to help the promotion of our image and regard for ourselves by third world countries.

But I want to deal a little, Sir, with what is happening in relation to the World Trade Organization because that is one of the new developments in this new economic order which we talk about.

Many commentators take the view that it really reflects a decline in western civilization, because over centuries most civilizations have tended or tried to mitigate the effects of the laws of the jungle. The survival of the fittest and the notion that might is right.

But it has come back now as we are about to enter a new millennium as the dominant notions regulating and informing world trade, because that is essentially what the World Trade Organization is about. It is hard to resist the notion that it reflects a decline in European and western civilization. The fittest will survive. Those who are mighty will dominate and dictate.

The notion that every country has one vote is only formally true. In reality they have in effect little or no voting power. Already those who are familiar with its early workings will tell you that the Americans and the Europeans and the Japanese and a few others make the decisions. They hear about them sometime after.

A lot of small countries do not even know how to access the World Trade Organization. There are one or two pamphlets which have now come out in recent years. One in Sierra Leone and one or two other places about that.

Now, that raises important issues about how do we prepare ourselves to become aware and to try to manoeuvre our way around the rules. Because in this New World Order we must ensure that we buy as much adjustment time as possible. It is very important that we buy adjustment time.

But you can only begin to do that and we have been told yesterday by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South what a colossal error of self-destruction to its own dairy industry. The Jamaicans may not appreciate that they could have converted non-tariff barriers into tariff barriers and the Canadians did it, but the Jamaicans did not appreciate it and in effect destroyed what was one of the finest dairy industries in this part of the world.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes. 3.35p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: So, Mr. Chairman, the Minister needs to tell us where we are going to train these people, the new diplomats that are going to be necessarily strong in trade matters and trade theory and trade policy issues of the world, strong in negotiations and strong in a lot of the imperatives of the new era.

I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has recently been on record indicating to the University that they must fashion new courses in the area of international trade. We want to hear from the Minister where

are these new and young diplomats going to be trained and whether the Institute in Trinidad is equipped to do the job that needs to be done.

I want to make one final suggestion and I will come back. It has to clo, Sir, with the relevance perhaps of recruiting some of the members of our private sector, short-term appointments in the foreign service to address and to attack particular issues from time to time. It seems to me that there is a case for that now as we move into the future. I, too, would like to hear the Minister address that particular issue.

Like the American Caesar at Badang I promise you to be back, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that the matter which now engages the attention of this Honourable Chamber will come to be the single most important matter in terms of the charting of our affairs over the course of the next two decades. To that extent it behoves each and every one of us to have a complete and comprehensive understanding as to what are the issues at stake before us as a country and us as a region.

I was very pleased to hear the comments of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who I think clearly reflected the sentiments shared by us all in this Honourable Chamber as to the motivation, of the American Government in that particular concern, but may I say really of most of the developed countries as they relate to small island developing economies. Indeed, we must not expect any special favours even in their process of seeking to determine what will be the final result of the state of our relations in the new global economic order.

I think, Sir, that if we remember that we too have strategic interests that must equally be placed on the table in the negotiation process and that we must not only respond to their strategic interests that we will come out far better than we have within recent decades and certainly in the post-independence era.

One of the clear examples of this of course was the manner in which we dealt as a region and as individual countries with the issue of the Shiprider Agreement where the American Government clearly had a strategic interest to protect and to further in respect of the expansion of their drug enforcement agencies' capacities within the sovereign waters and territories of our region.

It was unfortunate that some Governments in the Caribbean found it possible to accede to those requests without clear identification as to the strategic interests of their own nationals and their own countries or indeed of the region. One would hope, Sir, that given the level of attention that these issues have now had in the course of regional Heads of Government meetings and a growing attention within the Press although it is my submission, Sir, that the Press in the Caribbean still is not paying sufficient attention to the public education of the people of the region in respect of the developments within the international trading economies and within where we have to go and what we have to do to prepare ourselves.

If you take that into account you will realise that it is far more likely that there be coordinated approaches and responses to any kind of approaches in the future although to our regret there are still glimpses of individual countries who seem to want to buckle or for want of a better phrase to play up to those who have a lot to offer with riches, and I speak specifically, of course, of the American Government and their entreaties to individual countries using the approach of the promise of benefits in return for our acceding to certain issues.

What is unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, is that there are still people generally who will not see beyond and behind these issues and that is why I was grateful to hear the explanation given by the Leader of the Opposition because it is really not about bananas alone. It is about a far more fundamental issue that reflects how we will relate to them, how they will govern their own domestic arrangements in terms of production and in terms of trade and the reality is that even when we believed on the eve of the independence movement and subsequent to the independence movement that there was a sense of guilt perpetuating their relationships with us, in truth and in fact it was only a desire to protect their strategic interests in terms of the control of our primary product in a global economy that still places weight on the production of commodities.

The reality is that the global economy has in large measure shifted from being a commodity based economy to one that is driven more and more by services and speculation. To that extent, our usefulness has been outlived and we have to recognise this in the preparation of our own strategic position. Equally, Sir, we must recognise that simply to stand by and to cry as if you were the small one who deserves special attention because you are small that there is no one who is going to listen to you and we have to be as businesslike in the preparation of our strategic position as they have been with theirs. Even though we recognise that the constraint of affordability is there for us because of the numerous negotiations that must be confronted, whether it is in Lome, whether it is with the WTO, whether it is with the FTAA, whether it is with other bilateral regional agreements like CARICAN or whatever.

Within CARICOM in terms of the creation of the single market economy we have to determine how best we can utilise what little resources we have to the maximum results that are capable for us. One of the things that concern

me is that we have also accepted lock, stock and barrel in some regard what should be the strategic interest for discussion. I feel absolutely strongly and it is not the first time that I have spoken in this Honourable Chamber that the whole issue of our cultural heritage and the protection of our heritage needs to be addressed in the context of international trade discussions.

The movement of information is as much a topic for negotiation as the movement of goods and services and indeed, 1 go back to the Leader of the Opposition who yesterday in a second reading speech on this matter spoke to the issue of images going in and coming to our children without just simply accepting that they were capable of access into our drawing rooms and into our countries.

We have a situation where technology has made the transmission of images very cheap and very possible and indeed the affordability of receiving those images is now such that almost every household in this country can have access to some form of cable television or delayed transmission through videos. Unless we sit down as a country and as a region and determine what our strategic interests are in terms of the protection of our cultural heritage we would be like lambs to the slaughter and we would continue to fight a losing battle because part of the educational process is not only to teach children skills but to reinforce values among children as to how they are expected to behave as individuals and as a community. To that extent, if you are seeking to develop one set of values within them eight hours a day, five days a week and they are receiving images all of the rest of the time, whether it is through television, whether through games, whether through whatever else, then you have a running battle as to what are the standards of behaviour that they should seek to aspire to and should reflect as decent and honourable in terms of their behaviour as Barbadians as they mature. 3.45 p.m.

This issue of the protection of our cultural heritage, I would like to submit to the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs that while we talk about it that we need to give it higher priority in terms of part of the protection of our strategic interest as a small island state in these negotiations.

Equally, within the whole issue of cultural trade policy there will be other issues - other issues that will relate to how royalties are collected, as to how, for example, radio stations and television stations who are required to log their programming, how in fact do you require them and regulate them in doing so because, to a large extent, you have within North America, for example, a lot of Caribbean music being played on established radio stations and in the U. K. established arid pirate radio stations but there is no requirement or there is no understanding of Caribbean music, be it reggae or calypso as a separate genre of music. To that extent, our artistes when the logs are prepared and the computations are done to distribute the vast amounts of moneys that are collected, do not share in the same way that when we prepare our logs, a substantial percentage of what is prepared relates to North America and European music and the money goes back out of Barbados as foreign exchange to those artistes without any receipts coming in from North America or Europe. These are the kinds of issues, Mr. Chairman, that we hope as a Government to be addressing.

There has been established a Culture Trade Policy Committee which hopefully will feed in its recommendations to the national negotiation mechanism chaired by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and we sincerely hope, Sir, that these issues will come to the fore. Of course, our cultural industries are affected by the more mainstream issues such as the issue of intellectual property rights, the issues pertaining to competition, issues pertaining to investment, all of those things ultimately will have an impact on cultural industries as well because they are just another form of service industry in its own right. There are in fact, also, other peculiar areas that require our consideration both from an economic perspective as well as a national and nature building perspective.

I also want to suggest too, Sir, that as it relates to the issues of our human resource development, there is absolutely no doubt that this level of negotiation and this level of opening up of our systems put an even greater burden on us to complete the task of adjustments and reform within the areas of training and education in our systems. I speak now not only of Barbados because we have started to take the steps in that direction. Indeed, when one considers the plight of other Caribbean countries and the quantum leap that must now be made for them to be able to meet the human resource needs of simply making the adjustments in their economy as a result of what is taking place, there is no doubt in my mind that we are going to have to take a far more co-operative approach to meeting the training and educational needs of the region.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister this morning, in his speech, addressed the issue of greater co-operation in strategic areas within Barbados and the OECS such as finance, health, and education. And I am happy to report to this Honourable Chamber that one of the things that has come out of the negotiation of the Education Sector Enhancement Programme commonly known as EduTech 2000 is an agreement to establish at the University of the West Indies a regional centre of evaluation and research and development in education. How will that affect us or benefit us?

The reality is, Sir, that each country of the Caribbean with separate Ministries of Education is pursuing their own. development of criteria reference tests, their own development of curriculum, their own development of educational resources and their own development of all other forms of testing and certification. A lot of it is technical work that constitutes serious replication. But if we were to

stop and determine who best could address which of the developments of those technical areas within the region, we would be able to achieve far more in a far shorter period of time thereby being able to access what is produced at this centre at Cave Hill instead of us having now to go and employ human resources to go and create criteria reference tests because we do not want to use them from the United States of America because they are not culturally relevant and they may be pedagogically off in some instances as well. And instead of us now having to wait a year for that to be developed, we can access the materials there because there has been a model developed that is applicable to all countries within the Caribbean.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute left.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have already started to put in train the work of this Regional Evaluation Centre at the University of the West Indies and substantial assistance will therefore go to each and every country within the OECS and Barbados in terms of the development of a whole range of technical services and technical materials to allow us to make that transition in terms of our educational and training processes so that we will be better able, Sir, to meet some of these very, very daunting challenges. But challenges which I see as we move into the 21st century as greater opportunities than we have had in our existence as an independent country. I am going to come back to this issue because there are some matters which I have not yet addressed which I would wish to do.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this , debate at a time where I would like to share some other ideas. That is, even though I support the countries who grow and reap bananas, I think it would be foolish of us to continue believing that they can continue to export this crop without looking at an alternative. As you know, Sir, this world is a very competitive world and we must beseech them to look at alternative crops.

I am saying, Sir, that we in the Caribbean, we have been fortunate to be able to grow Sea Island cotton, a crop that is unique to the Caribbean and we have not exploited that crop. At the same time that we have not exploited that crop we expect to compete with other nations who are producing products that we are producing and we expect to get special favours. I am saying that we have to take the high road and we need to get down to the basics of certain things and acknowledge that we need to plant the cotton. The problem with the cotton crop within the Caribbean especially in Barbados, it appears to me, is a problem where we can plant the crop and we can produce it well but w@ have nobody to reap it. I am saying that the same way we had that particular problem with our sugar cane and we found a solution that we can easily find that solution by allowing the farmers to encourage people to come to the island to reap the cotton crop. This foolishness that you do not want imported labourers into the country must stop. We must look at these issues as national issues and we must look at them from the point of view that at the end of the day it is the foreign exchange that we need from these crops and that we must maximise our foreign exchange.

I am saying that it does not make sense to have a crop like cotton and allow minor matters to stop us from producing a very important crop. We cannot just, Sir, plant cotton and export the cotton to another country. We must be prepared, using our ambassadors, to find the necessary equipment to produce the cotton from the primary stage to the tertiary stage where the value added is much higher. I am saying to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to make sure that those ambassadors that we pay from the Treasury of Barbados that they do their work and make sure that the necessary technology to allow us to see cotton as a serious alternative crop is allowed to happen pretty soon. 3.55p.m.

It is rather interesting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepts the point but the Ministry of Agriculture does not accept the point. It tells, Sir, that there is a serious problem at the Cabinet level in this Parliament.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Sir, on a point of order. We have an old divided opinion on this matter in Barbados about cotton and...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Is it okras? But you cannot grow each one at the same time. Yet we produce some of the finest sea island cotton in Barbados. To get the technology to gin and to produce the value added that you are talking about, is not difficult to do.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad to hear that and that is why I expect that by next year this problem will be solved and I do not have to come back to Parliament and speak about this. As I said yesterday, I do not expect to go backwards. I am a forward thinking politician and I expect that by next year we will be dealing with the ginning aspect of it and not the growing of it.

It is fascinating to hear people supporting the countries within the Caribbean about bananas and one important point has not been made. If the bananas from the Caribbean were like the other bananas and if they were equal, I would understand us having this particular problem, but it must be said that the quality of the banana in the Caribbean is much better than the other bananas. The same way the Frenchman knows that there are different types of wine, we must be able to tell the Americans that the quality of the bananas that we are exporting is much better and that their bananas are inferior. The Frenchman is not scared to say that his wine is

better, so how come we in the Caribbean are producing a better crop, but yet still we are behaving as if the banana that we are exporting is the same thing as the 'garbage' that is being exported from elsewhere.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that if we have proper Ambassadors within the Caribbean -1 should not have to be making this point in this Parliament today - it would have been said already. There is no way anybody could come now and produce a wine and put it on the world market and tell the Frenchman that it is better than his because he would say, "No. My wine is better," and he would give reasons why. But because it is just a simple banana product, we feel that it is nothing. So I am saying to this Parliament that even though I sit on this Side, I am still prepared to give you free advice, but you must be prepared to take that advice and use it wisely.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I now turn to local matters, Sir, because as you know, we do not export bananas, but as a Caribbean man, I had to lend my support to my Caribbean brothers.

I now move to the other crop in Barbados that I feel we have the ability to export and as I said already it is the onion crop. I cannot understand why in a country like this, we allow people to ship crops from thousands of miles away to our country when we could produce that crop better than anybody else and the evidence is here now, Sir. We allow people from all over the other side of the world to come through our waters to dump onions on us and we are not prepared to do likewise.

Mr. Chairman, if Barbados is going to be serious about going into the 21 st century and if we are going to worry about the globalisation, we have to worry about points like these. We must be prepared to take the crops that we can produce - and produce well, and export them. But I am going to tell you something, Mr. Chairman, we have a private sector in this country who feel that once they are producing enough for this country, they feel well and do not want to do anything more. I am saying that the Government of the day must understand that any incentives to that sector must be incentives to help export crops, instead of growing those crops for only the local market.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the local market should be safeguarded for the small farmers in this country and any larger farmers who want to come on the market must be prepared to come in at the level where they can export. In any country where the small farmers are looking after the local side of it, there is no need for you to encourage any other farmer, producer or manufacturer to come in to share the local market. They must come in at the level to export, Sir, and that brings me to. ADM.

ADM must be told that when you look at all the legislation that is passing in this world that we understand their agendas and people in Barbados must understand that ADM has no commitment to Barbados, but it has a commitment to the country of its origin. And we must not allow ADM to come into Barbados and destroy our poultry industry. Because, they know full well that for two years now, whenever there is a shortage of chicken in Barbados, an import licence will be issued to support the fanners overseas.

I am saying, Sir, that two years ago when the poultry market was reduced, that was a sad error, because that was the gateway to allow ADM and its friends to...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes. Of course, this is foreign trade. You have to develop your local market in order to export. I told you that already.

I am saying, Sir, that ADM's interest in Barbados cannot be the same interest as the R.C. Hatcheries interest in Barbados and the small farmers'. The local poultry industry is being serviced by the small farmers and those other producers and if ADM and Roberts Manufacturing want to come in, they must come in to export and not to push out the small fanners.

I am saying to the Government also, Mr. Chairman, that the Government must understand that its role must be the role to make sure that the costs to the farmers are at such a rate that they can easily make a profit and be encouraged to expand to export. I have no problem of the Government owning the feed plant and making sure it breaks even, or for the Government to enter into an arrangement...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is too high for you. That is not true.

There is no reason, Sir, why the Government cannot get involved in this to make sure that the cost to the poultry industry is such that they can export.

Do you ever wonder why, Sir, a country like the United States where the climatic conditions are such that they could still export to us and we cannot export to them? Do you know why? It is because of our private sector. We have allowed them to believe that the local market is the only target they should see and I am saying that must change.

That is why I am saying that whatever is going to happen in this economy, it must have a policy coming from the Government and if Government fails to dictate that policy the economy of Barbados will be destroyed by people who do not have the interest. One only has to go back to what happened in the early 1990s when the waters were rough, Sir,

those foreign companies made certain decisions and I ask this Parliament to be forewarned because we cannot allow this to happen again.

It is okay when it happens for the first time, Sir, but we must remember that the base of everything must be at home. That is why I an\ saying that this Parliament - and we are fortunate to have the Minister of Foreign Trade whom I believe is prepared to speak to the other Ministers and the Prime Minister to make sure that the foolishness that is about to happen in this country and the livelihood of men who have developed the poultry industry, that they would be given the opportunity to go on and I am going to tell you why.

There is a particular processor in this country, Sir, who wanted to export chicken over two years ago, but an official from the Ministry of Agriculture - because he was forward thinking and going ahead of the *status quo* - he was stopped. I am calling on the Minister of Foreign Trade, Sir, to make sure that that processor is allowed to export because it means foreign exchange to this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is why, Sir, I am saying that in going into the 21 st century we must be sure that those industries that can bring foreign exchange to this country, must be given the opportunity to help develop the foreign exchange market in this country and I am extremely grateful to you, Sir. 4.05 p.m.

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

Mr. D. T. GILL: Yes, Sir, that's right. Mr. Chairman, I join this debate not so much to speak about hard trade about Mercosur and the impact of ASEAN or NAFTA but rather, Sir, to look at an adjunct to this foreign trade and further to a comment made by the substantive Minister when she said that quite soon they will be having a conference to which the relevant Ministries will be invited.

I would mention the Ministry of Education. Sir, I think that this is the Ministry which has to inculcate and to prepare young people at a very tender age in appreciating languages other than English. Yesterday over lunch in the dining hall this surfaced. It is not very common for a young person doing CXC's these days to be studying the humanities and doing two foreign languages or the humanities and three foreign languages, or Science and another two or three foreign languages.

I remember, Sir, that when I left the 5th form and went to the 6th form I had a little difficulty in giving up French, because I found it was a beautiful language and it offered me an opportunity to see and to learn and to know about another culture as a way of expressing yourself. My liking for the subject was so great and for the foreign languages that even when I was at University doing the Sciences I even took my electives in Spanish and French at a later date. But like a muscle if you do not use it, it becomes atrophied. So a foreign language is one which you must practise and keep in touch with.

I am not saying, Sir, that you have to study the hard literatures of the Moliere and such like, but you should be doing the conversational French or Spanish or Portuguese or what have you.

In a recent visit to Canada, I was a little taken back to see how virtually all of French Canada if not all, the signs, directions everything now are in French and lots of Barbadians and second and third generations West Indians have left and gone to Toronto because they suffered by thinking that the world revolves around the English language and I found, Sir, that the blacks in that part of Canada who hold the real good jobs are not of Barbadian extract or even Jamaican. They are usually of Haitian extract.

I am told nonetheless that when they do hold the good jobs it will be likely in Toronto but they have virtually fled Montreal city.

Only two mornings ago, Sir, I heard the programme "Opportunity Calls," in which they were advertising for a job and it is the first time that I have heard a language from the Middle East coming into the job profile. I think it was a job being offered at Geneva and I think it was Spanish, Portuguese and Lebanese.

So, Sir, that goes to show how the world is decreasing in size, how it is getting smaller when it comes to certain areas of doing business, international affairs, etc.

Sir, when I listen to someone like the Palestinian politician, Miss Anan Ashwari, when that woman speaks, she speaks in a way that you must listen to her. She has a good knowledge of the English language, she is fluent, she is idiomatic and you must listen to her. It is different from her speaking and an interpreter speaking. Late last year, I happened while surfing the shortwave to hear Mrs. Brutland and her name featured fairly widely a few months ago in our region. Sir, to hear her speak about her intentions for health in the developing world. Sir, she commanded the programme. Again she was fluent and no wonder, Sir, that she would have done as well as she did in vying for that top position.

It brings me back, Sir, to the use of video having failed us. I think, Sir, that we should be able to go out to a video shop without having to go to Community College in the evening, you do it at your leisure, and be able to access a series of video tapes, plug them in and study at your leisure and your pleasure.

But, Sir, again, it is the laziness of our culture and our attachment, Sir, to the English language that has us in that frame of mind.

Sir, I am sure that lots of our young teenagers would love as I said earlier, they do not want to do the hard literature about foreign countries, but they would love to be able to be fluently conversational, where you could have visits to neighbouring Spanish, French and Dutch countries. Because, Sir, if you know a man's language and you know his culture. I think the Honourable Minister for Education, she delved into that earlier on when speaking about the African diaspora and how we could make better contact - you could literally look him in the face and begin to think how he or she is thinking.

Only last year there was a Conference here, the ACP/EU Conference and one out of every three persons at that Conference and I exclude the English delegation, one out of every three, Sir, spoke either French, Spanish and maybe Dutch and/or two.

Sir, this again tells you why certain countries and certain cultures are able to hold the top jobs and are able to command and control the runnings of certain international organizations.

Sir, the other thing which concerns me, is the importation of certain products in which the literature or more the uses, the contents, not so much the contents are listed in a language other than English. I am particularly concerned with drugs and I use drugs in its wider sense, pharmaceuticals coming out of Europe. You can go to a broker and you can buy them from Britain, only to discover that the language is in Spanish, in French or one of those languages.

Sir, it gets even worse, when that preparation is an intravenous preparation or a preparation which is used for a life-threatening disease. 4.15 p.m.

I know of instances, Sir, where the person in charge of actually dispensing the medication had to contact someone versed in the language. There are certain subtleties in languages and what might very well apply to, let us say, language used for socialising is somewhat different. There are various nuances and subtleties which do occur, let us say, when you are using it for medicinal purposes.

That, Sir, not only applies to Europe, and we know the extent of the European Union and the trade in Europe, but it also applies to America and the Free Trade Zone where preparations are done in Central America, Puerto Rico, imported into Minneapolis or within the land mass of North America and then exported for consumption in the Caribbean.

We really cannot classify it as dumping in but in terms of safety, in terms of best use you could classify it as dumping because I do not think that any country outside of the mainland America could export to America. The mode of use, the indications, *et cetera* are printed in a language other than English.

Sir, we have to be not only versed in the mechanisms of doing business, not only versed in understanding how business is done in the various countries that make up the EU, or America, or NAFTA but I think we must know the language. We must know the culture and have more than just a passing appreciation for how things are done in that country.

Sir, with those few comments, I make my contribution to this debate.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, when I last spoke, I was analysing the Report on Human Rights published by the Americans earlier this year. I was making 12 criticisms of that report and I had done 10.1 wish to finish with the next two, Sir.

At page 7 of the Report it says, and I quote, Sir:

> "Human rights monitors continued to criticise the inconsistency in sentencing for rape, incest, and statutory rape, which is often left to the discretion of the judges."

I have said elsewhere and I repeat for the record that that comment of the State Department betrays an ignorance of the Barbados criminal justice system and especially the sentencing function.

I think murder is one of the few cases, perhaps the Cane Fires (Prevention) legislation is another, where the law makes provision for a mandatory sentence. Section 2 of the Offences Against the Person Act says that if convicted for murder a person shall be sentenced to and shall suffer death. That is mandatory. I think in the Cane Fires (Prevention) legislation, it is provided that there is a penalty of imprisonment and no fine.

Apart from those two examples, generally, a sentence is entirely within the purview and discretion of the judicial officer who can fine, put you on probation, in prison, whatever, depending on the nature and extent of the offence. To say that a discretion is often left to the judge implies that there is something unusual whereas it is the usual situation. It is the norm for the magistrate or a judge who have a discretion to exercise.

In addition to that, Sir, I cannot recall last year any correspondence in the Press complaining about inconsistency of sentencing in respect of sexual offences. I recall a few years ago there was one such case where the sentence was rather lenient in another case a ruling where a man's hand was chopped off down Cheapside and that photograph appeared on the front page of *The Advocate* four or five years ago. I recall that the accused was given probation and that was a sentence that outraged many people. These are all aberrations that one gets in the system from time to time, and in all systems.

You have it in the States. You have it in England. There is an attitude, I read somewhere recently of some judge, 1 think it was in Italy, who made the comment that outraged feminist groups that you could not rape somebody if they were wearing jeans. You get these odd things among judicial officers from time to time but they are very often the exception. It is really an unfair attack on the Judiciary of Barbados for the Americans to publish what they have published at page 7. I feel constrained to defend the Judiciary of Barbados against unfair criticism. As I say from time to time you will get an aberration but it is not usual.

The 12th comment I want to make on the report, Sir, relates to page 9 of the report and they say this:

> "While there is no specific law prohibiting anti-union discrimination, the courts provide a method of redress for employees alleging unfair dismissal. The courts commonly award monetary compensation but rarely order reemployment."

Now, again I am not nit-picking. I said at the very beginning that there are errors of law and fact in the report and this is an error of law. We do not have any law of unfair dismissal in Barbados yet. Such legislation is being drafted. What we have is the common law of wrongful dismissal. Unfair dismissal is a different concept that rests upon statute and to say that the courts rarely order reinstatement, the courts have no power under wrongful dismissal to order reinstatement. If we had a law of unfair dismissal such as England has had since 1971 you will find a power of reinstatement but at common law under the concept of wrongful dismissal there is no power for the courts to order reinstatement. So again that is a fairly large case of ignorance on their part. 4.25 p.m.

I have been strong in my criticisms of that report because I want to send a message that when people are doing evaluations on a country, first of all they should strive for accuracy and secondly I think it is entirely inappropriate; that a draft of what they want to publish should as a matter of courtesy be sent to the country that is being evaluated for their comment without prejudice to the ultimate publication of the report.

I will explain that, Sir. I want to use the analogy of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force which is a regional organisation aimed at promoting anti-money laundering measures and legislation throughout the region. Barbados joined in 1992. All of us in the region are members except Guyana. One of the methodologies that is used to ensure the attainment of reasonable standards and the improvement of systems and laws is the process of mutual evaluation. And in the system of mutual evaluation what happens is that you get three persons from three different territories who go into another country and have a look at their laws, regulations, practices and so on and then write a report. So that when Barbados was mutually evaluated in 1997, so far as memory serves me, there was a lawyer from Bermuda, somebody from the Bahamas and a third person - I cannot remember which country now - but three people from the region, experts in different disciplines and spheres. You had a lawyer, a police officer and a chartered accountant who came to Barbados, met with a wide range of persons in Barbados, examined all of our relevant laws and then prepared a draft report on Barbados which was sent to us for comment and we were able where there were errors of fact or law to point out to them that there were errors.

The substance of their report and indeed the criticisms we did not interfere with. They had the right to say that they found weaknesses in the international business companies legislation or whatever it is they were commenting on. At least we had the courtesy of seeing what they were going to write as a report on Barbados before it was published.

In the case of the American Report on Human Rights none of that procedure was done. They just published what they wanted and therefore I feel obliged to be critical of some of what had come out and what is really nonsense. I do not mince my words. The fact that they published another report recently on the drug situation in the region and they were very complimentary to Barbados and to me in particular - they made specific reference to me, something about leadership which I have given in the region and my involvement and so on - all of that is well and good. I am too old now to be flattered even by a Government and that is not going to stop me from being critical of them when they write foolishness. I have my country's interest to protect. I want them and everybody clearly to understand. To write nicely about me is not going to stop me from having to do my duty.

I am going to send the comments on the report on the human rights to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for onward transmission to the embassy in Barbados. I have learnt my lesson from last year when I had an oral conversation with the then ambassador and as pleasant as she was she said that she could not do much about it and apologised for the inaccuracies. This year the comments are going in writing.

Honourable Members will perhaps be able to help me but I find on page 5 of the Report - now this is a report about the Government of Barbados last year. Here is what it says, Sir:

> "Critics allege that the Goven ;nt..."

I have not included this because I cannot say that this is an error of law or fact but it is a value judgment with which I do not agree. So it is open for us to dispute but let us just recall that this is 1998 we are talking about.

> "Critics allege that the Government sometimes uses its influence to discourage media reporting on sensitive issues."

I am not aware of that. I want the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with this.

> "Critics allege that the Government sometimes uses its influence to discourage media reporting on sensitive issues, but the Press remained vigorously critical of the Government on a broad span of issues."

That is not my recollection of the year 1998. What is the Press? What are they talking about, letters to the press, politically inspired by both sides? The people on the call-in-programmes put up by both sides to call in? Is that what they are talking about? Or are they talking about editorial opinion? If they are talking about editorial opinion that is a different matter.

I really cannot say that the editorial opinions in the two newspapers last year were vigorously critical of the Government on a broad span of issues, I cannot agree with that. It is a value judgment, highly subjective. That is the kind of thing you find in this report.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from this it is that the Press of Barbados in dealing with these kinds of evaluations of their country ought to be more critical, ought to be more probing, ought to be more analytical and ought to read the whole report and not just pick out a page which refers to some allegation of police brutality.

I have not seen anybody, even the Sunday columnist that does not have a column unless he is attacking me or the Prime Minister and I have not seen any of the employees of either newspaper take this report and analyse it. I feel that they are doing a disservice. They just rely on what the North American editor extracts and sends down. He is just publishing an extract. They should get the report and then go through it. If this was in Britain, you would have found the *Sunday Times* or the *Observer* reporting two pages to tearing this to threads by people working for that newspaper. We do not have that kind of analysis here, that kind of journalist here that would analyse this. 4,35 p.m.

I have tried to help them by looking at some of the specific areas which I think were worthy of criticism or comment in the report and hope that that will point the way for them to be more analytical and critical in their duties.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr, CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St James South.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The issues relating to foreign affairs and foreign trade will, in the next century, be largely focussed on issues relating to environment. There was a time when there was a perception that issues relating to the environment were largely esoteric, engaged in by intellectuals by those who had the green lobby, whoever they were - Green Peace and eccentrics - people who had a lot of time to do nothing in particular. Increasingly there has been a recognition that sustained economic development is inextricably linked to the protection of the environment in all its manifestation whether it is the land itself, the water or the air and in terms too of the physical environment of islands such as ourselves which are truly environmentally dependent which define ourselves by reference to things environmental.

The quality of the sand, the quality of our bathing water, the quality of our air, the character of the island, all of these have to do with environment. In fact, each of these also relates to an issue of economic viability. For if any of the Caribbean was to suffer a serious devastation of its physical environment in the way that Montserrat has, you can see how very rapidly the country as that we know and the climate would cease to exist. That the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens, that the tourism product - its economic base can just disappear even if not overnight certainly in a matter of months.

Therefore, the focus of foreign affairs and foreign trade has come to be hinged on things environmental. Many of the international treaties which we have signed whether it relates to the sea or the air or protection of our marine resources, all have to do with environment. This is going to be a new area into which we are going to have to go. The focus of attention on this area is going to be increasing.

We have already seen in fact, the way in which WTO rules can apply when we have a monocrop economy as is the case of bananas for the Eastern Caribbean. In fact, agrarian societies generally are in very serious trouble and those which have not sought to diversity but have allowed their economies to remain rooted in one crop are in fact in very serious trouble now and will continue to be in the future. There is no society in the world now where agriculture is not being heavily subsidised by the Government in order to stop the industry from collapsing. Our relationship to the understanding of the WTO, its regulatory role, its rules, its organisation and the criteria which it sets up for issues relating to trade is critical to the way we develop our own environment in the future and the way in which we protect it.

Already there is a call for eco-labelling coming out of WTO which is going to have implications for trade. We have been accustomed moving goods through the Caribbean but as we seek to go into niche services, into branded products

and to move extra regionally and to retain access to the international market, the way in which we exploit our resources is going to become more and more important.

When one goes into the supermarket - I do not know how many men in here do but I know that the women do - when one sees various types of fish and other products and you see labels on them which say eco-friendly, that is part of the WTO regime where one has to list the content of the can and the kind offish that it is. To meet the new international criteria one is going to have to use specific methods of fishing that are deemed to be environmentally friendly, that are not destructive to mutiple species. This is going to be a problem for us in Barbados because we have developed and allowed to continue an open fishing industry where there are no moratoriums on fishing except for sea eggs, where in fact large palagics - this is the dolphin and species of that sort, Sir are taken out of the waters without us knowing what quantities are taken out, what age or what sex. Whether in fact the breeding seasons for these fish are being paid attention to. Already there is talk that the fish stock is significantly decreasing, that catches are becoming smaller and smaller and that one is having to go further and further out to make the kind of catch that one would previously have made some years ago.

Unless we develop a regime where we start to take these kinds of records and statistics to protect, for instance our fish stock, we are going to find that any attempt we make to export on the regional or international market under the WTO's rules that we are not going to be able to satisfy criteria. When people speak to WTO and when people speak to eco-labelling, it is sometimes without a full consciousness of the implications at the level of trade and of the implications of the level of the fishing industry. The average fisherman out there is going to have some role in what happens to us at the international level. We have to start preparing our industry for WTO compatibility. Equally, any indigenous industry is going to be impacted by and how indigenous products are produced, how they are labelled and how they are marketed. It is also going to be affected by the WTO rules. Many of the products which we have in the market, there are methods of production which we use now which are not necessarily WTO compatible and if we are hoping to have them recognised as branded products which we can get into the niches on the international market, then we are going to have to make sure that our production processes comply with the WTO rules.

In fact, what will happen is that the way we do business at the level of production and at the level of industry is going to have to be rapidly transformed if, in fact, we are not to find ourselves in a position similiar to that of the Eastern Caribbean where they have depended heavily on one product and where they have used one methodology of production or nearly so for a long time.

I recognise that there is a qualitative difference between what is happening with the banana industry and the examples that I have been using. But the point of the change of methods of production and the change in the way we do business, the way we label, the way we reap, the way we harvest and the way we market our product is really critical to how we are going to move forward in the future in terms of foreign trade. 4.45 p.m.

Equally important are the new trading regimes which are emerging and the new trading blocs which we are seeing align themselves in the world. I believe that more and more and this is why the Pan-African Commission is so important. We are going to have to look to the South for cooperation. Traditionally, we have looked to the North for cooperation whether in matters of trade, whether in matters of finance, we look to them for all sorts of things. But if we are to form effective trading routes, then regional cooperation is going to become far more important and rather than looking to the First World or the developed world all the time, we are going to have to seek stronger relationships for the purposes of trade with countries which are developing like ourselves. That is true of Africa. It is true of the Pacific. It is true of all those other small island developing states which are encountering challenges similar to our own and which are seeking resolutions to those challenges in very much the same way that we are.

The new trading blocs which are emerging are going to force us, I believe, to have new trading relationships and to seek new partnerships with those people whom we have not thought of previously as our friends. Geographical divides are not going to be as important as they were, and so we may find ourselves reaching out to the Pacific islanders, for instance, who have much in common with the Caribbean and to states in Africa and to other countries such as Bhutan which are similar to us in one way or another.

Another area in which this is going to be important is a lot of the issues coming out of Kyoto and the Kyoto Conference. Emissions trading for instance, the whole issue of sinking boats, whether we are going to have the Caribbean Sea defined in the way that forests are, because it is going to be important once those trading relationships, environmental issues, the whole notion of trading in air and trading in the reduction of green house gases and those persons who have no emissions schedules and low emission levels are going to be able to benefit from that, because of the larger countries with high emission levels seeking to get recognition at the international level for their attempts to reduce by doing a trade.

The notion that one can trade in air is such a new thing. It is literally what came out of Kyoto, the whole notion of emissions trading and the trading in reduction levels is a

concept that is new, but we have to prepare ourselves at the level of policy to be able to realise the benefits that are out there for us environmentally.

And while we have been in the forefront of the development of the notion of small island developing states as entities which need special protection regimes and which have peculiar concerns that must be given priority on the international agenda, we now have to start by defining a way in which we can exploit the international benefits to be derived by the very fact that we are small states that our emission for green house gases may be low, that we have issues of great environmental benefit, like the forest of Guyana and the Caribbean Sea, for instance and in this regard, we must look at how we are going to protect the Caribbean Sea.

The Honourable Member for the City has rightly said that the sea and how we use the resources of the sea, how they are exploited, whether they are used for science, whether they are used for trade, whether they are used to nourish and feed, or whether in fact there is yet some exploration yet to be done that will define how we use our marine resources, is going to be one of the major challenges that we have.

The Caribbean islands by virtue of their proximity to one another, are equally vulnerable to accidents of nature in the Caribbean Sea, as they are to oil spills, to spills of toxic waste, of nuclear waste, to spills of any sort from ships moving through our shipping lines. As more and more exploration of the sea goes on and its economic potential is exploited then those persons with the resources are going to be encroaching on the region to seek to exploit our own waters, well knowing that we do not have the military resources to protect ourselves. Therefore, regional cooperation for marine protection, not only of the sea itself in terms of beach quality water, but in terms of our resources and in terms of the economic potential of the sea is critical.

We have already started within the Ministry of Environment and working together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the kinds of discussions at the regional level that will seek to foster cooperation for protection of the Caribbean Sea which is critical to all of the islands of the Caribbean. We have developed not only protection in relation to oil spills, but managed to get agreement at the international level for the prior informed consent to which I spoke previously that relates to ships coming into the region having to declare what in fact they are carrying in the holds and the extent to which that can pose a threat to the water of the region.

But, there is more work to be done.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There is a lot of scientific exploration going on out there by the super powers who well know the value of the marine resources, not only of the Caribbean, but the rest of the world and who are in a better position to explore those resources than we are.

I remember that we had taken a policy paper to the Cabinet to have legislation drafted to ensure that scientific exploration cannot go on in the Caribbean Sea - certainly in Barbados' exclusive economic zone, without reference to Barbados and that is something that used to happen. Thai legislation, Sir, should soon be ready, but that is only the first of many steps that we have to take, if we are to protect ourselves environmentally.

Environmental protection is not esoteric. The econom ic development and stability of the region and Barbados, in particular, are fully dependent on it. I hope that other people are speaking, Sir, so I can come back again on these matters.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that you would now report progress to His Honour the SPEAKER, and beg for leave to sit again.

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

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended for 15 minutes and that we will come back at 10 minutes past 5.00 o'clock.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 4.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply to that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am pleased that Honourable Members have made such useful interventions under this Head.

Surely, I understood that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was going to address the matter of culture and trade policy arid I am grateful to the matters that she raised under that Head.

I thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for references to cotton. Perhaps a lot more needs to be spoken about that. He forget that we had a cotton factory and it was not called cotton factory for nothing.

When I was a child there was a cotton gin in Barbados. I do not consider myself qualified to respond to those highly technical matters and perhaps in due course, maybe on another occasion, the Minister of Agriculture may feel later on in the debate when we get to that Head, the Ministry of Agriculture, may wish to address matters of cotton and onions.

I thank the Honourable Minister of Health for her very timely intervention as she spoke very feelingly on the Environment, as an important if not the leading aspect or the leading edge of sustainable development.

There were one or two other matters that I wanted to speak to very briefly, Pan-African Affairs. I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition imagines that they could be any difficulty in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in respect of the interface that it must necessarily have with the Commission of Pan-African Affairs.

Indeed, I invited the Commissioner in and he came accompanied by Dr. Faria and we had a very long and engaging session. They set out in writing to me before hand, their programme and I was able to address those areas of it which would have implications for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Our understanding of the African Diaspora is so imperfect and so poorly understood, that I felt it necessary to point out to him that we have a lot of work to do here on Barbadians. I well remember as Minister of Tourism, a couple of years ago inviting a number of Afro-Americans to come here to Barbados on a fact-finding kind of meeting which allowed them to relax and enjoy themselves as well, they came as part of the Carib News Conference, also people like Charlie Randall and former Mayor Dinkins of New York.

It was almost a point of embarrassment, at the lack of interest shown in these important movers and shakers in the United States. People who are members of the congressional black caucus, who are willing to help us to put our case and to plead our case for us.

Indeed, when President Clinton was here, I well recall him making a point that it is in our interest to recognise where lobbyists can help us to promote our interests in Washington and indeed the United States generally.

In the area of tourism I have long recognised and I think that this is beyond contradiction that we have an attitude towards Afro-American tourists in this country which is not a good one. There is an attitude that somehow they are not treated in quite the same way as their white counterparts. We get letters of complaint all the time and for the most part the Afro-American tourists who come to Barbados are people who are in the higher income brackets and who are high spenders who want the best of accommodation.

It is a very lucrative market for us. It is a market which is there for the picking, and we need to pursue it more vigorously than we do. And indeed, what we can persuade them to get here we have to be more welcoming and recognise them as part of the Diaspora to which we too belong when they do get here.

So there is a lot of work that has to be done on the home front. I was able to discuss with the Commissioner and his associate, how we see Africa at this time from the perspective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a huge continent, very diverse. West Africa is as diverse and different from Southern Africa as perhaps Southern United States is from Canada, or Alaska is from parts of Latin America.

Again, East and West, we think that it is a huge homogenous society, it is not. There have some of the same difficulties that we have.

I so often go to meetings where Africans have to fly to Europe to get from one part of Africa to another, and I say to them that we have this difficulty in the Caribbean. To get across the water to Suriname, you have got to go to either Curacao or to Miami. So the difficulties we have in terms of airlift and other matters which continued to help to divide us exist in Africa as they do in this part of the world.

We talked at length to Southern Africa which I think our major trust is going to be not only South Africa but other Southern African States. I pointed out that there are only three Kingdoms left in Africa and I particularly want to be able to invite the King of Swaziland to come to Barbados at some point. Swaziland is not different from Barbados in that

sugar is a major market for them. Rising in tourism, I saw many good-looking golf courses there and so on and there is a great deal by the way of exchange.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph made the point about technical cooperation. We have had a long ongoing technical cooperation between ourselves and some of the African countries for many years and in much earlier administrations I remember we sent teachers to Namibia. We are in the process of sending teachers to Botswana but the thing is we have to wait for the request to be made. It is not for us to say you need X and you need Y.

I well remember last July President Mandela sat down with the CARICOM Heads at their meeting in St. Lucia. I was privileged to be allowed into that meeting and he made the point and I am not ever going to forget it, he said, we so much want to do business with you. We want to trade with you. We want to have these exchanges with you, but you have to recognise where South Africa is. He said to the Heads, do you know what is the most pressing issue in South Africa today, water. He then related a number of very interesting stories to us which spoke to water scarcity in South Africa.

This morning I picked up the newspaper and I saw again President Mandela making a point that South Africa's democracy is very young and still very much underdeveloped and we have to recognise that.

We had a mission, in my judgement perhaps too premature a mission to South Africa. CARICOM itself mounted one last year and many of our people are willing to do business and South Africans are willing to do business as well. But like Cuba and Haiti we find that their business systems, their legal systems, their customs, immigration and so on are so different from ours. This process will take time and we can be helpful.

We can be very helpful in this connection because there are many areas in which we ourselves have grown and honed expertise not the least of which is free and fair elections as has been said here and we stand ready and open-handed and we constantly make this point that in terms of technical cooperation, please tell us and we would do whatever we can to help, and indeed we are doing. Perhaps it is not attended with a great deal of fanfare when we have these technical cooperation arrangements and exchanges and maybe there is more that we can do in terms of our public relations in that regard. But it is an ongoing process which I think will accelerate, I said to the Commissioner of Pan-African Affairs Commission that I hope this was an area where we could escalate.

We spoke about political imperatives in Africa. I drew to his attention the fact that as a member of SEMAG, Barbados in the person of myself sits on the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. This is a group of eight Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, who has the task of monitoring human rights and other such issues in the Commonwealth.

Nigeria is very high on our agenda, so is Sierra Leone. We thought that that was going to get lower on the agenda. In fact all the appearances gave us to believe that that was so, and then problems erupted again and Sierra Leone is in a very serious situation today. Nigeria has had its elections, and I am happy to say that SEMAG is going to meet at the end of April and Nigeria's path back into the Commonwealth I hope will be secured by that time. 5.25 p.m.

The Nigerians are very definite and determined to move to civilian Government. They are very conscious of the fact that in all of the areas of their independence only ibur have been years when there has been a civilian Government. They are determined and they have actually fixed the date that May 29 will be the day when they move from military to civilian rule again. It is very important for this to happen because of the monumental influence that Nigeria has, not only in West Africa, and not only in Anglophone Africa but in Africa, generally speaking. It is a rich country.

I recall that there was a time some years ago when there actually was an airlift between Barbados and Nigeria. That is not as easy to put in place and to maintain as might appear from the surface. Airlines do not run unless they have load factors in excess of -60%, in other words unless they are going to, at least, break even and however we may want to have these linkages they have to make money and airlines cost a great deal of money. We know this in the Caribbean. I do not think that Africa has been anymore successful than ourselves in rationalizing airlift up and down that continent.

We spoke too of the Diaspora. I talked about work we were doing in the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. Indeed, in this term of office we are hoping to widen the scope of FURN and, indeed, FURN may have to undergo a name change because I think that FURN is more than about returning nationals. FURN must encompass nationals who may not be thinking about returning at this time but who may be only returning nationals potentially, but there is a great deal that we can be doing to enhance the relationship between Barbadians in the Diaspora and ourselves by way of trade and investment.

When I was in the Ministry of Tourism and speaking to the Barbados Tourism Authority about the need for us to

conceptualise something really different and spectacular as a millennium project, what I suggested, among other things, was a home-coming event which could go on for a long time. There is a lot of confusion about the millennium. The year 2000 really is the end of the second millennium and the year 2001 is really the beginning of the third millennium. It really does not matter. In a country like ours where tourism is the number one foreign exchange earner, we need to squeeze everything that we can out of it. We need to be doing spectacular events in 2000 and 2001, as long as we can stretch it out. In fact, we can begin now.

What is happening, Mr. Chairman, is that in many countries there are planning events which will tend to keep their nationals at home to celebrate their various millennial happenings and so on. It occurred to me that the one market that we could target at a millennium would be Barbadians who are living abroad and we have to plan it. It really has to be out of this world, different and very attractive that they would want to come home for the millennium. We have to start ringing that bell now. People have to start saving toward that now. People have to start thinking toward it now.

I imagine that the seven festivals that we have in any given year in Barbados would all be super special in 2000 and 2001 but there must be some specific event and it must be an event around something very special in Barbados which would make every Barbadian, no matter where they are in the world, somehow want to get home during the year 2000, or during the year 2001, however they can organise their business to do it. I am calling it the great millennial home coming. It does not matter what it is called. That is how I conceptualise it, how I conceive it.

Certainly, through FURN and through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade this is something that I am pushing.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Oh yes, special charters will be flying in, Concords like mad, the whole works, a gathering of ships. I would like to look out and see the whole of Carlisle Bay in nothing but ships on a particular day and there would be a particular hour at which they would sound their horns and salute Barbados. All of the usual things are going to happen. There is a National Planning Committee but 1 think we really need to be targeting those Barbadians abroad and it must be exciting and, as I said, attractive.

I have talked about this already. People should be booking passages all like now, so we are behind the game, so to speak. I hope that more and more people will catch onto this idea. Every club in Barbados, every service club, every Church group, every sporting group, everybody can find a way into the idea of the homecoming. Where else would Barbadians want to be on that special night or in that special month, or whenever with their families coming back to touch the rock? I think it will have a lot of appeal so that is something that FURN is having as a special project.

Mr. Chairman, we underestimate these things. The greatest exposition in the world is being planned for Hanover in Germany in 2000. These things happen to mark the end of a century furthermore the end of a millennium.

The Eiffel Tower in Paris, 1899 that was to mark the beginning of the new century, the 20th century. Here we are on the dawn of the 21st century. I am sorry the Right Honourable Prime Minister is not in his seat. I hope he can hear me but I have been working very hard trying to persuade him that we have to have a monument in Barbados that we will be able to point to and say that 100 years from now, 200 years from now this is what in Barbados will mark the new millennium.

I am thinking, again because in my tourism mode when I was holding that portfolio there is such spectacular development planned for Carlisle Bay that I thought that a new tower, we even had a sketch drawn, capturing the imagination of some people. It is capturing the imagination of those in the Ministry of Finance. I do not see any of them at this time but there should be a tower at Government Headquarters rising up behind with a panoramic view of Carlisle Bay. There are so many other things we are going to do but there really needs to be something that we could look at.

I remember when Government Headquarters housed all of the Ministries. The entire Government of Barbados was housed there. Today, Government Headquarters at Bay Street cannot even hold the Prime Minister's Ministries. The Ministry of the Civil Service will just have to find a berthing elsewhere. What we need is more office accommodation at that site which is now, I would think, a historic, almost verging upon a heritage site and so beautifully located, a beautifiil office tower with proper arrangements and a floor dedicated to the Prime Minister's personal offices, to the Cabinet Secretary and the Cabinet offices and so on.

We have outlived this building on Bay Street but it is still a beautiful building. It is very distinctive when you are flying along the west coast of Barbados. It stands out. It was well designed, thanks to the late Captain Tomlin. All of these are matters which make a difference, Mr. Chairman. People may think the location is perfect, a wonderful prospect across Carlisle Bay - ships standing in the roads there. We may not have had a natural deep water harbour but Carlisle Bay is one of the best anchorages in the Caribbean because of the natural roads that existed there to this day, ships stand out in the roads in Carlisle Bay that you do not see in other harbours. 5.35p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we must recognise that all of this goes to a vision of Barbados and I am getting now to the branding of Barbados and this is an initiative being taken in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well and it has very strong foreign trade impetus.

The point has been made in here and I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made the point when he was speaking. There are certain of our products which we have to brand if they are going to survive in this new world. We are not the only country making sugar. We are not the jewel in the crown of the British Empire any more. Those days have gone. Where sugar is going to go in terms of Lome we know already that its days are numbered and we have to find a way to brand our sugar. We all grew up with something called Demerara sugar. Everybody knows what Demerara sugar is.

Mr. Chairman, there are some in here who may not be so familiar with Demerara sugar but they would know about Scotch whiskey. We have to find a way to brand not only our sugar and our cotton according to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. We have to find a way to brand Barbados so that wherever in the world people see that symbol, that logo, whatever it is that we dream up in the end they will krow that it speaks of Barbados. You would not have to use words, just the symbol alone will say Barbados.

We have no idea how important this is. There are countries like Sweden, countries like Copenhagen and other Scandinavian countries who have spent a lot of money on consultants and they have spent a lot of money conceptualising a brand. If we do not do that, we are going to find that, as we are accustomed to, some people cannot distinguish us from other Caribbean countries.

Some people - not Caribbean people of course - think Barbados is part of Jamaica. They have no idea and there is no reason why they should. It is our duty to market ourselves. We are the product and this whole island is the product. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can have an initiative in that area. I would like to think that almost every Ministry if not all Ministries should now be looking for a way to hone in on that concept.

We have to brand Barbados. If we do not distinguish Barbados from others then we will go the route of all others, whichever group that is. We have been able to do it to some extent only in respect of our tourism product. Everybody in this region is hawking the sun, sand and sea, heritage, nature bay. We have our brand and other people have theirs, but there is something very distinctive about this Barbados.

In the area of foreign trade we must not think that this does not apply as well. It does. These are highly specialised areas in which foreign trade has to take the lead if necessary. There are some matters that I am going to be moving. The Ministry of Finance has given its blessing in respect of two of our missions. Funds for strengthening the mission at Geneva and at Miami.

Geneva is the home of the World Trade Organisation, the home of ILO, the home of WIPO and the home of WHO and a host of others. Perhaps at this time for us WTO and WIPO are the most important, bearing in mind where our strategic interests lie. We have at present one senior foreign officer who is doing a heroic job trying to monitor all of these.

It was always intended that we would upgrade the mission at Geneva. What I am proposing to do is to do it in a bottom-up procedural way. We need to put strong highly skilled technicians on the ground and strengthen the mission in that way before we would think of putting an ambassador and everything that goes, all the accoutrements that go with being an ambassador there.

To put an ambassador at the beginning he has no support base and you are wasting your time and your money. This is the most costly country in the world. I well remember as a Minister of Health going to the World Health Organisation looking at what the Government was giving me to spend. I had to choose between eating and sleeping. You either chose a decent hotel room and you ate in the cheapest places and at coffee break time you stuffed yourself. This is how these things used to be done. Times have changed now

This is only some of what we ask for. As I said, we are going to do it incrementally over a two-year period. We are moving a sum of $749 242 in respect of the strengthening of the mission at Geneva and $222 870 for the upgrading of Miami.

It is my considered judgment, Mr. Chairman, that Miami has already overtaken New York as the Consulate General of the greatest importance for us in the early twenty-first century. I am not looking at today and tomorrow and yesterday. We are looking forward. Miami is the crossroads now and if you are looking at forays that we have to make into Central America, into South America, we have already spoken of trading potential in this area and in services as well including tourism.

Miami has overtaken New York in that regard. It is also the home of the cruise industry. Certainly that part of it which cruises the Caribbean it is an important hub in terms of airlift for us and in many other respects. A lot of Barbadian nationals and indeed a number of US nationals on the whole are moving away from the North and North East into what is called the sun belt. Atlanta is said to be the fastest growing of those centres but Florida and Texas believe it or not have more nationals living in those states in the United States than we might want to believe.

So we have to upgrade Miami and bear in mind that the Consulate General at Miami was a pilot that we put in place for the country team and it has worked wonderfully well and the time has come when it cannot be a pilot forever when it must move from being a pilot now to a full fledged consulate general. There are other priorities but these are the two top priorities and so we are requesting a moving of those sums in respect to the missions.

Also, the care of the Barbados National Committee on External Trade Negotiations, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has several assignments. Certainly in excess of half a dozen assignments. He chairs the Board of the Needham's Point Company. He is chairing the Maritime Demarcation Grouping in addition to being our National Chief Negotiator in respect of all of our external trade negotiations and there are a host of other things as well.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South does need to have some support service. His personal legal secretary cannot be expected to do all of this work. A lot of this work he is doing virtually *pro bono* for which Barbados must be eternally indebted to him. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade being the coordinating Ministry and bearing in mind that the negotiating process on both sides of the Atlantic and within CARICOM as well is going to accelerate tremendously during the course of the coming financial year it is important that he should have a secretary.

We are asking for a move-in in the sum of $23 603 in respect of the provision for the post of a secretary for the Chairman of the National Committee on External Trade Negotiations. When we were in Surinam two weeks ago at the Heads meeting in session a very sad disclosure was made known to the Heads. An employee of the CARICOM Secretariat who has been with the Secretariat for in excess of 10 years and who is a very hardworking person as indeed they all are because they are so understaffed there and who has given yeoman service has found herself overtaken with a very rare illness which requires urgent bone marrow transplant if she is going to be able to survive. She is fortunate in that her parents live in Florida and they have identified a hospital in Florida. She is waiting for a donor. It is riot going to be an easy thing to find a donor. They are looking among family first and then beyond family but the surgery is going to be very costly.

The insurance which is here in Barbados, a company in Barbados services CARICOM, will not be able to satisfy the expenses and particularly with respect to the surgery. The CARICOM Heads want to be helpful in this regard. We cannot leave her to die. They were beating about their heads how best this could be done and Prime Minister Arthur gave an undertaking that under the Barbados Medical Scheme, the Medical Aid Scheme we would advance this money. This money will be reimbursable let me emphasise that. We will advance a reimbursable sum by the various CARICOM countries because literally there is no time to pass the hat. Somebody has to do it. Somebody has to say we are going to put it up and we will be reimbursed so we are asking for BDSS500 000 to be put up to supplement the Medical Scheme but it really would come out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. We have to be in a state of readiness. I do not know, maybe from tomorrow. There will be no time to butt about at that stage. 5.45 p.m.

In respect of those three items, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 32 as amended stand part.

HEAD 24 - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANS-FORMATION - $59 839 390 390

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Estimates of Expenditure for the Ministry of Social Transformation for the financial year 1999 to 2000 will reflect the importance placed by the Government in the interest of its poor and also the needy citizens and those otherwise vulnerable groups in this society. Sir, an expenditure of $59 839 390 is being sought to allow our Ministry to carry out its mandate which basically is to re-define the social landscape of this country and secure a national social grip which would make all Barbadians proud.

This new Ministry, Sir, will provide for the rationalisation of the social services and welfare agencies and has as its primary focus the poor, the disadvantaged and the disabled. Sir, at present, we are currently preparing a new policy document which will give new effect and direction to this new Ministry. The policy framework will see a new impetus given to the provisions on social services and is expected to result in significant efficiencies in the sector. As I have said earlier, Sir, this paper will shortly be submitted to Cabinet for its approval. Sir, the paper, however, embraces several adjustments to the existing arrangements and will see a new and improved way of delivering the product particularly to all poor people.

Sir, one of the things that we want to do in the new Ministry of Social Transformation is to look at how best we can bring all of the members of the various boards and committees and sub-committees under the new Ministry together in addition with the NGOs and CVOs to sit down and also come up with new initiatives for the Ministry of Social Transformation. In other words, what we are looking to do is to seek and create nice partnerships not only with the NGOs and CVOs sector but also with the private sector in Barbados. I know, Sir, at this particular point a lot of attention is focussed on this new Ministry of Social Transformation. Some people in Barbados when they hear the word transformation might try to refer to biblical standards and expect miracles but certainly this is not a miracle creation Ministry.

Asides.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: It is one that is going to take careful planning and at the same time implementation as we go along the way.

Sir, I sat in this Chair on this Side and I listened to the Honourable Member for St. John and he was expressing some concern about the role of the Community Development Division and certainly, Sir, he expressed his concern with a kind of a passion. I knew when the Honourable Member for St. John was doing the television programme because he too himself came up as a product of the same Community Development Division and there was a programme at the time on television, a community programme called 'Understanding'. I remembered that he participated in that programme.

Sir, this area of Community Development, has always interested me. In actual fact, Sir, it is one that the new Ministry of Social Transformation is going to be paying a lot of attention to particularly now with a lot of crime developing within our community. The Community Development Division has to play a very important and developmental role in the process of stabilising the communities in Barbados, Sir.

Sir, I am a product of one of the most famous communities in Barbados, that is the community of Pinelands. It was a community that was once termed as a bastardised community and nothing good could come out of this community. In actual fact, Sir, if you refer to biblical terminology, you would want to know if anything good could come out of Nazareth. Sir, because there were a few good community workers existing at the community department at that time, Sir, that stigma was eventually changed because high praise at this point and time must go to a former Community Development Division officer Mr. Ralph Walker who was actually sent to that community to fail at a time when we were involved in what you would call community gang activity. It was the notorious warfare between Pinelands Community and Chapman Lane Community. At that time you could not even come in the Pine and you had to tell people that you lived somewhere else. Sir, I am well aware of what the power of organised community activity can do to transform communities in Barbados.

I am saying, Sir, that the Community Development Division has a very positive role to play. All through this debate I have been hearing about heroes and that we are creating a Heroes Square and all of that. I support that one hundred percent. If my genesis is to the community, I believe that every single community in Barbados and this is something that the Ministry of Social Transformation is going to do, we are going to look at creating halls of fame in every single community in Barbados.

The rationale behind that is that there are so many community minded persons and people living in communities that would have made significant contributions to their respective communities that would not receive a national honour that we have had to set up our own places of recognition for these people who have played significant roles within their communities. 5.55 p.m.

We are talking about transformation. The word has been bandied around but I am talking about it in a practical sense, Sir. If we are going to transform the communities, a lot of community centres in Barbados are named after the particular areas, I am saying, let us use Pinelands model of development as an example.

The Parkinson School was named after Rawle Parkinson and similarly Parkinson Community Centre was named after him, but there are so many other people in the communities they live in that have made contributions. One of the things that we want to look at is to actually change the Community Centres' names in Barbados and naming them after people in most of the communities who would have contributed significantly to those communities.

Sir, when we are talking about communities, several community centres were refurbished and renovated and two new community facilities will be constructed and I will name them. Weston in St. James, Bathsheba in St. Joseph, St. Marks in St. Philip, Speightstown in St. Peter and Ellerton and the two new community centres that will be constructed are Haynesville in St. James and St. Martin's in St. Philip. There is another one which will be constructed but that is coming directly from the Attorney General's Office and that is one at Charles Rowe Bridge.

Asides.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, the problem is that we just cannot build community centres and buildings without proper programming. We must have proper programming. It is therefore against that background that we are going to launch an initiative, the national assault on communities. Let me explain that because if I say assault some people might believe that we are bringing in an army, the police force and the defence force on communities in Barbados. Certainly, Sir, that is not the idea and I would like to spell it out clearly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: This Community Assault Programme, Sir, will ensure the allocation of resources, and if I may quote, Sir:

"This informant guide will involve all the sporting organisations in Barbados, the cultural organisations, Sir,

enterprise and employment creation, social and environmental enhancement and the general infrastructural development. The project will involve several dominant, as well as other agencies of which a task force is expected to be established shortly to structure the intervention strategies and expected outcomes."

Now, Sir, it is very important that we have programmes in place at the community level. It is going to stabilise our communities. When we take the model of Pinelands you will realise it is a model that I want to spread throughout Barbados. I would like to use the Pinelands model throughout all the communities in Barbados, so that we would have heightened community activities in all the communities in Barbados.

Sir, we also have to realise that the Royal Barbados Police Force public relations play a very meaningful role in all the communities in helping with this stabilising effort. The problem in Barbados is that we deal with the effect of crime and not the causes. Sir, I am trying to target some of the most densely populated communities in Barbados and initiate the right type of programming that would bring a kind of pride and sustainable, economic development within those communities. Also, Sir, we will try to concentrate on new initiatives within the community, for example community tourism projects. Again, by using the Pinelands model, I would like to see a number of the other communities in Barbados get involved in more community-based tourism projects.

For too long, Sir, the tourists have been arriving at the Grantley Adams Airport and the Sea Port and going on what I would call a tourist reservation - in my view. That is on the south coast and on the west coast, spreading all that valuable foreign exchange along that coast and not coming into the communities. What I want to do is to make sure that the Communities Development Division finally places this developmental role within the communities by establishing these community tourism projects and it must happen. Because, in the final analysis, the Ministry of Social Transformation in the eyes of the public of Barbados must be seen to be doing just what the term of reference says, transform the communities in Barbados.

Sir, if we are going to do that effectively then we are going to look at the problem of crime. The time has come when every playing field in Barbados should be lighted to include night activities. Let me say why, Sir. Again, using the Pinelands model, we are lighting the field at the Parkinson Community Centre and there is no community in Barbados that has as much night activity, particularly when the Night Soccer Tournament is being played. Sir, what I am saying is that if we use this model, we will see a great decrease in criminal activity in Barbados.

Sir, while I say that, it brings me to a very important point. $6.4 million has been allocated to the National Assistance Board. The very name of the National Assistance Board implies that it is a national institution. On a day-to-day basis in the new Ministry, we get several complaints incoming, not only from representatives, but from all strata of the society about the delivery of services. Sometimes people cannot get assistance, so we cannot have a national institution, like the National Assistance Board and every day people are crying out for assistance and that assistance is not being delivered.

Sir, I intend under the new policy paper to reconstruct the National Assistance Board so that it would play a more meaningful role and provide a faster and more efficient delivery of services. Let us take one segment of the National Assistance Board and look at the welfare housing. There are a number of old people living across Barbados in these welfare houses. These welfare houses do not have water borne toilet facilities. It means that at night when it rains, some old people who could hardly see have to go out in the yard and walk to the toilet.

Sir, you know the condition of those pit toilets. They are only six feet deep and how infected they could become, for example, with cockroaches and centipedes and those people endure stress on a daily basis. 6.05 p.m.

The time has come, Sir, as we go into the new millennium, that we got to look at the new approaches and changes. I am very emotional about this, Sir, because either through the legal framework of the Ministry, we are going to compulsorily acquire those lands that the welfare houses are on or in cases without having to take that route use moral persuasion, Sir, to acquire those lands so that our senior citizens will live lives that are far more comfortable.

We cannot have a situation in 1999 as we go into a new century, Sir, where this condition continues to prevail. Something must be done and done right away.

Also, Sir, maintenance. Maintenance of these welfare houses, Sir, is going to be in top priority. I am proposing that a group of selected specialist carpenters and artisans be selected to maintain these welfare houses that are stretched across Barbados, Sir. I am very serious about it, Sir.

In addition, Sir, I remember the National Assistance Board when I was an employee there. We built over 543 houses in a single year. Too much, Sir, if we did not have the agency of the Urban Development Commission in St. Michael, Sir, my God I do not know what would be happening to the repair programme throughout Barbados.

I am saying now, Sir, that the time has come when the National Assistance Board will play the role that government has given it to play, Sir, beginning from the new financial year.

Sir, I want to express another point, Sir, and that point is, that there are a number of persons on a daily basis who walk into the National Assistance Board seeking assistance. I am sure that the programme has over a thousand applications for repair work, Sir.

Therefore, in order to meet this great demand for repair of houses of Barbados what we will have to do now, Sir, is to restructure the housing welfare programme. That is, Sir, by bringing in a chief technical officer. There are currently three or four technical officers, Sir, but bringing in a technical officer to oversee the work and at the medium section of it, bringing in Supervisors, Sir, let me explain why.

When materials leave the National Assistance Board to go out, Sir, there is no real way of checking on those materials, Sir. What you need, Sir, is a system of Supervisors in place to check those materials, Sir. The National Assistance Board needs a storeroom where to store the material and then at the same time, Sir, have a storeroom clerk put in place that will allow for more efficiency of that department, Sir.

Sir, I am very concerned about this, because if we are going to deliver the services under the Ministry of Social Transformation to poor Barbadians, we have got to have the right machinery, mechanisms and principles in place to do this job, Sir.

Sir, the time has come when every single department that delivers these social services to Barbadians, Sir, must play the role that have been given to them and the mandate, Sir.

You take also, Sir, to establish, the Promotions Committee at the Board again, alright, and this Promotions Committee, Sir, would play the role, as a fund-raising agent and this will raise funds for all the senior citizens' programmes.

When I was on that Side, Sir, I always used to talk about programmes geared for senior citizens of Barbados, Sir. I talked about the memory bank, Sir, and I intend, Sir, to bring back this system. The memory bank basically, Sir, is a system that exists in Trinidad and Jamaica only. In Trinidad they have the OPEC system, in Barbados we are trying to develop it so that for historic events we can tap on the memories of our senior citizens and have them stored for posterity. At least you have living people to talk about these events and share their experiences.

Currently, Sir, the drama programme. We are hoping to revitalize that drama programme so again to add meaningful activity to the senior citizens lives, Sir. Currently we are looking at an exchange reciprocal programme between Grenada and Barbados. The senior citizens in Grenada and the senior citizens in Barbados, where the senior citizens from Grenada will come over and do a drama exchange and also later our senior citizens under the National Assistance Board drama programme, Sir, will go over to Grenada.

Sir, for too long, Sir, we have been saying to people when you get sixty-five years old you are supposed to basically go in a home or somewhere and sit down and that is the end of your life. I am saying no. We must revitalize and bring about new activity for senior citizens. Sir.

One of the scariest things that is certainly happening in Barbados, Sir, is the abandonment of the elderly in our society.

Sir, if we are to be a caring and understanding nation. Sir, then therefore, we have to look at agencies that are going to help develop programmes for our senior citizens.

Sir, the Soroptimist Club is doing a wonderful job. I am hoping to develop another programme called The Friends of the Elderly Programme, where people are involved in community activity to go into the various homes throughout Barbados and talk, Sir, and discuss and reenact programmes for them, to make the senior citizens live more useful lives. Sir.

Sir, another aspect of the National Assistance Board programme that we are looking at, is the whole system of the home help programme. The care of the elderly, Sir, cannot be a Monday to Friday exercise only. The care of the elderly have to be seven days a week exercise.

When you examine it, Sir, our home helpers are either working, some of them on a five-day week or some of them on a three-day week. I intend to bring a little more equity across the Board for those home helpers.

You will find that since the programme started in about 1981, that there are some home helpers who have been with the programme from the inception and are still working on three days, while some that came after them, are working four to five days. We need to bring a little more equity, Sir.

In actual fact, Sir, what we are hoping to do is to have all the home helpers who were employed at the National Assistance Board put on a five-d^ veek programme, Sir, but we cannot do it instantly. It wii. ^ a phasing in method. We have looked at it, we are examining it, but this is very very important, Sir.

Home help, seems to lend to most of the home-helpers mind as a kind of temporary service, Sir. We intend to change that to home care where they will go into the homes and really take on the role that they have to do. A lot of training and retraining will have to go into this particular department. The entire department would have as I said, Sir, to be reorganized. It is going to be playing an effective role, Sir.

Also, Sir, when we look at it, the Rapid Response Unit, we intend to set up a Rapid Response Unit within the National Assistance Board that will respond effectively to cases involving traffic, vehicular accidents, house fires and incidents of domestic violence, Sir, as well as other disasters.

Sir, there is something that I do not want to even think about and it is that most of these senior citizens are left unattended after the period of six o'clock. We are looking at a programme whereas we can respond to some of the emergencies that these old people might encounter at night, and we are looking at that.

So, that these old people, Sir, would know that at anytime that something happens that they have a system in place that could rapidly respond to their needs, Sir. 6.15 p.m.

Sir, as I was saying, the National Assistance Board has to play the role that it was designed to play. Beginning shortly, as I said, we will be getting all these committees to sit down together. We are going to work seriously with the NGO section, the CBO sector in Barbados so that again we could come up with meaningful programmes for our senior citizens.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: I beg to move, Sir, that this Head 24 stand part.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the new Minister in his new role and I must admit, listening to the new Minister, I know I have heard many of those statements before. The only difference, instead of hearing them before, now he has an opportunity to implement what he speaks of and I can give him the assurance that once he is fair in his doings he will get some support from this Side.

We want to remind him, Sir, that for the last four and a half years we have been calling on this particular department to deliver the goods throughout the constituencies that were represented by the Democratic Labour Party members and throughout Barbados on the whole. We have not seen the delivery the way we would have liked to have seen it. We would expect, Sir, that now that the vote is larger and there are plans to have certain changes within this Ministry that the poor people in the constituencies that are represented by the two members over here would not have to come to this House and complain anymore because the same way the other 26 would expect delivery of services to their constituents, that the constituents of the two over here are also people of Barbados, people who have contributed to Barbados and people who would expect to share in the pie. Home help, looking after the old people, providing services to the old and things like that cannot be a political issue. It is unfair, Sir, that in a country where you ask everybody to contribute that when it comes to a time where you are about to deliver a service that this service can only be seen in political terms.

I will say to you, Sir, I can appreciate that to certain groups of people but when it comes to young children and old people, I am not prepared to accept that because I feel that the young ones should be given an opportunity to develop and the old ones should be able in their old age to have a good life at least to look toward their God and to know where they will come shortly. But in a situation, Sir, where after they have worked hard for this country, Parliamentarians must still come and put a case for them, I am saying it is regrettable and not progressive but regressive and we expect this Parliament after receiving over $217 million in additional VAT revenue to at least look after the interest of the poor, the old and the young in this country.

Sometimes we talk a lot, Sir, about the poor and the old but there is a particular group in Barbados that we must also pay special attention to. There is a group of people who do not work, who cannot find work, who do not have any income, but we do not understand that those people also have to live and that is a group I would like to see the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East making special provision to look after also.

I am not saying that you must find or make special provision at any given time but I am saying that this particular Ministry, the Ministry of Transformation, must be able to transform the people from sitting on the block into the world of work. The opportunity must be provided for those young men and women who are willing to work for this particular Ministry to look after their particular problem.

I am reminded, Sir, it is social transformation which even makes my point even stronger. I am saying to the new Minister that once he does what is expected of him he will get the support from this Side but I warn him he must be fair and fearless too because while I say "fair", he must be fair to us and he must be fearless because I know that there are certain Members on that Side of the House who feel that

once you are not with them that services should not be provided to the particular constituency. I have heard the mouthings on many occasions.

I want to remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that he was once over here and he would understand how it feels to be sitting over here, have your interest the right place and people not delivering the goods even though you have presented a good case. He is in a privileged position today, Sir, because he understands how it feels and he understands what it means about true representation of one's people. That is why I am saying that the Honourable Member is a special case and he is not expected to behave like the others.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would understand that the expectation of the people of Barbados when it comes to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is different. He cannot behave in the same old way as others and much will be expected of him.

Mr. Chairman, I am also a bit worried how every year we can come to certain Ministries and we can vote large sums and sometimes when you look at the explanation and the breakdown you cannot find an explanation or a breakdown. I am saying that any time you can have a Head with over $12 million without a breakdown something is wrong. We feel that any Ministry that is running any department should be able to tell thjs Parliament what they are going to spend the particular money on and we need to know the breakdown.

Here is a good example, Sir. When one looks at Head 24, there is $11 million going to the Urban Development Commission. I do not know as it stands now how much of that will be spent on wages and salaries, whether the person that is given the mandate to look after this particular Head whether $10 million of this will be going in wages and only $1 million is going to do what should be done.

I personally feel, Mr. Chairman, that this Parliament should be given a breakdown of how this money is going to be spent so that I would know, Sir, how much of it I can expect. It is very regrettable that I am not part of urban because I must admit that as I said on the Floor of this House already I am not sure where I stand because I am not in urban. I am not getting the delivery from rural and I do not know where I stand. Sometimes I wonder what I should really tell my people in St. Lucy because Barbados is supposed to be divided up between two Commissions and we are not getting the delivery from neither urban or rural. I think it is time that we get the delivery in St. Lucy and St. John.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, St. John has the same problem too. We should know which of these Commissions we can expect delivery from. 6.25 p.m.

It seems to me that we are going to have to do something to get in urban because when one looks at the ads of the Urban Development Commission it seems to be performing well even though the Auditor General tends to believe they are operating too much below the line. I feel that even though that is happening we still need an explanation from them as to what the money was spent for below the line. But you must admit at least you can see something is being done.

It is regrettable, Mr. Chairman, for a person like myself to go throughout my constituency to list every single cart road, deliver it to a particular Commission or Ministry, go and look for every house that needs to be repaired, every old person that needs home help, every person that needs assistance, report that to the particular department, nothing is done and three days before the election the same Ministers who are supposed to do the work have the guts to come into a constituency to tell people you have not written them.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, it happened once and it is once too much. The next time it happens I can assure the particular Minister it will not happen like the last time. I will not allow anybody to come into any constituency that I have been given the privilege by the people to represent and tell lies on me and my people and leave the same way. They will have to report to the people. You can interpret that now.

I am saying, Sir, that the same way that the Government Members expect the Ministers to have visits within their constituencies they must understand that we are people too and we deserve the same rights and privileges as the people on that Side.

You must understand that when you spite the people of St. Lucy you are not spiting the DLP supporters you are also spiting your own supporters for the simple reason they wou Id have voted for you and they would have expected you to deliver to them. When you decide to ignore them, you are ignoring even your own people and no good Minister would allow that to happen and that is why I have the confidence that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East until he does something that I do not like - and then I will have to change my course. He understands how these things run because we have sat over here and we have discussed many approaches and he knows my stance when it comes to batting and I know he would not want to have that.

I am also saying, Sir, that I am a bit surprised to hear the Honourable Minister naming areas where he will be constructing community centres and so on and he did not

mention one for St. Lucy because if I were in his position I would have mentioned one for his constituency. So I am a bit surprised that he did not ask me for somewhere in St. Lucy where I would like a community centre constructed but 1 am not worried about that, fle is yet young in his Ministry and I can assure him that in Grape Hall, St. Lucy that there is a place where the Grape Hall cricket team plays and there is need for a community centre. That area is close to Archers Bay which right now should really have facilities but if the community centre is built at this present time it could help solve problems with the Ministry of Environment because we do not know when we will get any action out of that particular Ministry.

What the Honourable Member can do is to make sure he delivers those services to Grape Hall in St. Lucy. I also want him to understand that we have been promised some lights at Checker Hall and I took my friend the Minister of Education, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, to her word that we would have received those lights by now but seeing that the elections are over and they have not been delivered and I believe her plate is full I expect the Minister of Social Transformation to transform the area in Checker Hall by putting some lights.

1 agree with him that if you want to help deal with the crime in Barbados that you have to put up lights around the playing fields and areas like that throughout Barbados. I give my support in that. The best place he can start that is in St. Lucy because the crime level out there is low and you need to have that as an example for Barbados. You cannot go wrong, Sir, if you make sure and put those lights in those areas in St. Lucy.

Sir, I am saying that in terms of housing repairs it is true that for the last four and a half years we have complained about the National Assistance Board. It is true that the Board has not performed and everybody on this Side and that Side will agree and I believe that once the new Minister does what he has to do with the assistance of the Director I am sure that Christian gentleman who happens to be the Director of the NAB, who happens to be a fair man also, would deliver the goods to the people of Barbados.

Sir, I want to ask the Honourable Minister to make sure that he manages his finances at these departments very carefully. I have heard mention of employing more people but I am not sure that the problem is necessarily more people. Right now he has the hands-on approach and I will give way to him on this matter but I think the emphasis right now is more on delivery of services to the people of Barbados than necessarily employing more people because those poor people out there have been suffering. 6.35 p.m.

The people who have worked in the home help services have been asked to work for three days a week and no Government department or no Government after collecting over more than $200 million additional in VAT revenue should have people working three days a week.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time is up.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I think it is shameful and I think, Sir, that we should do something to make sure that those workers get five days a week and it is not six months from now but from tomorrow.

I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to salute the Honourable Minister for Social Transformation for presenting his first Estimates.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: It is also I am reminded his first speech on the correct side of the House.

Mr. Chairman, this establishment of this Ministry of Social Transformation and the $59.8 million originally allocated under this Head, represents one of the best uses of funds in this country. It is given by a Government which recognises that economic growth is certainly a necessary condition for improving the welfare of its people but it alone may not be sufficient. The establishment of the Ministry of Social Transformation to give greater focus on the poor, on the disadvantaged and the disabled in our society, is a truly laudable step. All of us must band together to ensure that this first step that has been made will at the end of the long journey result in all of us reaching a destination where, as a society, we recognise the fact that it is already there but that we operationalise it, that there is more than enough in terms of resources available to us in Barbados for everyone's need but certainly not enough for a few persons greed.

This Ministry, Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation when we have completed all the reforms that are planned, will be in a prime position to deliver the level of social services which are needed and indeed deserved by those three disadvantaged sections of the society which have been identified. In fact, Sir, whilst I have a broad national interest in this matter, I also have a parochial interest. In Christ Church, Sir, the parish of which the constituency of Christ Church East is located, many persons who are not intimately associated with the parish will fall into the trap of believing that all is well, that there is no poverty, that there are no disadvantaged persons.

Sir, it is useful to have the benefit of some empirical evidence to support some of these assertions because if there is one important thing which must characterise the work of

the Ministry of Social Transformation is that this almost $60 million which has been provided must be spent in such a way that is targeted and focused and that the benefits must go to those persons and those households that need it. If that is done, Sir, all of us could rest comfortably at the end of the day.

Sir, according to a survey, the final results of which were published in 1998; a survey on poverty and income distribution in Barbados which was sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank and conducted for one year during 1996 to 1997; poverty in Barbados, to take one section of these deserving groups, Sir, - poverty in Barbados, which according to the statistics that they use to identify the poverty line, occurs at a rate of an annual income of some $5 503 which in basic terms equates to about $115 per week, which according to their statistics represent the ability to purchase the basic food basket as designed by the National Nutrition Sector but also to cover some of the other necessities of life equated at about twice the cost of the food.

That statistic aside it at least gives a starting point for analysis and to allow for some targeting of the efforts. The result of that survey indicates that some 8.7% of households in Barbados can be classified as being below the poverty line. Which translates to about 7 000 households in Barbados which are below the poverty line.

Sir, of that 7 000 households when they were broken down into a sub-strata, 38% of those households were in St. Michael, largely because St. Michael is the most popular parish and some 30% were in the large but not so densely populated parishes of St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St. Lucy and St. Peter. Sir, in the two adjacent parishes, one of which I have an interest both as a resident and as a Member of Parliament, in Christ Church and St. Philip, that combined area in which part of the survey was done, some 25% of those 7 000 poor households reside in St. Philip and Christ Church. You will therefore understand, Mr. Chairman, if I make the plea on the Floor of this House on behalf of those residents of Christ Church East who happen to fall within that number of 7 000 households nationally, for the Ministry of Social Transformation to so speedily and effectively conclude the restructuring and focusing exercise in which it has embarked that sooner rather than later, the benefits of the agencies and of the services provided by the agencies which fall under this Ministry will be felt.

Every week, Sir, I am in my constituency office twice - on Thursdays and Saturdays. In addition, of course to being in and about and around the corners of the constituency. Amongst the folks that I see, Sir, amongst the average 75 or so persons per week that I see, included are a number of persons who have a grouse. A grouse in relation to the slow or non-response or inappropriate response of some officers in some of the agencies that are supposed to deliver services. If there is one place where not only public sector reform but basic human charity and basic Barbadian hospitality must manifest itself, it is in those agencies that have to interface with the poor, with the disadvantaged and with the disabled in the community. I am not complaining, Sir, about cases where people make applications and on the basis of the established criteria cannot be accommodated because clearly, Sir, there must be a starting point and ending point in terms of delivery of services. What we are talking about and what my constituency have complained about is the inability to get a simple response as if, when and how. Or sometimes, Sir, to be given the royal run around from Agency A to Agency B.

What we are proposing on this Side, what the Minister of Social Transformation has been mandated to do and which he has started on, Sir, in a manner in which all of us are very proud is to so reform those agencies that first of all an individual who requires the assistance of the state, to ensure that the overall benefit of the economic growth that we are experiencing, are able to be translated into these services, is for a different approach to be taken to this matter of case work. As the Minister has so well articulated, an individual who has issues relating to several of these agencies should not have to spend all of his time and what little funds he has on bus fares running up and down, up and down from agency to agency.

Mr. Chairman, you would know, Sir, as an active and effective parliamentarian yourself, Sir, also in Christ Church that one of the sad realities that we face is that usually in those households with problems, the problems are myriad. There are multiple problems. You have poverty problems in a household and when you check, Sir, you have a problem relating to discipline or the upbringing of the child. You have a problem, Sir, sometimes of an elderly person who needs care, sometimes a disability, all of these factors put together. We found it necessary to so reform the situation by bringing this Ministry of Social Transformation and changing the institutional framework to ensure that a family with a set of family problems ranging from the financial to that relating to care, would be able in a proper, dignified, confidential manner, one which respects the fact that although an individual may be poor, disadvantaged or disabled, they are no less worthy of respect than persons who walk in the highest echelons of this community.

Mr. Chairman, I am therefore supporting this allocation under this Head. I am looking forward to the pleasant reports coming back from my constituents concerning the change of approach.

Mr. Chairman, under this Head, in terms of help to the poor folks, I want to make a very very strong case for an improvement in the speed of delivery of services via the National Assistance Board in particular. 6.45 p.m.

I am pleased to note that the Minister has clearly defined the reform he is putting in place, but all of us as Members of Parliament, Sir, have particularly been bombarded and properly so, with requests for assistance in helping constituents to get through the bureaucracy to obtain the little help. The lady from Inch Marlow who is unable to work because of a medical condition, who is short of income in the household because one of the breadwinners is in prison and the other one is overseas. Who, Sir, at present has the lone bed in the household getting wet because the siding, as one would say - on the above side, of the house is bad.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask the Honourable Member to wind up, now. You have one minute remaining.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I was just warming up. And, what that is all about, Sir, is the simple fact that the state, given the needed set of circumstances there is charged with the responsibility for those things, All it needs is to prevent a further deterioration of the circumstances, by providing that form of assistance.

So, Sir, in closing I would also make one other observation. We as a Government are acting on behalf of the wider society to discharge what we recognise as that social responsibility to help those who are disadvantaged, But an observation that I must make, Sir, is that along with this heightened awareness of our responsibility, along with the bold steps that we have taken to discharge that responsibility, there also will appear in some quarters - on a small scale, but growing, to be a move on the part of some members of families to go beyond the stage that has started unfortunately, of abandoning old people, for example, in the Emergency Ward at the hospital, but sometimes pose an imposition to provide assistance to the less w§ll»Qff members, or turning those members over to the state,

What will ensure that Barbados i§ able to be even better off, Sir, is if the state on one hand is providing assistance by the Ministry of Social Transformation that families and persons in the communities, NQQ and CBQs are able to work hand in hand with each othtr, If we could make that our millennium commitment, Sir, w§ will ensure that we are able to go into the new century and into the new millennium with a society which is by and large egalitarian and whereas there is an even smaller gap between the best off and the worst off.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr, Chairman, 1 was a little surprised and somewhat more than a little humoured by the contribution of the Member who last spoke from the Other Side, the Honourable Member for St Lucy.

I am surprised and humoured because he speaks out of a party perspective which in recent months has been very loud in the view that a programme of poverty alleviation, as conceived recently in Barbados was both whimsical and inadequate. He represents a party perspective which made loud also the view that agencies, such as the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission should have been abolished.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I am very sorry to interrupt the speaker in his maiden speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is a standard rule. He is making his maiden speech. Allow him to flow. Please carry on with your maiden speech.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: That perspective was loud. It would have also rejected, perhaps in that context one might therefore understand today the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He also made the point that it was his opinion that the advancement of the delivery of social services in this country was pursued in a very partisan manner.

I would beg to suggest that my understanding is in fact totally different. I have the honour of representing a constituency of which the former representative in fact was said to have been equally loud in his refusal to request benefits through these services for the disadvantaged people of St. Michael West. And, as a matter of fact prior to January 20,1999 and during the last years of the Democratic Labour Party representation in St. Michael West, approximately 20 houses were repaired and rebuilt for the people of St. Michael West. If there is to be any indication that the delivery of social services through the Poverty Alleviation Programme was non partisan that one is very telling.

But, if you would permit me, Sir, to make a few remarks and thereby endorse the provision of these Estimates to the Ministry of Social Transformation, I would wish to do so. I believe the establishment of this Ministry is one of the most significant initiatives undertaken in the history of ministerial governance in this country and I look forward to both the performance of this Ministry and the Minister in this regard, in really transforming the social landscape of Barbados as we now know it.

There are a few things of which I am particularly pleased. One of them is the basic philosophy which seems to underpin the establishment of this Ministry in the formulation of the programme under this Ministry. It is a philosophy which is simple, but yet to me very profound and that is that all Barbadians ought to have the right to decent living.

There is a view that the most basic right of humanity is the right to life. I differ in opinion. My view is that the most basic right of all humanity is the right to a decent living and not simply the right to life.* The principal plight of the programme is obviously poverty alleviation. Barbados cannot go into a new millennium and into a 21st century as a fairly well-developed, developing state, yet leaving behind numbers of our people in a disadvantaged situation.

Poverty alleviation is absolutely necessary. It is totally desirable and I could embrace, very gladly the approach which suggests that it ought not to be an expression of charity, but rather programmes designed to create the opportunity of well-being for Barbadians who have been left behind because of the pace of the development of this country. 6.55 p.m.

The opportunity of well-being is absolutely welcome as a principle approach in the overall formulation of this programme, creating the opportunity of well-being.

Barbados is still very much a pre-industrial, pre-capitalist state, but even with the developed industrial capital states of the world, there is still the need to provide safety nets for those who left to themselves cannot derive fully the benefits provided by the best of governmental policies or provided out of the best will in the world.

So, those safety nets are needed and should be provided by any caring Government. I come personally from a perspective which holds that developmental success is directly related to a nation's care of its poor and of its elderly.

It is a precondition for national development: That is a view I hold as a perspective from which I come. Any nation's ability to develop and the extent of that development will be limited in relation to its care of its poor and of its elderly and I welcome the programmes formulated to the projections under this Ministry.

I heard the Honourable Minister speak with reference to the expansion of the home-help programme to a seven-day week programme.

I would want to humbly suggest that consideration perhaps should be given to a higher level of ambition or aspiration and that we do not simply see a home-help programme through which elderly are ministered daily by those who go for a brief period of time but perhaps the feasibility, the possibility to be looked into of having a residential placement type, programme under which individuals might be financially assisted by Government and placed in the homes of some of these elderly people.

I say that because I have come to realise that there are many elderly who lived on their own in the constituency of St. Michael West and I worry because of their physical condition. I worry because of threats to their well-being on the part of others and on the part of themselves and I would like humbly to suggest that, Mr. Minister.

Reform of the social sector is critical and again is a principal plank of this programme. We cannot continue with institutions which are archaic and steep to the philosophy of the 1950's, 1940's, 1960's. We must have reform to make these institutions more relevant and I salute that and I notice that under the blind philosophy behind the conception of the programme and in the Minister's presentation today, emphasis is to be put on speedier delivery of services to the poor and to the disadvantaged and again I salute that.

But would I want to suggest, Sir, that we need to look not only at a speedier delivery, but we need to further dignify the process of delivery of those services.

It used to annoy me much when I would see long lines outside of the US Embassy in Bridgetown waiting to contract their business. I have seen it elsewhere in greater terms, it used to annoy me much, but then it started to incense rne even more when I saw long lines outside the Employment Benefits facility when it was temporarily located at Pinfold Street. Our own people, in the hot boiling sun, waiting for the delivery of a social service. I am speaking to the business of dignifying the delivery of social services in this country. Dignifying the process.

I think also, Sir, care needs to be taken in the recruitment of staff, who are involved in critical roles in the delivery of social services in Barbados. We cannot simply recruit somebody out of the University with any kind of qualification and place them in critical points for the delivery of social services. It is negating the whole effort to upgrade these services and to make them more relevant.

I wish to speak quickly to the matter of the community focus also a principal component in this programme. I believe these community centres must be the main places where edification takes place. That is a term borrowed from church circles. In a very secular sense, these community centres need to be places where people can be and will be edified.

We mention the element of education. They should be made part of the empowerment process of Barbados. I believe this is also embraced by your thinking. The element of entertainment which is very vital to proper balanced human development.

There should be centres of entertainment. There should be centres of positive exchange. I know the community in

Alkins Land, no community centre, no facility, but here you have a situation where people come together in an atmosphere of kinship, a family without blood bonds. Facilities such as this, need to give proper expression to this kind of activity.

1 believe, in fact We have the dream, the ambition in St. Michael West of setting up a Community Secretariat which will be a nonpartisan facility for the management of community business as we endeavour to develop the community.

Perhaps within the design of these community centres we may set up a section of it with this in mind, a Community Secretariat wherein there would be a centre for non-governmental management of community business, if you understand what 1 am trying to say.

We would welcome the building of such a community centre at Alkins. I did not hear it mentioned, but I am holding forth on promises that we will see that in the not too distant future.

Very quickly, Mr. Chairman, I think the $60 million provided for this Ministry in this very embryonic stage compares well with the provision for other social services ministries. I notice that one third of it goes to poverty alleviation and urban developmr

In St. Michael West we applaud that. You see I understand very fully, Mr. Chairman the mystery of the dismissal of the former representative for St. Michael West, the Honourable gentleman who held this seat. I understand very fully the mystery. It has to do with the defaulting on the cause and plight of the poor and it has nothing at all to do with mathematics. So we welcome such a facility at Alkins.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And since you are on mystery, would you wind up please.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I am going to wind up. I would want further a$ I wind up, Honourable Minister to suggest, that the Ministry of Social Transformation would not be in the business of working miracles. But I honestly believe that all attempts at social transformation would prove deficient and would lose some of their legitimacy if they do not include a focus on the element of spiritual renewal.

I am humbly suggesting serious dialogue on the part of this Ministry with the church, the Christian church of Barbados to see what programmes for spiritual renewal values, discipline and education can be introduced at the community level to stem the tide of deviant behaviour that we are seeing across Barbados.

I believe there needs to be an attack on the work ethics that exist in Barbados. This Ministry, I think is in a position to do that. There should be an attack on the dehumanising conditions which obtain in the workplace. I believe this Ministry, similar to the Ministry of Finance impinges upon several other ministries and we need to attack some of the dehumanising practices taking place in the workplace.

Indignities suffered by our womenfolk, long hard hours, meagre wages. These things need to be addressed if poverty is to be realistically and fully alleviated.

Sexual abuse and exploitations in the workplace from which we want to take cover and conceal ourselves. Because these are vulnerable people exposed to the whims and fancies of scrupulous people. Poverty alleviation and social transformation must embrace the attack on some of these things.

I would want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence and cut short the presentation at this point, perhaps an opportunity will come again this year.

Thank you,
7.05 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, on that note of edification, I really must compliment my Parliamentary Secretary on such a wonderful first speech in this Honourable Chamber this afternoon, perhaps the best I have ever heard and I will look forward to many more.

I shall be obliged if you would now report to His Honour the Speaker that we are reporting progress and ask for leave to sit again.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour, the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, 1 beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. tomorrow. I wish Honourable Members to be aware that lunch will be served from 1.00 o'clock tomorrow. We resume at 2.00 o'clock. Cabinet meets at 9.00 a.m. tomorrow, Sir. Tomorrow[7] will be a long day.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 7.10p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply to that it will now return.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair and Mr. Chairman resumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I listened yesterday with a degree of interest to a number of comments and suggestions coming from those Honourable Members who would have spoken in this House yesterday.

I must use this occasion, Sir, to say that I was extremely pleased and impressed with the contribution made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, Sir.

I use this occasion to come back into this debate, simply because I want to expand a little more on the role of community development and the power of the agency of community development and the effect that it could have in transforming the social landscape of this country, Sir.

I am personally of the belief, Sir, that no community centre in Barbados should be closed. I believe that every single community centre in this country can be operating on a twenty-four hour basis.

It is quite obvious, Sir, that the Community Development Division does not have the staff or the capacity, Sir, to keep these centres open on a twenty-four hour basis, seven days a week, Sir. Therefore, in my presentation yesterday I was talking about partnerships and building cooperatives in this field, Sir. It is against that background, Sir, that I am suggesting that those community organizations, those organized community groups and councils be given full responsibility for the community centres across Barbados particularly on weekends. Too many community centres on weekends are closed, Sir.

I am saying that if a bond of partnerships is established between the Organisations, like the NGOs and the Community Development Division in Barbados, the current crime rate in this country would be reduced because what you would be doing is introducing new programmes that are coming out of the community by the community councils to further enhance the social environment within those particular communities and I am hoping that the Community Development Division would use this process of empowerment to the community councils which will be one way to do it, Sir.

We would like to offer those organized community councils a subvention to run the various community councils across Barbados so that these community councils can enact programmes on their own for the communities. It is very important, Sir, that we give the community councils a stake in their respective communities, Sir.

This is one of the best processes of community development, Sir, rather than making the community groups dependent upon the Community Development Division, to make them independent with some assistance and a little shove from Government, Sir.

Sir, since we are talking about the empowerment of the community councils and those organized community organizations in Barbados, I must at this stage say that approval has been given so far through the Social Investment Fund to a number of community organizations.

If you remember my presentation yesterday in this Honourable Chamber, Sir, I would have been talking about a community assault programme targeting specific geographical areas in Barbados based on a high density of population.

I must report to this Honourable Chamber, Sir, that some of those communities would be receiving funding through the Social Investment Fund. We are looking at the Haynesville Project which is basically, Sir, a sports development project and educational project.

In addition, they have a built-in component for job creation, Sir. This is one of the projects that would be funded and that is in Haynesville, one of those densely populated areas, that has a housing development.

Sir, when we look at the Deacons Development Project, we also made a vote for that. Their programme basically entails skills development, technology, computer training and it has an educational component. I am very impressed with the work that is being done in Deacons to stabilise that community by Deacons Development Community down there, Sir.

Then there is the Valerie Project, that is a joint project between the community and the National Training Board and that also has been approved. But it is so important, Sir, that we introduce these new concepts of partnerships between the established agencies in Barbados and the Community, Sir.

It is the only viable alternative that I know of, Sir, that we could really counter the spate of crime in the communities by developing positive programmes.

Then, Sir, we looked at Silver Hill and in Silver Hill there is a physical development training programme which is initially funded by the NDRC. Basically that programme introduces young men to weight-lifting and training.

We are using what they like to introduce them to other things and this is basically self development, Sir. Keeping them away from drugs. Silver Hill is one of those areas, Sir, that we will be further targeting to go into and develop these types of programmes.

Then we go into St. Martins, St. Philip to the St. Martins' Youth Ministry Church of Christ in Prophecy. Their project, a skill development project for St. Philip, has also been approved, Sir.

It is at this particular juncture that I would like to give tremendous credit to the churches in Barbados who in my view, Sir, are doing a tremendous job programme initiation to help the youth, with the current problems that are developing in communities around Barbados.

If you go into Nelson Street, Sir, the Faith in Action, they have just opened a shelter for tne homeless in Nelson Street and you would be surprised, Sir, that at this particular point of our history, how many NGOs and CBOs and other organizations in this country are willing to work with Government and lend a helping hand in dealing with the current problems that exist.

This brings me to a very focal point, Sir. The importance at this particular time that we get a building for all the NGOs in Barbados. That is, those NGOs that act as umbrella organizations for other groups across Barbados, Sir.

Recently, I had discussions with the National Organization of Women. Yesterday I was in discussion, with two other umbrella organizations in Barbados and the most important thing on their agenda is a building. Sir, if we could have all the umbrella bodies of the NGOs into one building, they could develop a cross fertilization of ideas and initiatives which will help us in the Ministry of Social Transformation to deal with the problems that arise in the communities more effectively, Sir.

Sir, PAREDOS which is an NGO have submitted to us for approval a sustainable family programme which is particularly geared towards families who want to get involved in enterprise development which has been approved.

Sir, when I look at PAREDOS in order to deal with the whole issue of families and I look at the current structure of the Child Care Board and the Welfare Department you will notice that there is a difference in their structure because the Child Care Board has a department which deals with matters relating to fathers and a department which deals specifically with matters relating to children. 2.15p.m.

The Welfare Department deals with the problems relating to the matters of family. We have another department which deals specifically with the problems related to the children. Sir, I cannot see on one side the children being dealt with and then on another side the parents being dealt with and we are talking about building families in a holistic manner which to my way of thinking is to bring them all together under one agency so that we will have a real family unit where all the problems that develop can be dealt with.

I do not want every Barbadian to believe that the Ministry of Social Transformation is out there giving handouts or that we are like Santa Claus for every little cry-baby who comes and asks for assistance that we give them. It is not like that.

All these undertakings that I have talked about have been approved for funding. We are already in consultation with BIMAP and Scan Consultancies where the leaders of these various organisations will be given courses in capacity leadership training which will help them to govern and manage the programmes that they submit to us in an efficient and effective manner. The courses will include management, training in computer skills or being computer literate and I am sure that within the programme that we will be working towards self sustainable developing communities.

This is important because I see too many people forgetting where they came from. Some of these youngsters in the community need mentors. Apprenticeship training and mentorship programmes will be initiated throughout the communities so that the youngsters will have someone to look up to. We have to make those persons heroes who are heroes virtually in their own right. My hero who developed me, is in this Honourable Chamber here. Had it not been for him, Sir, I could not have been here.

The point is that we need more people like him to guide our young people. Too many of us take an armchair view and exercise armchair ideas but dealing with our youth today, Sir, is a practical exercise. We have got to get out, all of us parliamentarians have a more fundamental role to play than just in Parliament. I know many of us sacrifice a lot of time and effort but we have to start working towards targeting where the problems really are. That is dealing with the problems associated with our youth.

Every single youth in Barbados once a politician comes around would gather around to hear what that person has to say, whether they agree with it or not. Therefore, Sir,

mentorship has got to be a key factor in the whole transformation and transitional exercise. If we keep on and do not take a practical hands-on approach to the problems that exist in the communities it will be wasted.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West spoke very eloquently last night and I just want to say that the churches in Barbados must be commended on the effort they are making. I know there is an Anglican Church, Christ Church Parish Church, which has over 800 people involved in a number of programmes. There are among thirteen other organisations that are currently before us for possible funding. Sir, no effort will be spared by this Ministry to help those who want to help themselves.

I will be back later.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I also wish to make my contribution to this debate in relation to the community development. First, I would like to thank the Minister of Social Transformation and the staff for the work that has been done so far in relation to that department. I would also like at this time to express, after listening to the Minister yesterday, that what I have picked up from him clearly is part of what can be a situation of solving some of the problems that exist in this country as far as the young ones are concerned.

What we have discovered over the years, within the last twenty years or so, is that there seems to be a generation gap, as if the cultural history of Barbados has been lost somewhere along the line. Community life which Barbados is known for seems to have been lost. Based on what I have been hearing from the Minister yesterday, I am grateful to see that in this Chamber this Government under the Ministry of Social Transformation is seriously looking towards reconditioning the minds of the young people in this country and are calling on the older folks in the island to play a role in the exercise.

When we look at the suggestion of a Hall of Fame in the community I consider this to be a step in the right direction because there have been several Barbadians over the years, from the school teacher in the district, to the policeman in the district, to the sanitary inspector in the district, people who have made a substantial contribution to a community who seem to have been forgotten so that the young ones who live in that community cannot respect the community because there is no one in that community to look up to. I believe that under the idea of the Hall of Fame which will encourage communities to nominate and suggest people of the community whom they identify as people who have put something back into the community then this is a step in the right direction. I am only hoping that it would be implemented at a community level and that it will not have the interference that we would expect, or the bureaucracy you would expect from a government department. I would like to see it happen at the level of the community where the community is involved in the exercise of such a plan.

The Minister spoke yesterday on the idea of the Hall of Fame, I would like to remind him that at sometime he was also involved in an exercise where the senior citizens of this country were part of an award given by the National Assistance Board. I believe that what I saw at that time was a step in the right direction. I would hope that under his Ministry, since as a civil servant or working under a statutory board at that time he implemented what I consider to be one of the most serious ideas as to look at the old folks of this country and to give those old folks a chance to be awarded for what they have done in the community...

Apart from having the Hall of Fame, I am suggesting that the Community Division as well return to the idea of community awards. The senior citizens who have made a substantial contribution should be awarded for what they have done in the community. This, Sir, gives the opportunity for young people in a district to start to respect the older ones.

The only way that young people can respect themselves is if they respect the older folks in the district. If the older folks respect themselves then the younger folks in the district would also respect themselves. So I am saying that under community development that this project which I heard yesterday from the Minister of Social Transformation, I would like to see it implemented and when it is implemented I am hoping that every single parliamentarian in this Chamber would get involved because each parliamentarian happens to be a product of that district or that community of which he represents.

I would not like to see it just as a situation where it is run by the community department and somewhere along the line it is run by a group of young people in the district or group of people in the district and the representatives of that constituency sees it as something that is implemented and stays away from it. That person, he or she, whomever that representative maybe, should identify with such a project. 2.25 p.m.

Sir, I was also proud in the sense when I heard the Honourable Minister yesterday spoke about the plans that he has for Community Division in terms of community centres. That is a step in the right direction as well, based on the fact that I lived in a community, St. Michael North West, which I consider to be one of the communities in Barbados which has made a serious input to the community development of the life of Barbados in the area of sports and drama. My community has been able to produce perhaps one of the only film star actors in Barbados, who has been filmed right here on the island, a gentleman by the name of Milton McCollin who was a star in a movie called 'Black Stake'.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: I am saying that at the time that he was selected he was a resident of a community called the Farm. I am also saying that when you look at the areas of St. Michael North, Sir, and you look at what the volleyball team has done, you look at what the football team has done and you look at the various activities of sports at the community level in St. Michael North, I am saying at this point to the Minister that although we have been able to produce some of the better teams, some of the better sports people, some of the citizens in the community, there are still some areas that I would like him to look at and to improve, which I am sure that he will do when the time comes.

For example, we have a problem on the Deacons hard court which is considered to be a basketball area which at the present moment has one of the youngest basketball teams on the island that has been playing unbeaten. Up to now that basketball team has not been beaten but there is a handicap that each time they have to play basketball that they have to put a coin in the lights there. I am asking, Sir, that some provision be made for youngsters who play basketball on that court.

I want this Honourable Chamber to hear this, they have been playing basketball for over three years and have not been beaten but each time they play...

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: It is a team sponsored by the Nation Publishing. Up to now they find it difficult to have to go on that basketball court because they have to put in a coin each time.

I am also appealing to the Minister of Community Development that since the rule of my Government some twenty one years ago, nothing has been done to the hard tennis court at Deacons.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: The Barbados Labour Party Government. I would like to take the time out in this Honourable Chamber to say a special thank you to the then Minister of Sports who is out of this Chamber but has given us what we consider to be a landmark...

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: That is Mr. Vic Johnson. I am saying that for twenty-one years that that court has not been resurfaced. I am appealing to the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Division of Community Development that the sooner they resurface that hard tennis court and basketball court at Deacons that it will at least enhance the community and make the community life in that area a lot better than at the present moment.

Sir, when I look at the area of community development in the constituency of St. Michael North West and I look at what has happened over the years in terms of community life in my area, one of the things that I would like to see happen as far as the senior citizens of this country is concerned, because they find it difficult to have to move between the commuters daily on the public transport and also on the mini-buses; I would like to see the day come when there are special transportation provisions made in this country that the senior citizens will be able to make their journey across this country with more ease than it is at the moment.

I am also appealing to the Division of Community Development that one of the things that they can do to enhance the life for the older folks of this country is to look at the area of probably asking the Transport Board or doing something in the line of assisting the senior citizens of this country to move from point A to point B even in having to go to change their cheques, sometimes they go to town, they probably go to banks and probably go to some place in order to have it done. I am appealing to the Community Division to at least have that as one of the movements that they will enhance in that department in relation to their plans.

I am also thinking in terms of the cottage industries as far as the Community Development is concerned. I have heard the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation talk about doing certain projects in certain areas that will enhance the community. Again, I have to speak on behalf of the constituency of St. Michael North West which I consider to date to have one of the most beautiful stretch of beaches to be found any place in Barbados but somewhere along the line, that beautiful stretch of beach which is now being taken over from Tuesdays to Fridays because of the arrivals of the tourists ships in the Bridgetown Port, that beach has now become very commercialised. It is sad to say that the people of that community do not benefit from the arrival of those tourist ships and the tourists who go to Brandons and Brighton beaches to bathe.

I am suggesting, not like the former Member that was in this House, a plan that I think was a plan that should never ever be on paper -1 am suggesting that under the Ministry of Community Development that somewhere along the line that something could be done to enhance those people who are involved in leather craft, people who are involved in what we call cottage industry. That some cubicles, something should be built along the beach of Brighton, along the beach of Brandons, so that instead of people just coming...

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: I am talking about St. Michael North West not St. Lucy. I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said in this Chamber... and I would say this. He is making complaints about St. Lucy but when the time comes, I will tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I am a St. Lucy man and some of the things that he has said in here are not true. I have visited St. Lucy almost every day and some of the things that he is saying is not true because I have spent many times there.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is accusing me of lying in this Chamber. I will ask you to do the necessary.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please carry on.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Sir, I would like to continue on the point which I have just had the interruption and that is where I want to see under Community Development some provision made for the young entrepreneurs of St. Michael North West to benefit from the arrival of those tourist ships that come and anchor at the Bridgetown Port and certain places within that area.

I hope the time would come when we would see nice little cubicles built along that stretch and that the young entrepreneurs of St. Michael North West would be able to display their leather craft, will be able at least to produce their cottage products so that they would be able to make a dollar as well out of the tourist industry.

Sir, as I continue under Community Development, it makes me feel as if somewhere along the line that the young people of this country have started to look toward the senior citizens of this country for direction. I believe they can be a change and the only way they can be a change, Sir, is if we decide to make a change for those young people. A lot of the young people spend a lot of time watching the television and watching a lot of imported stuff. I am saying to the Minister responsible for Community Development that he could also make a plan to use the television as a medium to educate and to embrace the young people of this country. Many things can be done. A lot of things are done in the community but daily you read and watch the media and you see a lot of adverse comments being carried in the newspapers and the young people are feeling disenchanted because the things that the young people are doing are not being highlighted.

I am saying that under the Ministry of Community Development there should be such a project which would enable the young people of Barbados to be highlighted and that project could carry any name into the new millennium. It would give the Community Development the right to have inside of that department a group of research people who would go through the various communities and would be able to pull out people who are making a substantial contribution to this island of ours and to kill off the adverse comments that we read daily in the newspapers and in the media of this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Sir, I would like to compliment the Honourable Minister. I would like to say at this time that I will be watching him closely as far as St. Michael North West is concerned and I am hoping, Sir, that if there are three breads that somewhere along the line that those breads would be divided and that St. Michael North West would get some of them. 2.35 p.m.

I am appealing to the Minister of Community Development to have a closer look at the constituency of St. Michael North West especially in the northern end of St. Michael North West where there is a need for a community centre. The area of Black Rock where there are thousands of young people living, there is no provision for a community centre. I am asking that some provision be made so that we can embrace the young people of Black Rock so that we can involve them in the areas of sport, so that we can involve them in drama and we can involve them in a better way of life.

As I close, I am hoping that somewhere along the line in the constituency St. Michael North West, that we would continue what we have been doing over the years. I am a product of a better standard of community living, Sir. 1 am proud to say in this Honourable Chamber, that because of the lifestyles of the community of St. Michael North West that I am in here to represent those people today. And I am hoping that what I have heard in this Chamber, under this Government of mine that come the year 2000, we would be able to feel proud that we have turned the young people in this country around.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I should first say that I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is the new Minister of Social Transformation. His own experience and the way in which he relates to people and even where his heart is located makes him in my view, a very admirable person to look after this Ministry.

I do have one or two observations that came to mind as I heard the speaker before the last and I want, without using up the 15 minutes, to raise one or two of my concerns. I walk around my constituency on a regular basis and I see the occasional case of abject poverty. 1 see occasionally some districts where there is no longer a community, where there

is hostility between young people and old people. Hostility between one group of young people and the other and I see in some cases hostility between some members of one family and other members of the same family.

I try my best in the circumstances and a certain generous amount of self-interest is involved, but I am concerned about these people. This is why I, from time to time, talk about the good society, because we talk a lot, and we philosophise and give a lot of fine speeches that sound good but do not connect at all with what are the real problems in the community. One of the things I would like the Minister to look at is the business of having me, as a Member of Parliament, having to get on the telephone on a regular basis and calling a Director of the National Assistance Board or a Director of a Child Care Board or somebody in the Welfare Department and begging them to meet, what I consider as urgent and pressing needs. 1 do not believe that is my job, Sir.

I believe that the Department should be so structured that when letters are written stating that I have come across cases that are so bad where people, particularly old people, in some cases young women with many children are living in conditions in which no human in Barbados should live, 1 believe that when I submit those cases, that I should have nothing more to do with it. The Department should be so structured that it will be able to go in, if they accept what I say and accept my word as honourable, to go in and investigate it, see for themselves the problems and do something about them. But you know what I have been saying, Mr. Chairman, who is applying the most pressure on the Minister, who is applying the most pressure on the Director of the National Assistance Board, who is toadying up the Chairman of the Board and occasionally who runs to the Prime Minister so that he can put in a word for them. I am not involved in that, if they cannot accept that there are people who know what is going on and can point out to them cases of particular difficulty...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I have already responded that something is wrong with the system.

I am glad there is a new Ministry and a new Minister. I am glad there is a Minister who believes that he should adopt a hands-on approach and I hope that to improve this system, they would set up the kind of structure where the field workers or whomever do these things would go and see the real problems and make sure that cases are dealt with primarily on the basis of need and not on the basis of who makes the representation.

I know my constituency and the people up there who have problems. I remember, Sir, in the days of local Government the politicians were the people who worked dealing with the welfare cases. They knew the problems and they had a lot of say in determining how these problems would be solved, nowadays, they do not seem to have any say on them. Not that I want any say over and beyond the assistance to people who are in genuine need. I really would like to see that system established.

We talk about community development. What communities? The people in the community who know what is going on and the local groups in the community who meet regularly and discuss the problems of the community have little or no say in the delivery of services to the people of the community. There are a lot of clubs in parts of my constituency who meet on a regular basis on Wednesday nights. There are older people, younger people, people working and people who are not working, everybody, they meet and they sit down and discuss the problems in the community. I do not go to the meetings, I am not involved. When they sit for hours and talk and come up with conclusions, they pass on their conclusions, they do not even get a response from any of the Government Departments. What community are we talking about?

There is a system I see in Jamaica, but I do not necessarily feel that because it is in Jamaica it should be here, but the Minister can look at it. They have a Poverty Alleviation Programme that has been worked out with the Inter American Development Bank and this programme has got in a great amount of detail as to who should be the target groups for assistance. How do you connect with the target groups and how the communities are involved in their own deliverance.

I studied it sometime ago and I have volunteered a few comments from time to time in Parliament and outside on it. I would really like if the Minister is so inclined to sit down and talk to him about it because that kind of programme where the community is its own monitor, where the community is its own saviour, if we can get that kind of system functioning in Barbados we would be able to remove these difficulties and really will be living in a land of paradise.

Which of the local churches for instance in my constituency are involved in anything that the Ministry of Social Transformation is doing in St. George South? In my checking, none, Sir. Although they keep asking, what role can we play? Last Sunday morning, Sir, I went to a Pentecostal Church in Drax Hall...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The music was good. As a matter of fact I was moved, Mr. Chairman, at one point to wave my

hand too, except when I waved for a little while, I began to see it was becoming prrtin'tic because there was a pain in the shoulder. 2.45 p.m.

I was there and 1 listened to, in my view the most vibrant church in St. George sending out a message that it wants to get involved in dealing with some of the problems to which this social transformation is geared.

In fact they have a big sign saying "Preaching the gospel and ministering to the whole man." It is the ministering to the whole man that was the focus of what they are doing now. They want to get involved and I want to get involved but there is no transparency. We do not know how to get involved.

Nobody can tell me after all my years in this business, Sir, exactly how communities get involved in working alongside the govermr.ei ,t departments in alleviating poverty, in healing homes, in healing communities and looking after children who go to sleep hungry. Churches do not know how they do it.

I want when I hear about these NGOs... What NGOs? They have to be the Salvation Army to be able to work out what must be done in Workmans in St. George. What NGOs they are we talking about. Come up in Ellerton and we will show you the people who they work with to help solve the problems in Ellerton. What NGOs are we talking about?

I am also concerned, Mr. Chairman, Sir, about the high administrative cost of these social programmes. When you look at say the Estimates, I have not even gone through it in any detail, you will see, Mr, Chairman, that the bulk of the resources in the social welfare ministries is spent on administration, not on delivery of assistance to people in need. Big salaries. People who want help cannot get help.

I am going, Mr. Chairman, to try again to see whether a new system can be worked out to meet the needs that we have identified, Sir.

Another thing that troubles me and this is the last point, Sir, because I really get a little tired of saying the same things over, *ad nauseam.*

When we begin to look at the delivery of services - you put in a list of three old people who are getting wet and have dirt floors and the holes in the roof are so big that a breadfruit could fall through and you send it to the National Assistance Board, you hear that you should have sent it to some group of people in the Prime Minister's office called a Poverty Alleviation Programme headed by a civil servant. They do not send ti c letter that I send to the National Assistance Board over to the department. They tell me I have to send another letter and when I send another letter up there, I hear that this comes under Rural Development. So I must send the same letter down to Rural Development somewhere in the north of Barbados.

I am being shunted about like a railway car, from department to department with a single complaint of somebody who is suffering. Sometimes to add to that, there is another department dealing with complaints, complaining about some children who cannot go to school because they do not have school uniforms, they do not have clothes to wear to school, they do not have money to get to school and you go to these departments and you add another one. They tell me to go to the Ministry of Education, that there is a fund in the Ministry of Education to meet this eventuality. Well if there is a fund in the Ministry of Education for this purpose, it is the biggest kept secret there is in government because I am not aware of it.

In all this Mr. Chairman, I am asking in good faith that as we continue to seek to address the probFerns of the underclass and in Barbados in 1999 there should have been no underclass but there still is. When we deal with these things in 1999 I wish, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that we can cut out the high rhetoric and the fancy words and get directly to the problems that these people are facing. There are children going to sleep hungry at night, Sir.

It is shameful that a Government that could spend all this money and the 250 or 260 thousand people still have these small pockets of abject poverty. I am sick and tired of all the talk.

I am livid, Mr. Chairman, to submit to the Minister or whomever he designates a list of the persons and the families in my constituency that are living at a level at which no Barbadian should be living in 1999. I am willing to give them that list in 48 hours.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would urge the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I will, Sir. There is not a lot of them, in strict terms because this country generally is doing well. We have a good country and things are going well. But we must remember that however well this country goes there will always be some who will be outside the line.

I believe that we have the resources. When I deal with my colleagues, I believe they have the commitment and the will to do something about it. It is just that the system, the way how you go about getting it done, is the biggest hindrance in our efforts to deliver to the people who are so badly in need.

I would hope, Sir, that the Minister before this debate is finished can address some of these problems and relieve me

of some of my anxieties. Give me some hope that we are going to deal with these things in a serious way. I hope he could do that.

According to what I hear further in the debate, Sir, I may get up and make a few additional points that are currently floating around in my head. But when I make the points, Sir, I want to make them in such a way that they will come through as serious suggestions as to how we can transform this society in 1999 and beyond.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I want to begin, Mr. Chairman, by first congratulating the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East on his appointment as the first Minister of Social Transformation in this country.

It needs to be said, Sir, also at the outset that expectations are high, not only from fellow Members in Parliament but also from the class of the needy across Barbados.

His is an enormous challenge. He has the opportunity to define both the boundaries of the Ministry of Social Transformation and its structure and content. His is the challenge too, Sir, to reorganize the structure of welfare agencies which has grown up in this country over the last forty years, to the point now that there is enormous overlap and duplication. In many instances, Sir, there is the feeling abroad that the public is not getting value for money, that the services are not being discharged in a user friendly way and that a lot needs to be done to make these agencies more impactful.

The Minister ought to be warned, if indeed he does not already know it, that at any attempt of the reorganization of these ministries, he will meet enormous resistance from the bureaucracy, in so far as officers will perceive that they are losing turf and that they may even see the disappearance if not in terms of substance, at least in terms of the nomenclature of some of the agencies of which they now preside or which they now serve.

He ought not to allow any of that to stand in his way. I have told him privately already that if there is any resistance, he can tell them it is not my policy, it is the Government's policy and it is buttress by the will of the people. This programme was put before the people and it is a matter of historical record how they responded thereto.

I want to spend a little moment, Sir, on this whole question of duplication and overlap of functions because I think it is no where better manifested than in the area of house repair and house provision. 2.55 p.m.

Right now, Sir, you have the Urban Development Commission that is responsible in part for repairing houses. You have the Rural Development Commission that has that too among its responsibilities. The Welfare Department is involved in that area and so too is the National Assistance Board.

We have had the ridiculous situation sometimes of officers from two agencies, I have never heard of a case of three but I do not doubt that it has happened, making an assessment of the same house as though the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. There are other more serious charges that can legitimately be made in relation to this house repair programme, not necessarily at the top in importance. The fact is that Parliamentarians are never treated to the courtesy of being advised which houses are being done.

I want to say that we do not want to be involved to stop anybody from getting their houses done, certainly not me. I assume that would serve no purpose. We are here to perform like the rain. We fall on the just and the unjust. We serve DLPs and BLPs and it does not matter. These are the official classifications. Our charges are our responsibilities and the people of Barbados so we do not care to know because we do not want to deprive anyone but the stark reality is that often people's houses are fixed and they do not represent priority cases.

It happens because as the system stands everybody can call in or write in and say that John Brown has a need. But, as it turns out, there are few people that know their Barbados better than the politicians, whatever the people think about them. It is the Parliamentarian. Often you see houses being fixed, when 100 or 200 yards away there are cases far more deserving. People who have their flooring creaking but still have flooring and they are getting attention in circumstances where there are people without flooring at all. But the Parliamentarians have no say, even when the Prime Minister asked the former head of the National Assistance Board to ensure that we are advised still today a lot of Parliamentarians have not been advised so that is the only reason why we want to be involved. But there is more than that.

The work is presently not being properly done. There are a lot of people who have experience of work having been commenced which was never completed. It seems to me, Sir, that the work of the National Assistance Board, and there is an urgent case for reorganisation of that agency, ought to be concerned with evaluating, if not identifying, certainly evaluating the claims, making sure that the job is done and if it needs to be contracted out in different areas, they need to make sure that it is done to standards; that the public is getting value for money and that there is not, to use a fashionable expression, any rip-off or quick fix which does

not represent value for money. As it is, Sir, several charges, of a very legitimate nature, very serious too, can be made against the Board as it currently functions.

An important question arises, too, Sir, that has been alluded to by the last speaker and that is, how do we ensure that there is equity, that the people of St. Joseph, and the people of St. George North and South and so on, get as much attention as the people in other parts of Barbados? It seems to me that among the other responsibilities of the Minister and of these agencies is to ensure that it is an agency established and charged with the functions of assisting Barbadians, not only urban Barbados or part of the urban area but all Barbados.

I want to turn, Sir, because we have limited time in these 15 minute slots, to the whole question of poverty alleviation because it is at the centre of much of the activity of the Ministry of Social Transformation. It is a matter of justice that has fallen to the Barbados Labour Party at the close of this century and into the next, to address some of the unfinished business of the social revolution which we have experienced in this country in the last 60 or 70 years.

After all, it must not be forgotten that our National Hero, the Most Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, Sir Mencea Cox and all those who were the founding fathers of the Labour Movement were concerned both to alleviate and to eradicate poverty. They have succeeded in large measure but it remains one of the unfinished pieces of business, as it were, of this social revolution that it has been a privilege to live through.

Now, at present, Sir, there seems to be unclear thinking about what it means. We know thus far it has been concerned to provide paved roads, to repair houses of the poorest, to give indoor toilet facilities where needed and even to light up certain districts in circumstances where there are no street lights and to provide too proper shelter. It seems to me that cannot be the be-all and end-all of poverty alleviation.

There are two elements that seem lacking at this stage and I want the Minister to commit himself to two additional features. The first is the need to address the whole question of value rehabilitation. A lot of those who are among the poorest in our country are also those who have strange notions, in so far as they are young, about work. I meet people who ask, who say that you have to work. They challenge the notion that by the sweat of their brow they should eat and that is not a joke. There are people out there on the block and some not on the block who challenge this whole question of why work. They raise it and suggest that one should be able to live and live well without working.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: This is not the only notion that is contrary to all that we have been taught. That is why I say, Sir, that value rehabilitation has to be at the centre of the poverty eradication programme but it is more than that, Sir. Unless a lot of those persons who are within the working age are provided with skills, they will not be able to maintain the improved shelter which they are offered and they will not be able to beat the poverty trap. 3.05 p.m.

Seven, ten and twenty years they will still be among the poorest of the country. So we have to address these two areas of value rehabilitation and skill acquisition. Unless we do that, it seems to me that the initiative will fail.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think at this point you should wind up. I realise that the time is short. You can come again.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I want to thank you, Sir, and I wish to indicate to the Minister that we are all looking forward to his respective performance and we wish him good luck.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that some of the most pertinent, meaningful and relevant recommendations on the whole question of our social services ever to be put in a single document have been put in this 1999 manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, it did not surprise me that a very prominent member of the Opposition Party made it very clear that when he examined the two manifestos he thought that it was really chalk and cheese.

I do believe that this indicates the seriousness of Government in its approach to the whole question of social services. I think that the very idea of having a single Ministry of Social Transformation indicates the true conscience of this Government. I always thought that it was necessary to have a ministry responsible for social services with a minister responsible with his own permanent secretary and his own staff so that it can focus on these issues rather than have them tangential in another ministry. I wish the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I congratulate him, as someone has said before, on being this country's first Minister of Social Transformation.

I just want to say a few things. I do not think that many people have spoken so far on child care and the Child Care Board but I want to spend a few minutes on the work of the Child Care Board over the past couple of years. I want to begin by saying that we have to commend all those officers at the Child Care Board, the Chairman and the members of the board for the work that has been done. In particular, Sir, I think of the National Certification Programme and what is actually happening now, is that we are making it mandatory

that those persons who look after our children and have responsibility for children be trained how they should deal with their charges.

I recall, Mr. Chairman, calling the Chairman of the Child Care Board and telling him that I think it is time that every single person who is looking after these children of ours should have some qualifications, a piece of paper, to show that they were qualified. That arose because there was a very nasty thing on television where a Barbadian who was looking after a child in the United States had been taking up something and beating the child, a secret camera was hidden and this Barbadian lady never knew what was being done to her. Eventually that was shown and it was an embarrassment to this country.

I thought that we had to put an end to that type of thing so what the National Certification Programme will do, is to make sure that those who look after children have some idea as to the behaviour of children, a little child psychology, understanding children, the teaching aids to use with them, how to discipline them and so on.

I think it has proven to be extremely useful. I believe that some two batches have been trained so far. We can look forward now to those people who work with children to have some idea and are qualified, indeed, the qualification to work in this type of profession overseas. People who come from Vietnam have a piece of paper when they get to Canada to work as care givers and they are admitted into those programmes but we are kept out because we do not have much to show. Therefore I thought that this was doing something which was absolutely necessary if we are to get proper care for children.

I think too, Sir, that the Child Care Board has done everything possible to make life far more comfortable at the homes for the children in care. We have repaired quite a few of those homes. I think we have done very well with our limited resources. The high point of repairs came when we refurbished Fair's Children's Home in St. Peter. I think that was the high point. We believe just as we leave our good homes on mornings and just as all of us want to know that we go into a place of work where we have suitable working conditions so too our children should be housed in good conditions. As I have said, we have done the best we could with the children's homes.

I want to thank the public of Barbados and to thank the business houses in Barbados which have contributed so willingly over the years to the Child Care Board. Government could not have done it alone, very often we got assistance from the public and from the business houses.

I have to say though, Mr. Chairman, that the children at the homes are not angels and very often we do get some forms of indiscipline and a lot of the children now have come to realise that their child care attendants and the house mothers cannot really inflict corporal punishment on them and so there is a little type of rebellion which comes out every now and then from certain children at the homes. 3.15p.m.

One thing which worries me is that when there is a situation where you virtually cannot control a particular child, one of the first things that you rush off to do is to say, well, if we cannot control him in here the next step is Summervale or Dodds. It is very worrying because I do believe that there should be some institution beyond that, some holding house somewhere, where you do not have to send the child to Summervale or to Dodds. I think it is very rough on those children. One of the real highlights of this Manifesto is at page 9. This is already a document of the House where it says:

> "The Barbados Labour Party will establish adolescent centres, to prepare young adults in residential care for the transition to independent community".

Mr. Chairman, you are a sporting person and you would know, if I could use the analogy that over at the Sir Garfield Sobers Complex the Swimming Association has the Aquatic Centre, there is a training pool where the youngsters go and they train because they cannot swim yet and it is only when they graduate from that that they go into the big one. Sometimes, Mr. Chairman, the transition from being looked after every single hour of the day, you have the house mother and you are being looked after, and now you have this full freedom, full independence, that can pose problems and it can be traumatic.

We believe that these adolescent centres can be used as half-way houses. You can hold them there and give them a kind of semi-independence before you actually let them go into the community on their own. Believe you me, Sir, they are extremely vulnerable having left the residential care and then to go on into the community.

I want to also mention the whole question of child abuse. You have to admit that it still exists in Barbados. I know that from time to time the Chairman of the Child Care Board has been speaking on this issue. My belief is that in spite of the statistics which we have at the Child Care Board a lot of child abuse in Barbados is not actually reported. I feel, Sir, that you should never ever in the case of child abuse that goes before the law courts, you should never, ever be allowed to come to the court and say that you are not offering evidence in this matter anymore. I feel it is a very dangerous thing which we are doing. Having realised that there was evidence of child abuse and having gone that far, I do not think we should be allowed to pull back at that late stage. A lot of neigbours in Barbados tend to be turning their

eyes away and looking in the other direction, what we call turning a blind eye to the whole question of physical and other forms of child abuse that goes on in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I welcome this part of the Manifesto, again at page 9 its says:

> "The Barbados Labour Party will enact legislation to make it compulsory for police, doctors, teachers, social workers and other professionals to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Child Care Board".

I think, Mr. Chairman, that is the type of thing which I look forward to.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be anecdotal but when I was a teacher, in fact it was in my third year as a teacher, I realised that there was a particular child, a young girl about thirteen years old who used to be crying every afternoon about 2.30 p.m. School finished at 3.00 p.m and you could virtually set your watch to the time that she was going to begin to cry - every evening around 2.30 p.m. It worried me after about a week and I tried to get out of her exactly what the problem was. She was very reluctant to tell me. I called another teacher after I could not get it, a teacher who is very prominent in Barbados now, and we sat her down and asked her. We picked her and we did everything to get it. Then she said, "O.K., I am going to tell you". With tears flowing down her face she said, "every evening I go home, I get home nearly 4 o'clock and my father troubles me. My mother comes in about 6.30 p.m. and every evening my father troubles me".

We got into a car with her and went down to see the father because he was working at a plantation as a tractor driver and we called him and told him what this girl had said. He admitted it to us and promised that he would never never do it again.

The point I am making is that with this legislation now teachers who have evidence like that will have to report that matter to the Child Care Board. From there onwards something should be done about it. This is why I say, Mr. Chairman, that I never believe that we should allow it to go that far and then later on say you are not going through with it because if you let him get off, he may go and do it again and again. This legislation which we plan to bring is in keeping with trends throughout the world because it is one way in which we have to curb the whole question of child abuse.

Mr. Chairman, I have a lot more time to spend on the Child Care Board but as you have said, I am supposed to be winding up now. I think in Barbados that we have done quite well, even in terms of things like child labour and so on. I do not think that other parts of the world can point their fingers at us, we have done quite well. My biggest shock was going to Geneva and hearing other countries come and defend child labour. It must continue they say. The only thing we want you to do is to regulate it properly. I am saying that in Barbados we have done quite well. If it prevails, it prevails, Mr. Chairman, in a very subtle form. What may be happening is that you might find some mother making the child do the cooking or looking after the baby, in that form, then perhaps you can term it child labour.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, my time is up. I will come back and speak perhaps on the National Assistance Board and a few more things on the Child Care Board.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the opportunity to intervene in this debate. Like the others I would like to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East on his appointment to this exceedingly important and high profile Ministry. I believe it is true to say that every Member of Parliament in this House and every Member of Parliament in the last House have felt the frustrations which their constituents felt with respect to the delivery of the social services in Barbados. Many of us have repeatedly had to complain at the political level and at the level of the civil service, not because of the fact that our constituents were not looked after by our Aides, but because of a kind of indifference and some would say, a kind of inhumanity in the administration by the bureaucrats. I do not know what was responsible for it. I came up in politics with a system in which when such occurrences took place it was possible to use the appeal mechanisms. There were appeal mechanisms in place and the politicians as the appelate body were able to ensure that the intention of Parliament for the Local Government Authorities was carried out. 3.25p.m.

I believe there is still an appeal mechanism in place but for some reason it does not function. Now I would hope that one of the first acts of the new Minister and the new Ministry would be to have a frank discussion with his bureaucrats and let them know and understand that there is profound dissatisfaction in this country with them and the way how they administer the bounty that is provided for by Parliament. This is not a question of politics because as I said at the beginning that this is a matter that has generated concern by all shades of political opinion in Barbados.

Now, Sir, I also have in addition to that a special interest in what is taking place with the aged in Barbados. In my constituency there is one of the institutions that is supposed to provide shelter and care for people who are in need and why I say supposed is for the simple reason that I know that it is easier for me to fly to Mars than to get anybody in that District Hospital. I have repeatedly tried to get people in a district hospital, and except they are just

about to provide work for an undertaker, it is an impossibility. The procedures for obtaining entry into a District Hospital in Barbados are shrouded in mystery.

I do not believe that is right. It never used to be so. I thought that we had bragged in here of expending over $20 million in the expansion and upgrading of the Geriatric Hospital and in the upgrading of the other District Hospitals. I want to say, Sir, quite frankly, that I was privy to a report which sets out very clearly that the District Hospital at Oistins had a dated life and that was 10 to 15 years ago. By now that District Hospital should have been closed and transfers should have taken place to the District Hospital in St. Philip which was supposed to have been expanded to take care of the 80 or 90 people who are there. In addition at the District Hospital in St. Philip there was an area specifically acquired so that small chattels could be built for people who would wish to either finance their own chattel or rent a chattel, who wanted to have the advantage of the institutional framework of a village. It was felt that could be provided at a more*economical level within the curtilage of the District Hospital so that the aged but active, could be living alongside those who were aged but were ill.

Part of the reason why we have the problems of people abandoning their relatives in my opinion is that they are unable, whether they are willing to pay or not pay, to get their relatives into the district hospitals.

I hope that the Honourable Member knows that in this area like in the area of the youth, he should seek to coordinate his efforts with the efforts of the Ministry of Health and with the efforts of the Minister of Youth Affairs in respect of these. I am one of those who believe that even under a ministerial system of government, there is an important role to be played by ministerial committees whereby ministers whose subjects impinge on each other take it upon themselves to have regular meetings, both of the officials and of themselves to ensure that there is a coordinated approach. So I look forward to hearing that.

I certainly, am going to move a Resolution in here if things do not improve that we have a Parliamentary Committee to scrutinize the efforts of the Ministers in respect of the delivery of social services. We are going to have that, because right now it is not satisfactory. The Minister has been given this super Ministry and he knows the expectations of all of us as to his performance but we are willing to give him a chance. He spoke very well today. His ideals are lofty and I believe his heart is in the right place but as I continue saying, politicians must understand that there are limitations to what they can do. If you are not willing to deal with bureaucrats, they will deal with' you and they will frustrate you if what you want done they regard as something that they do not wish to see happen.

One of the most disturbing things to me, Sir, in my constituency and around in the neighbouring constituencies is a matter that was raised here today by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. Apparently, in his constituency he sees the same problem and it is, the boys on the block. This is a really disturbing thing because many years ago, I was one of those who fought to see established a skills training institute, one of the best in Barbados, at Sayes Court. I feel great joy and pride when I pass there early in the morning and I see a large number of young men and young women going to the Skills Training Institute. But when I drive a little further away from it, less than 100 yards away from this Skills Training Institute, I still see a number of young boys on the block. Sometimes they shout me and I stop and when we talk I ask them why they do not go there. Now, I must say that all is not lost, because some have gone, but there is still a high proportion that will not go.

I know the work that is being done by the Youth Commissioners. I am pleased to say too, Sir, that they ought to be able now to report to us on what impact they have had. They have certainly had some impact in some parts of my constituency but I believe that it is the wish of all of us in this Parliament that collectively an impact can be made on these young men. It is a strange thing, Sir, I do not see many young ladies on the block, Sir. Maybe, Sir, I may be enlightened of how they pass their time, but the position is, Sir, this is a serious problem that we have in Barbados and I would like to endorse the remarks particularly about the work attitudes or the attitude to work that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke of today. 3.35p.m.

Let us not fool ourselves, there is a fair amount of indiscipline in the approach to time keeping in Barbados. There is absolutely no doubt about that and it is running right through this society. People do not keep their appointments. People do not reply to letters. All of those things happened and it is systematically an attitude that we need to change.

I do not know, Sir, if you go around a construction site in Barbados and you go there from 7.30 in the morning to 10.00, you would see, Sir, that there are varying degrees of time that is kept. Not in the afternoon because everybody keeps time in the afternoon somewhere between 3.30 and 4.00. But this is a matter that I believe is of great importance to the economy of Barbados.

When we look at the efforts in relation to the old, the efforts in relation to the youngsters, I think we all recognise here, Sir, that tremendous progress has been made in the provision of our amenities over the years. I am at a position to see it, Sir. I know for a fact, Sir, what has been done during the Labour Party administration, Sir, and I am able to see the little that has been done in other administrations, Sir.

The community centres that we have, and the playing fields that we have in Barbados, I think the Honourable Minister of Lands told us that there were 65"acres of land, I understand, Sir, and that you will know that there are some 100 odd playing facilities in Barbados. There are 67 acres, I will stand corrected that there are 67 acres with what was acquired in the last five years. All of that is reflected in the satisfaction that we have that resulted in 26 to 2.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to urge the Honourable Member to wind up.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes Sir. I will wind up, Sir. In the winding up, what I wish to emphasize, Sir, is that there is only so much that we can do in here as Parliamentarians by way of the provision of money. The rest has to come from the people themselves, the communities themselves and those people whom we provide the machinery to carry out our programmes.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I am once again standing to make another presentation before you. Before I get into the presentation, I believe I would be doing an injustice to the Honourable Minister for St. Michael South East if I did not give some praise to him not based on his recent entry into Parliament but based on his contribution over a number of years.

The Honourable Minister is unique because he does not intellectualize these matters. He is a practitioner. He is a social practitioner. He is best ably described as an interpersonal social interaction. The philosophy of this man emerges not from textbooks or documents or reports from anyone but as a consequence of his experiences in life. The philosophy emerges from the bowels of the earth.

As a consequence of that experience and his socialisation, there is an intensity of emotion as a result of mixing with people on a daily basis that makes his position completely different from any other one who have actually been responsible for the ministry before. Not this Ministry as it is named but any ministry which was responsible for social policy.

This Ministry is multidimensional. It reaches out not just to social matters within the Ministry itself but as was indicated by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, it reaches out and hold hands with other Ministries in this exercise.

What is even more important, Sir, is the opportunity for this Government to carry out this programme at this historic juncture which must be respected because this mandate was given to us as a political party right from its inception at the end of the 1930's. Successive governments also had their opportunity to carry out this national mandate. Unfortunately, we have never moved as rapidly as we ought to over those years and therefore the bulk of the burden falls on this Minister on the eve of the 21st century.

Now, I can understand some fears and some reservations. But you have no reason to even think about the competence because as long as we have access to $59.8 million in this Ministry, we have a responsibility to spend the tax-payers money and deliver the service so that one can have respect for the amount of money which has been allocated to the Ministry and feel that justice had been done.

I say that this mandate had been given to us before, because in 1937 if the society had taken warning of the concerns of the dispossessed and those who are described by the indifferent as the unwashed, we would not have had the difficulties and the social explosion which we experienced called the social revolution and pejoratively described as a riot. We would not have had that. 3.45 p.m.

We had it simply because the powers of the day had no respect for the broad masses and who had no respect for the separation of power because they were the Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislature. They had no separation of power at all. The people who conducted the affairs of justice and who were responsible for executing the administration of State they were all one; members of a special plantocracy type who were indifferent to the concerns of the poor black people in Barbados of the day, but we have no excuse now.

I do not believe the people of Barbados gave us 26 to 2 by accident. I believe they expect delivery. They expect a Government to demonstrate a social conscience within the next five years and to move in harmony with the broad masses of people. If they suffer then we must empathise and suffer with them but we cannot behave as though we are affluent and arrogant and do not care about the concerns of the poor in this society. I believe that is extremely important. We must understand that so that we do not speak and intellectualise this and just go through a narrative or a journey through your constituency alone. You have to deliver the goods because you are going to be judged not by word but by action. A government will bejudged by the manner it treats the less noble in the society.

Any modern government, especially in an age when there is so much tension in international affairs, when there is so much automation being introduced in the society and the reality is that as technology and science improve there is less need for labour intensive environments so more people are going to be forced out and displaced and put into joblessness.

We have to come up with ideas so that the society can still remain relatively at a social equilibrium and that is why because of all of these dysfunctional features in the society we find people behaving in an anti-social way. You have to understand it. You have to understand the causality of it before you put into place a solution. The reality is that the tensions that the international institutions are inflicting on the small economies like this, place us in a unicjue position on the eve of the 21st century and we have to come up with innovative ideas and solutions in resolving the problems of the poor in this society.

It is not just a ritual to get up and talk about poor black people and what we need for the elderly and the youth in the society. You have to understand the problem and you cannot understand it by sitting behind a mahogany table in an enclosed air-conditioned room. You have to be on the ground and that is why I say the Minister is the appropriate person at this time to be in the position to administrate the finance of this particular Ministry.

The reports are very clear. We have all the statistics not only the Reports for Lord Moyne in the 1930s which only reflect the views of the working class experiences, men like Israel Lovell, Clement Payne, John Deckles and a whole series of persons who were described as radical and undesirables of the day whose spirits will now be able to enjoy the admiration of the State by both Government and Opposition. But back then in the 1930s it was not easy for them because they were victims and they were alienated. They were sent to prison. Some found themselves ostracised and placed in a mad house in Black Rock because of these same feelings that we express today about how our fore-parents, sons and daughters of barefoot black slaves, people who would not even identify themselves with the very groups from which they sprung. All of a sudden you hear people saying one thing on the platform and when they come in here, they talk something different.

I want to make this point because all of a sudden NGOs are of importance coming from that Side but when money was allocated to a *bona fide* organisation with over nine years' experience in the field, all types of charges were levied against the persons who were functioning in that organisation and one person was highlighted as though he was some god responsible for administering an organisation for nine years.

At every attempt that I as a representative of the community *de facto* on the occasion but *dejure* now, on that occasion to get the media as well as other persons to respect that other people in the community were functioning within the institution of the Israel Lovell Foundation, they did everything to discredit the organisation and the representative of the people today of St. Michael East but the people knew differently and it was because they saw the evidence of the work done in St. Michael East and not only the work done by me but the work done by the Government of the day.

I am not going to exclude the former Minister from any credit because the reality is that prior to this Minister coming some work was done, just like the credit must go to the Democratic Labour Party that something was done in their time but certainly not enough. This is usually the way how they treat social services.

The Urban Development Commission responded to the concerns after proper social investigation. It was not politics. If you go to every home in St. Michael East that was replaced and you had any knowledge of the antecedent of that home you would discover that those people experienced some of the most severe forms of hardship and painful experiences.

People in that community were living in dilapidated homes but a more vivid description can be made of the conditions. It is so inhumane that to describe it in these quarters would be doing an injustice to those persons because I do not believe that they want it to be part of their memory that they went through a form of indignation and dehumanisation that they ought not to have experienced because they were the sons and daughters of ordinary people who worked in the cane fields of this country and the hardest working persons in the society who got the less for the actual labour which they gave to the society. That is why I feel that we have a responsibility to the elderly.

Whenever we think about delivering this service the first people we must take into consideration is the elderly because it is the blood, sweat and tears of those people prior to the 1950s when black self rule was given that was responsible for building this State in the post 1950s and the post-independence period in Barbados.

There is a place called the Barracks in Martinique...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: ... it is sandwiched, this is St. Michael East, by Gittens Road and Martinique, a place called the Barracks. If you had to go in there and see those houses with overflowing toilets, a major health threat to the entire community, people willing to change conditions but cannot change it. They are extremely happy that the State has recognised the contribution of their fore-parents as well as the family today and is prepared to put something back into the society.

I have been talking to the Minister about it. I have been talking to the authorities. I am hoping that we will move expeditiously to make sure that those conditions exist no more, that by the end of this century I would expect the people of Licorish Village, the Barracks and the surrounding areas of St. Michael East to have better service being given to them.

I recognise, Sir, it is a bit anti-climax but I want to once again give you thanks for listening to me so patiently. I hope I have been able to give some words of enlightenment and encouragement to others who would like to speak. Thank you very much. 3.55p.m.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I am indeed very honoured this afternoon to address this Honourable Chamber in support of this vote of $59 893 390 for the new Ministry of Social Transformation. I am heartened to see that the Ministry will be charged by a person none other than the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. This individual has considerable experience in changing the lives of the less fortunate in our society. This Minister, in the very short time I have gotten close to him, has demonstrated to me in no small way that he not only has the interest of persons in his constituency at heart but the interest of other persons in this country at heart.

Mr. Chairman, it is incumbent on me to inform this House of the state of affairs in the constituency which I represent as it relates to efficiency in social and, indeed, physical infrastructure. It is a constituency which before I was born, I dare say, was represented by the Democratic Labour Party.

During the last election, Mr. Chairman, it became clear to me that the constituency of St. Philip South which I am very proud to represent was void of certain basic things which were needed to advance the cause of persons socially and otherwise. I inherited a constituency that was crying out for help. I inherited a constituency that could not boast of a single public good in the form of a community centre.

There is one which I would like to associate with the constituents of St. Philip North because it was handed to them by the Honourable Minister for St. Philip North and most of the constituents in that area of the parish. They vote over in St. Philip North so I would like to say that the constituents of St. -Philip South at this stage of the development of this society are without a community centre. There is no proper explanation for that. I also inherited a constituency with no organised programmes developed for the community. There were also pockets of poverty which had existed for the longest while in my constituency.

The constituency of St. Philip South in my considered opinion and estimation has benefitted most from the migration which has taken place in this country. Residential developments sprung up in the constituency of St. Philip South almost overnight. We had two types of existence in St. Philip South. We have an increasing middle and upper class but at the same time and very close we have the traditional persons in St. Philip South experiencing the type of existence I would like to put behind us once and for all.

I am happy as I embark on this course to deal with the problem of poverty in my constituency that we have a Minister like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who is in charge and the type of approach he intends to take to deliver the services from his Ministry in a more speedy way that it will help to deal with some of the problems in the constituencies.

In the constituency of St. Philip South I realise that there is low participation of home help workers there. As I said earlier there is a slow case of service delivery by the National Assistance Board. There is also quite a level of unemployment existing among young persons in my constituency that I am very concerned about.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I admire in the Barbados Labour Party administration is the effort placed on trying to eradicate this scourge of poverty in this country. I remember during the by-elections in St. Michael North West which was won by Mr. Mascoll a couple of years ago the Prime Minister gave a commitment to the people of St. Michael North West and to the people of Barbados in general that he would make reasonable sums of money available for the eradication of poverty in this country.

I also remember the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, coming to my constituency a couple of months after and during our question time I reminded him of his commitment to the people of this country and that he should move with despatch to have the policies and the programmes organised to deal with this problem.

I am happy to see that quite soon after his visit to St. Philip we had the establishment of the Rural Development Commission in Barbados and later on that was followed by the Urban Development Commission. Such acts convinced me that the Barbados Labour Party administration very ably led by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter was serious about dealing with this problem of poverty.

I want to applaud the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation for moving quickly to respond to the social and infrastructural needs of the constituents of St. Philip. Yesterday, it took me by a little surprise, I must say, when he announced to this Chamber that of the two community centres which will be erected during the next financial year that one of those centres will be part of St. Philip South, that is at St. Martins. The Honourable Minister has assisted the constituents of St. Philip South even before he was appointed to such an important position during this term. 4.05 p.m.

In response to the problem of unemployment among the young people in my constituency, a church group bearing the name The Church of God in Prophesy, the youth arm of that

Ministry conceptualised a skills training programme which we had discussions about and it was necessary for this group to access funding. Naturally, one of the best persons to discuss such projects with is the present Minister of Social Transformation. After a very short meeting the Minister of Social Transformation gave me the assurance that he will take this project, he will refine the project and the persons in St. Philip South could look forward to, in the very near future, the start of this skills training programriie.

This skills training programme is one of the most important projects undertaken in St. Philip South. The architects of the programme, have the intention of training sixty young persons per quarter in various areas, like basketry, needlecraft, cake icing, tailoring, joinery, *et cetera.* 1 am happy to say that the Honourable Minister, the Member for St. Michael South East has adopted this project and funding has been approved in principle. I hope that disbursement would be started quickly. The programme officially got started a couple of weeks ago and the young persons in my constituency will, in the very near future be making meaningful contributions to the development of their relatives, in the development of their communities and in the development of the constituency as a whole.

I have to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for the assistance that he is willing to provide and that he is providing to the constituency in St. Philip.

Mr, CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I will go a little quicker.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I have some notes here on how best the funds at the Ministry of Social Transformation can be utilised.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I hope the Honourable Member realises that he could come back a second time and speak.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, I will have to. The first point that I want to raise here is that there is a need for the Ministry of Social Transformation to have a well organised public relations effort to sensitise persons about the full range of facilities and programmes which are available in the Ministry. Mr. Chairman, I realise this was a serious problem during the campaign as I moved around the constituency and I spoke to the older persons especially, the pensioners, who were not aware that there was a programme in place by which they could get relief from the payment of water bills and such like.

Of course, that is an indication of the lack of interest shown by persons in the constituency who should know better. I would implore the Minister to utilise a very effective public relations programme so that the services which are available at his Ministry can reach those persons who are most in need of those services.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate at a time when I would like this House to ponder on certain things. After listening to the Members on the Other Side, it became rather clear to me that this particular Ministry is going to create certain expectations of all Members of this House. I want to say from the outset, Sir, that it is clear to me that this Ministry cannot solve the problems that are being created now by the Government of Barbados and the private sector.

When one listens to what is being said from the Other Side, it is clear to me that we seem...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, it seems to me this Government instead of putting a proper programme in place has decided to rely on a handout mentality which cannot serve this country well in the long run. I am saying, Sir, that I support poverty alleviation but one must ask oneself how far we are prepared to carry it. If the Government is saying to me that this is a short term programme and they will be moving towards a programme where they will be looking for long term solutions instead of short term solutions for the particular problems that people have in Barbados today, I will support this programme.

It is clear to me, Sir, that we have allowed the private sector to rake off the cream of everything that has occurred in the economy and the Government is now faced with a situation where they now have to prop up the poor. I am saying, Sir, that we are going down a dangerous road, instead of people creating employment for people, the impression is being given that you do not worry about getting employment any more but you go to a particular agency and that agency will fix your problem. I would like to be assured that I am wrong. If this beggar mentality continues, this country will not progress.

I have heard Honourable Members on the Other Side saying that you do not see people on the street corners anymore, that might be correct but if they are really doing their work they will understand that those same people are still there. They are not on the street corners but they are under the trees.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is a fact.

4.15 p.m.

It tells me that we are fooling ourselves that we are solving certain problems but we are not really solving the problems. When I listen to the demands that are being placed on this new Ministry, it tells me that the problems are getting greater, Sir, and we are doing nothing to solve the problems on a long-term basis, that we are only looking at our short-term problems but we are not necessarily looking at our long-term problems.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East mentioned particularly as they related to the 1937 era. I am telling this country, Sir, that when one listens to the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, one cannot differentiate between 1937 and 1999, because the same things that people were fighting for in 1937, they are still fighting for in 1999. I am saying that this is a national disgrace because, at a time when a country can brag on having a surplus in revenue of over $232 million and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East can talk about conditions which people are still living in after we have received all of that money, one must ask oneself, what is going on in this country. One must ask oneself if the statement that was made during the campaign that 95% of the people in this country paid 95% of the taxes and that 5% of the people in this country pay 5% of the taxes, but yet the 5% get 95% of the gains from the Government is correct. One must ponder that statement, Sir, and when one listens to what was said in this Parliament today, Sir, it is clear to me that that statement is very much correct.

One must ask oneself, Sir, why is it that we are pandering to the private sector. We are giving them everything they want, but yet the poor and unfortunate must run to the Ministry of Social Transformation for their needs. How long can they continue to run to this particular Ministry for their needs to be satisfied?

1 am saying to Parliament today, Sir, and I expect those who have the authority to do the necessary things to understand that Members of this Parliament must not behave as if we are here just to throw scratch grain at poor people and this is exactly what is going on. It is true that the poor people might be so hungry that they need the scratch grain, but we must move away from the stage where we not only throw the scratch grain at them but give them something of more substance.

I want to say another thing, Sir. Every year we come in here to discuss Estimates and you get the same discussion every year about whose constituency is not represented well by certain agencies. I want to put a simple solution to this problem because I believe it is about time that we come up with solutions to these particular problems.

I cannot understand why there are 28 constituencies that are represented in this Parliament and you have a budget and no Minister of Finance can tell me how much money will be spent on any particular constituency. I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that as soon as we have a solution like that, at least we will start to go somewhere. Every year we would not have to come back in here and beg somebody for mercy to tell somebody that their own people who worked to develop this country that they should have a right to the same services that are provided to other constituencies. I think it is deplorable and a shame, Sir. I cannot understand how people can get up and talk about how these people worked hard in this country and yet still as a politician you have to come and beg for them.

The District Hospital in St. Lucy, whenever the rain falls you have to make sure that a nurse is there to stop the old people from getting wet. I have brought this to this Parliament already and I will not continue to bring issues like this. Mr. Chairman, if this was on behalf of somebody that was working, I would not bring it but I have .said in this Parliament that once it is on behalf of somebody that is unemployed, someone that is young or someone that is old, I will bring their cases to this Parliament. It is regrettable that you have to repeat these things in here every Tuesday and now every Estimates and it seems to be going through one ear and coming through the other. It makes a mockery of Parliament. Sir, I do not blame the new Minister for this because he has not been grounded long enough in his Ministry and I give him the opportunity to take some time to settle in and to develop the programmes because he was well trained.

I am not surprised that everyone over there is praising him today because they knew what they were after and they knew the training he got before he went there. But, I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that we need to make sure that we do not come in here and vote large sums of money to deal with short-term problems when we have more serious long-term problems. The guys who frequent under the trees, Sir, have brains too and I keep warning this House that sometimes we behave as if maids and messengers and people who lime on the block do not have common sense. They have common sense to understand what is going on in this country and if you do not do something to solve the problems of these particular people, you are going to develop a bigger problem in this country. A word to the wise is enough. You cannot, after today, tell anyone that you are not aware of that, Sir. It has been told. The problem is for us to take it and use it wisely.

I am also saying, Sir, you cannot come to this Parliament and tell me that agriculture workers have been badly treated for years and the same month that you are telling me so, Sir, you have the opportunity to correct their problem and you fail to correct their particular problem. Also, you talk about third party Government being a third party and all that foolishness. I am saying, if the people have

worked hard, let us move a vote from the Treasury of Barbados to make sure they are compensated for the work they have done and they were not compensated for before.

You do not need money to be paid from the Sugar Industry. If the Government feels within itself that the agriculture workers have worked hard, the same way they could bring something called 'a reverse credit', which many of them would not get, I am saying that they should bring a lump sum of money to this Parliament and compensate the agriculture workers who have been deprived because, although we have legislation in this Parliament that states they should get five days a week, they still do not get that. I am calling on the Government of this Parliament and of this country to make sure that the necessary money is voted. Instead of cutting back the amount of money that poor people whom they know so well deserve, to make sure the amount will be propped up through the Parliament and through a necessary vote to make sure those people who •deserve those funds are given.

When the private sector in this country want money, Sir, we do not get that same argument. We hear about how much foreign exchange they can generate. I am telling you, Sir, that those same poor people generate foreign exchange and they do it through their labour. People tend to forget that capital is important, but labour is also important and you cannot feel that capital is important and not labour, Sir. The two have a relationship, because if you have capital and you do not have labour, you cannot invest that capital properly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am asking the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I can assure you, Sir, that I will not breach your rules. I am saying that poor people will be affected by globalisation and this Parliament must make sure that when it happens, they are properly grounded.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak, particularly on behalf of the people of St. Michael South, because they never thought anybody else would have spoken on their behalf...

Aside.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, let me first begin by commending the new Minister of Social Transformation, wherever he was trained and whenever he was trained, because I believe that he comes out of the bowels of poverty and is certainly a shining example for many young people in our society to believe that you can come out of a place like the Pinelands and end up in the highest offices in the land.

I believe, Sir, when I hear some of the things that have been said on the Other Side, particularly from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that he totally and completely misses the point about the philosophical underpinnings of the need to create in a society like this, a Ministry of Social Transformation. 4.25 p.m.

I do not want to take him into a lot of Marxist theories. But he at least said already, that he grounds himself in understanding how you start to redistribute wealth within a society like this particularly for the most vulnerable in the society and those who have made this society what it is but had spent so much time in building it that they were not able to put aside for themselves and now need to be provided for in another way.

Let me say, Sir, that I believe that this Ministry of Social Transformation is perhaps the most proactive approach ever taken by any government in Barbados to deal with the social services and the delivery of social services. Sir, it should hold special significance for almost everyone if not everyone in this Parliament, because some of us if not all of us have come from very low working-class backgrounds and have been able to rise to these heights.

Particularly, Sir, for anyone whose grandparents were agricultural labourers, it obviously would mean a lot to them to be able to see a government seeking to reform the social services and seeking to rationalize social agencies and seeking, Sir, to set them on a serious path for the future.

As an MP also representing an urban constituency, it also holds special significance in terms of how we are seeking to create a base for helping urban constituencies.

I believe, Sir, that the real measure of a society's capacity to develop, is in how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. A nation's capacity to develop is only as strong as where its lowest citizens are grounded. The most developed societies in the world are those that have expended lots of time in dealing with the people at the bottom of the ladder.

If you look, Sir, mostly at many of the Scandinavian countries, the picture is very, very clear, but it obviously begs which comes first. It is like a chicken and egg thing. Does a developed society become developed because it looks after the most vulnerable or does it look after the its most vulnerable to become more developed? Now, the fact is, Sir, that we are clear that the most developed societies in the world have spent lots of time and effort looking after their most vulnerable.

I believe, Sir, that the $59 million that has been spent on this Ministry, may be the best monies that have been spent in these entire Estimates. The Minister outlined yesterday the distribution as he went through but the ones that are most important to me particularly were the $8.4 million for

poverty alleviation, $11 million for urban development and to a lesser extent the $2.7 million that was spent for community development.

First the $8.4 million for poverty alleviation because as has been stated in the study, 8.7% of Barbadian households fall below the poverty line, a poverty line which was established at $5 000.00 per annum. Seven thousand households in Barbados are below the poverty line and of those 38% are in St. Michael. The $11 million for urban development is obviously linked to that. When we take into account the poverty statistics that I quoted, we obviously see the link between the poverty alleviation and being able to spend a lot also in urban communities.

The $2.7 million for community development is important because I believe and as most of us recognise that the only way to build strong nations is to really start by building strong communities.

Now, reform and rationalisation of the social services are also seriously important. I believe - because I am not as tainted as some of the others, and as everyone knows and also most of the other Parliamentarians - in terms of what has not been delivered and has been delivered. I had an opportunity a couple of weeks ago to see the Ministry in action when there was a house fire. Four houses were lost in St. Michael South and as far as I am concerned, the way in which the Ministry responded and the agencies that are linked to that Ministry responded on a weekend, I can tell you, Sir, that what I saw certainly gives me great hope for the future and great hope for how we are seeking to rationalise these agencies under one Ministry and to put them on the correct growth path.

Now, when I spoke a couple of days ago, I sought to ground fiscal matters in terms of how we deal with the social services. I talked about the three levels at which I see the Ministry of Social Transformation operating particularly as it relates to poverty alleviation and I spoke about the remedial action that needs to be taken as the first step.

There are too many small pockets of poverty in constituencies around Barbados that needs remedial help and quick fixes to be able to stop them. There are people who live in some of the worst conditions such as houses that leaked and quick fixes are needed to solve that, 1 believe the Honourable Member for St. George South spoke particularly about these areas. Whenever you go into a constituency, you see these pockets of serious poverty that need to be fixed and need to be fixed immediately.

Then there is the concept of what I call the group fixing approach in terms of looking at helping community groups. I spoke, Sir, about Pinelands Creative Workshop and the Israel Lovell Foundation. Those organisations that have already started to work at the community level in order to improve things within their own communities and therefore need to be aided.

Then, Sir, I spoke about the other level, which is the level of empowerment. At that level, we need to be able to bring people out of poverty. I was particularly interested in urban development strategies and the monies that were being spent when it talked about the empowerment strategy and then of course the linkages to other agencies and other ministries.

The specific component of this poverty alleviation programme which appeals to me must be the empowerment side. I am interested, Sir, mostly in the mechanism for moving people out of the condition of poverty and not only the safety net that is initially provided.

Poverty, I believe has a debilitating effect upon individuals and on societies and programmes must be created to focus on building, in my opinion, within that Ministry a sense of worth and purpose as part and parcel of the programme. I am particularly interested in the educational side, the counselling side and the mentoring programmes because the message that must be sent to the poor is that they can always change their fortune as Barbadians, that there is a mechanism there for them to change their fortune in Barbados and that poverty, Sir, is just a passing condition and that eventually they must be out of poverty.

There must be, Sir, in that programme a sense of counselling, a sense of chanelling poor people, not only giving them the safety net but giving them a can do and a will do attitude. People must be given the right to get off of welfare.

Many subprogrammes must be built into the global programme to be able to deal with this challenge. You know. Sir, interesting enough in the United States there are seventy-five different assistance programmes which make up the US welfare system. From hard cash they give people to medical care, rent supplements, short-term emergency stipends, food stamps, all kinds of programmes are available. But since 1964, President Johnson started the assault on poverty, interestingly enough more families have come on the welfare roll rather than being able to reduce the number of families on the welfare roll.

In 1960 alone there were 800 000 and by 1995 there were 4.7 million families on the welfare roll. Sir, what must be important is that we create a safety net but we must never ever create a welfare mentality or any sort of welfare state. 4.35 p.m.

I go to St. Michael South every Wednesday and every Saturday and I see some people in my office on those days.

to say that the private sector is ahead of the Government or the public sector and that is not necessarily a bad thing because it shows a good understanding by civil society that in this respect we have to be into self help as well.

There are a number of senior citizen day care centres. I remember many many years ago when I was in the Ministry of Health discussing the idea that in the district hospitals, and we started with what is now the Geriatric Hospital, in fact it became the Geriatric Hospital in my time in the Ministry of Health, that we would have a day care facility integrated into the District Hospital. As far as I am aware, it has not been duplicated in all of the District Hospitals of Barbados and I would like to invite the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East to look at that together with the technicians and the advisors in the Ministry of Health where people who do not need intensive nursing care which is what most of the folk in the District Hospitals require, can be attended to.

It is a hospital but there are some who need no intensive nursing care. Some do not need nursing care at all. Some may need to have their daily insulin and other medication for hypertension, cancer or whatever, these are the major killers in Barbados still, diseases of the heart and so on, and who come down with their children or grandchildren and are left just like little children are, who are at the other end of the age spectrum, in the day care centre. They are looked after. They are fed well. There are activities in which people are engaged. They do handicrafts. They do ballroom dancing. 4.45 p.m.

People come in and help to entertain them. Young children from schools from time to time come in and interact with them. There are cots just as there are in day care centres for children, where they can have their little snooze after lunch and they are picked up by their relatives and friends or whoever are their caretakers in the evening and are taken home to the communities where they live.

I would like to suggest that we need more and more of that. Older people do not wish to become more dependent. They want to maintain their independence for as long as they can and they have the health and the strength to do it. There are senior citizens' apartment housing areas already and I would like to see more and more of that.

I think that the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation was very impressed, or so he led me to believe, and pleased when I took him on a tour, of what I believe will become the London Bourne Towers, two mornings ago and showed him that part of the ground floor, in fact, a large part of the ground floor, easily the half of it, is given over to a day care centre for children. On the ground floor, as at Kensington Lodge in the City of Bridgetown - we plan communities not just a housing estate - that is where you have the apartments for senior citizens which are mostly one-bedrooms or studio apartments so that they do not have to contend with stairs. In the course of the day, too, they can interface and be helpful in the day care centre so that they do not spend the whole day staring at a wall or looking through the door or the window.

They are very much integrated into the life of the community and I would like to see that as a feature of all housing estates, halfway houses for the aged who are not at all ill but who simply do not need to be or do not want to be living alone, who wish to be in a community that is serviced. There are perfectly well and they can catch the bus that goes from Speightstown to Oistins and get a little drive. They go into town and see their friends at the evergreen clubs and go to church functions. They lead perfectly independent normal lives.

Home help - I hear the Honourable Minister describing it as home care and I entirely approve of this large concept of home care and larger than home help. The Urban Development Commission, Mr. Chairman, falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Transformation as it very properly should. I have been a happy beneficiary of it in the City of Bridgetown. Let me illustrate to you, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the Honourable Minister why I put this entire contribution in the context of empowerment. I have seen for myself, and I am one of those parliamentarians who do not just write letters and expect the various welfare and other social organisations to look after people. You have to go into the community yourself and understand that this is part of your function as an MP. I have seen this situation on more than one occasion in the City of Bridgetown where old people, particularly women, are living in the most squalid conditions, as was described by an Honourable Member either today or yesterday afternoon, going out in the night to an out-house through a yard that is full of rocks and when the rain falls, floating with water and mud; they have to light a lamp because there is no electricity, and put it at the door and hope the wind does not blow it over and burn down the little house which has a piece of dirty curtain separating an old bed from what passes to be the living area in the house.

I have seen people like that in the City of Bridgetown dependent on home help, dependent on friends and relatives, the Church, the Salvation Army, bent down with old age and poverty. We do not understand how poverty saps the body not only the spirit. I have seen the Urban Development Commission go in, rebuild because some of them you just had to rebuild and I have gone back to these houses to inspect them myself to be greeted by an upright smiling woman and I have heard myself say, "Well, you are looking very good today. You're not bent down anymore." She explains to me, and this is empowerment, Mr. Chairman, "First, to begin with, I want you to know that I don't need the home help

anymore because — come and look and see - I have my inside toilet and I have my tiled bath and I have my tiled basin and I have a kitchen with a stainless steel sink and 1 have cupboards at top and bottom, nicely painted, and I have a nice bedroom with a bedroom door and I have a bathroom door too so that in the middle of the night when I have to go, I can get up and switch on my electric light over my bedroom and go in my bathroom and do what I have to do and come back out. I don't need the home help anymore."

Suddenly this is not a person bowed down by poverty anymore. That is what I have seen in the City of Bridgetown. That is what I have seen the Urban Development Commission do and long may it reign!

Minister of Social Transformation, I can only appeal for an expansion of the work that the Urban Development Commission does. I also want to draw two other matters to the attention of the Honourable Minister. One has to do predominately with, what I hope will be in this administration as we approach the end of the century and look into a new era, the transformation of the role of women. We have a situation in Barbados where particularly women between the ages of 25 and 55, that age cohort, many of these women, particularly in their 40s and early 50s, have raised families. One woman actually said to me, "I even built a house in the days when there was a greater demand for unskilled labour". The children of these women have been the beneficiaries of the social revolution in Barbados of the 50s and the 60s and the 70s. They have been the beneficiaries of good health care from the womb right up to the present. They have been beneficiaries of free education and those children are now in the industrial estates and working in the marketplace because they have had the privilege to acquire skills which are in demand today. And here come their mothers and sometimes their grandmothers to me regularly in large numbers on Wednesday evenings, and my other parliamentary colleagues have this experience as well, to say that they find themselves now in a new era where skilled labour for women is where the demand lies.

It is a very difficult experience. Every Wednesday you are telling people the same thing. Nobody calls me or comes up to me and says to me, I have a job, do you know somebody who wants a job. Nobody comes and says that to me. What people may come and say to me is, do you know a good carpenter? I am looking for a good mason. I want somebody who can cook or who can sew well or whatever. What is happening there, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that people are identifying skills and some of these young women and middle-aged and older women are resentful and you cannot blame them for the fact that having raised families and made their contribution they find themselves virtually unemployable in a Barbados that is prospering.

I would wish that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East in the Ministry of Social Transformation would pay very especial and particular attention to this component within our population.

We have taken a conscious decision that what was the Bureau of Women's Affairs must now become the Bureau of Gender Affairs. I am very supportive of that. Women who now have these new skills, and they have them in every area, are main streaming but we have a problem of men in crisis so that on both sides of the gender divide there are clearly identified groups who are in crisis.

Last year we heard the Vice Chancellor and indeed the Chancellor of the University of the West Indies both go public independently one of the other making the point that in the University of the West Indies today in every single faculty except the Faculty of Agriculture women outnumber men. 4.55 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it concerns me deeply, I represent a constituency which is almost exclusively working class and these women between the ages of 25 and 55 need to have access to the labour market in a way that they do not have today. These are women who can learn new skills. I have commended on the Floor already and I will commend again the work of the United Nations Drug Control Programme. They are responsible for a skills training programme which is carried at the Emmerton Community Centre five days a week. A term is three months and people go two evenings a week for a course. Those who are doing two courses will go four evenings a week, two hours an evening between five and seven. Fifteen dollars, that is all it cost. It is heavily subsidised. Sometimes when people say to me I cannot afford it, I will say if you go and you stay the course, I will pay. It is not like go today and do not go tomorrow. You have to go and stay the course because you will get a certificate. At least you are giving me something to work with. When I call up somebody or go somewhere to beg for a job, I am in a position to say, I know that the person is possessed of this skill.

I have seen that kind of skills training programme give some renewed hope to women. I have seen them graduating. They invite me to the graduations. There is another one in April to which I have been invited. That will be the third. I would want to invite every Honourable Member to come to that graduation because they put on exhibit some of the work done in the programme. It is just incredible the high quality of the work that is done.

I have seen it given renewed hope. I have seen it allowed women in their 40s and 50s to start up little cottage industries at home. It is not everybody that is going to have to rent premises or go somewhere to find a job. Take a simple thing like fresh juices. There is a great demand now in Barbados for fresh fruit juices. It is a good thing for healthy lifestyles. I know of a woman who has bought a Suzuki van and has made herself independent and

comfortable doing that, learnt in the skills training programme. Whatever fruit is in season...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: For the first time now I am drinking sea grape juice. It taste real good too.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is why I am saying that I see it in the context of empowerment. We have the Fund Access right there on Tudor Street.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank the Lord and the Barbados Labour Party. Micro Enterprise advised her. She needed to get some of those big plastic jugs and a good juicer.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like you at this stage to wind up. You are going well but you can come back after the break and expound.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In closing, Mr. Chairman, what I would say is that I am commending these ideas to the Minister of Social Transformation because these are not abstract ideas. I am putting these forward as tried and true because I have seen the direct benefit of it in the City of Bridgetown.

I hope that in the not too distant future I would be able to see more and more of that.

I will heed your advice, Sir, and break at this point. I

am much obliged to you.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.15 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 5.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 5.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. Chairman took the Chair.

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

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, it is indeed a special honour for me to speak on this Head and also, like other Members, compliment the new Minister of Social Transformation. I also want to say, Sir, that all the other Members who have spoken in this debate so far, spoke with a type of passion that has really showed to us the need for this Ministry of Social Transformation and also the need to put the departments under this Head, into their true perspective.

Mr. Chairman, I must first look at the new Ministry of Social Transformation as the outcome of a series of events which took place over the last three or four years - the last term of the Barbados Labour Party administration. That is why credit must be given to the former Minister of Labour and Community Development who actually laid the foundation for this new Ministry.

I must also thank Mrs. Phyllis Roett. Mrs. Roett and a team, Eliseus Joseph and company really put forward a number of proposals. We, as a Party, were able to go on a retreat and examine some of the content of the proposals that were laid by the Roett Report. One of the things that really struck me about the Phyllis Roett Report, was the fact that it suggested that the departments under the social services, needed to be more people oriented. These departments are the Welfare Department, the National Assistance Board, the Community Development, the Child Care Department and the Disability Unit.

Out of that report it was featured that we must be more people oriented, people focussed and people centered. That was the main theme also that there needs to be the rationalisation of the social services in such a way that you either put them under one ministry or under one board. For example, there was a need to rationalise the services of the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board. If you notice, the two departments usually cater to the same clientele. One wondered if it would not be better to put them in one single department to serve the community as a whole. I want, Mr. Chairman, to look at some of the major things that these departments were doing over the years.

Over the years, Mr. Chairman, these departments under the Ministry of Social Transformation really performed

wonder jobs. I think they performed terrific jobs over the years, way back into the 195 'S one Member alluded to, the fact that out of the MOYi ._. Commission, departments were set up to provide for the poor in our society. Through the years a number of reports were made to uplift and upgrade the various departments. We can say that the Welfare Department, the National Assistance Board and all these departments have responded to help the poor people of our society. We must, to some extent praise all those persons who, at some time or another have held responsibility for the departments.

Within recent times, Mr. Chairman, it is believed that these departments need to be more concerned with what is going on in society. We have heard that there are too many people existing in poverty today. My colleague and friend the Honourable Member for St. George South made the point that within our society the poor seem to be increasing and we need to do something for them. We have also heard the term that the poor will always be with us, but we have to do something for them.

We need to do something for the poor. Not necessarily speak about them as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does. He is a good talker. He speaks about the poor, but does nothing for them. We know where his heart is. However, we want to really look in a more scientific way at what is happening in our society and we want to ask the questions, does the Welfare Office really know how many pit toilets exist in Barbados today? Do they know how many people are still without running water? Do they know how many people are still without electricity?

I want to suggest that we need to concentrate on these small things in our society. These are the things that really matter. There are still too many people in our society that have to go out in the night to use the pit toilet. Too many people still have to go and bring water to their homes in our society. When you look at it, Mr. Chairman, you have a society that is very well off, a society that is doing so well at the top but we still must be concerned about those people out there who are still using pit toilets and those people who still have to go and bring water and those young people who have to do their home work without electricity. We have to look at these things.

I believe that it is the Members of Parliament who seem to have the facts more so than the Officers of the departments. It seems to me that we have the facts and would have to pass them on to the departments. So many times people come to the office of the Members of Parliament, they tell us who has running water, who went to sleep without food and so on. We will have to work hand in hand with the departments to help them to get over this hurdle.

Mr. Chairman, as we go into a new century, we have to help this new Ministry to set the agenda to help the people of this country. That is why in the Ministry of Housing, we have set up a committee which will comprise of the National Assistance Board, the Welfare Department, Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. These are the departments which have some elements of housing and we will be looking earnestly at the 'Upgrade 2000'.

The Upgrade 2000, Mr. Chairman, will be looking specifically at and targeting specifically pit toilets, targeting specifically the upgrading of other facilities which we want to provide and produce, not only toilet facilities but we want to produce communities that are sustainable and will be long lasting for housing. This will complement our programme of Settlement 2000. So both Settlement 2000 and Upgrade 2000 will work hand in hand to provide decent accommodation for the people we house.

I am also concerned, Mr. Chairman, about the Community Development Division. I believe in today's society, the community development officer should do more in the society. I believe that the Community Development Officer should go out there to see what is to be done to help the young people in the street, to help those persons who are unemployed and those persons who are willing to help themselves. There are still a number of cases where a number of women need to be taught to do certain things to get them into the world of work. I believe that they can be helpful in this way. 5.25 p.m.

We know that there was a time when the Community Development Officer was very functional within the 1960's and 1970's. I am a product of the Community Development programme. I was a member of a youth organization. Today many people do not get involved in community work any more and therefore the community development officer must do more. They must look for new avenues to get programmes going within the society.

I am very happy, Mr. Chairman, that the Community Development Division will be setting up or establishing a community centre at the Glebe, St. George. I hope when that centre is set up that the Community Development Division would look for programmes and would implement programmes not only in a peripheral manner but in a manner that would be sustainable to help develop the society; to help move people away from poverty; to help move people away from crime; to help move people away from all the things that would be harmful to our society.

I believe that the community development officer can do this. They have to be more responsive in our society and as the Phyllis Roett Report has suggested the programmes must be people centered. I want to see the welfare officer going into the community. Too many times people are saying that they want to get some help from the welfare officer; an MP has to write one letter, sometimes he writes two letters and so on and sometimes they do not get any help.

We want to see also the Welfare Department trying to help people to get away from welfare. Because you were on welfare when you were young, it does not mean that you must remain on welfare throughout your life. They must have a programme to move people away from poverty. People must not remain in poverty all their lives. We know the poor will be with us, but I am of the opinion that the Welfare Department working hand in hand with the National Assistance Board and all the other coordinated agencies should be able to address these cases. We want to put a new dimension into the entire social services.

We do not want the officers to think that this is just talk. We need some action within our communities and we want the officers to respond to some of our requests here today. In the final analysis we have to live in our communities. We have to live in communities, Mr. Chairman, that will take us well into the 21st century, so we have to be responsive to all these cases.

All the cases that the National Assistance Board has, they must be responsive to. All the cases that the welfare officers have, they must be responsive. Get back to the people. If they cannot come today, say so. If the National Assistance Board cannot turn up, say so and set a new date. If the welfare officer cannot turn up, set a new date. People are important. People must be featured in our new dispensation.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to compliment the Urban Commission. This is part of the remix of the Minister. Everyone in this Assembly knows that the Urban Development Commission has been a success. We will want to see that this Commission continues on that path. The Urban Commission has provided in a short two and a half years or whatever, housing for the poor, proper roads, removal of derelict property and so on.

If you saw some of the conditions that existed within urban Barbados before the Commission was set-up, then you would understand. It means there is still a lot of work to be done but everyone knows that it was this Government who established the Urban Commission to address some of the things within urban Barbados.

There is still a lot to be done because they are still to address the question of tenantries within urban Barbados. The legislation is supposed to come to Parliament within this session, where urban people would be allowed to own the land at a statutory price.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute to conclude.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: We hope that could be addressed very soon. Mr. Chairman, I would like to challenge the Ministry of Social Transformation, that we are going into a new dispensation and to be more people centered. I will urge them, Mr. Chairman to read the Phyllis Roett Report and also to read the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party that will guide them a long way. I am sure by doing so, they will be on the right path. I would like also to compliment the Minister.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I join this debate for the second time. I want to look at the National Assistance Board for a little while.

It has become clear to me now, Mr. Chairman, that a lot of the stigma which Used to be attached to the whole question of receiving welfare, a lot of that stigma is gradually going out and indeed I could even say it has gone out to a large extent. We do not get the stigma now that was once attached to the whole question of receiving welfare.

We have situations now, Sir, where the girl who works in town or who works in the industry, she was receiving $350.00 or $500.00, or what have you, and therefore you can hear people saying that if she can be receiving that I can receive something as well.

In almost all strata of society now they are applying for help with their homes. They are applying for home help and so on, to the extent that it never happened before and I believe that certainly within the last three years we have seen an upsurge in the applications that we never used to see before.

Indeed, Sir, I believe that extremely great demands are being made on the National Assistance Board and there are so many bad houses in Barbados in need of repairs that I believe that if we were to give the National Assistance Board $40 million dollars to spend on the repairs of houses they would spend all. I believe that.

The amount of pressure which you get in that Ministry from Parliamentarians asking you to repair houses in this constituency and the next constituency, I do believe that this year 1999 it is going to be unprecedented because you get a lot of demands being made on the National Assistance Board to repair houses.

The thing about it is that in addition to its own work at the National Assistance Board, the Board also has to join hand in hand with the Poverty Alleviation Committee and do work for that Committee as well. The major thrust of the National Assistance Board has been in that area of poverty alleviation. It is a deliverer of that particular service.

The names of the prospective recipients would go to the Poverty Alleviation Committee who in turn would pass them on to the NAB and then they will go out and they will check and so on and then they will deliver that service to

them. So in addition to their own work they have to carry the Poverty Alleviation work as well.

I have to commend the National Assistance Board for this as well because nobody feels for the National Assistance Board and nobody says, you are doing your own work and now you are doing Poverty Alleviation work as well. They are doing it with one truck. I mean they did their own work with one truck and now you dump all this work on them and they still have the one truck to work with. They still have to carry around all of that themselves.

Another thing, Mr. Chairman, is that they do not have the storeroom to store the material. They do not have anywhere to put the sand, to put the grits and so on that the people use. All these are constraints that they have to work with and nobody feels for them.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member mentioned just now that if National Assistance Board cannot turn up they should set another date and so on but they are under a lot of strain and with very limited resources.

I have to say, Sir, I knew it. I experienced it. I could feel it. I can see the demands of the Parliamentarians and so on. We have to stop sometimes and think about how are we going to deliver these services, unless we increase the resources to the National Assistance Board.

Now, I know too that they are other problems which they meet from time to time. Now, the welfare houses which the National Assistance Board would give to old people and so on - very often you get the situation where the person may have passed away and a younger relative would go into that house and live in that house and treat that house as though that house is theirs and then you cannot get them out. You just cannot get them out and that house is like a kind of revolving fund where it should be passed on to another old person somewhere else that want the use of that particular house. But having a young strapping person in the house and that person does not want to get out and the National Assistance Board is not equipped to deal with all these hindrances. There are many diverse problems facing that Board which we have not been able to draw our attention to.

The other problem which we get very often is this whole question of old persons living, it might very well be that they are living in their own house but they also have, Mr. Chairman, in that house some young big strapping people as well and you are expected to repair the house nevertheless even though there may be four or five persons living in it. You are expected to pay their light bill and so on. These are problems which we encounter almost daily.

Where the home helpers are concerned, Mr. Chairman, I am very sympathetic towards home-helpers. I have to say that some of them know it is the luck of the draw. What happens sometimes is that you can have a particular home helper and that home helper can assist in combing the hair of an old person. It is that simple sometimes. You may have to read to an old person, cook, clean the house and bath the person. What is equally true is you can get a situation where a home helper has to look after one person, a 240 Ib. person and you have to be shifting the person and bathing the person and so on. It can be extremely strenuous but, as I say, it can be the luck of the draw. You can have a person who has three people to look after and those three people are a lot of trouble. 5.35 p.m.

The whole question of how many days the home helper works, to which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy alluded. One of the reasons why we are not able to give home helpers five days a week is the fact that we have never had enough old persons asking for this help. A lot of old people when they die, 10 more come and you virtually stay at the same number for a long, long time. I was there. I would know. More come on but you never really have enough to get around to give the people five days. What we are hoping is that we get a lot more applications so that we can justify having persons on a five-day week. That was the major problem.

Mr. Chairman, the point I was making is that a home helper can be a nurse, a maid, a cook, everything in one day. As I say, I am very sympathetic towards them. Another thing is that by having to deal with so many people, sometimes you do not even know the conditions under which some of the people live. I am always of the view that the home helpers open themselves to a lot of hazards, hazards in particular in terms of their health. Before they begin to work you have to give them tetanus shots and so on because they never know what they are going to encounter and I am very sympathetic towards them.

A lot of them have to move from one district to another because they may see Mrs. Jones in Marley Vale and then they have to see Mrs. Brown in Brereton. If you know the constituency of St. Philip North and the distance I have spoken about, it is a very sprawling area and therefore you have to pay a bus fare to get from one to the other. Although they do get bus fares, sometimes they actually go over that in order to do their work efficiently because it is not like they work for the same people on the same street and on the same road. It is not that simple.

The other point is, I believe that 99% of the home helpers are very honest. I would never like to hear about a home helper being involved in stealing from an old person or something like that. You always have to screen them, even though you say politicians send them - you may say this thing about them and so on - the point is you have to screen them and make sure that you have people who are as honest as possible working with those old people. Barbadians may not want to admit it, but one of the biggest injustices done to old people in this country is the fact that a lot of young

people steal their pensions and whether we want to say it or not it happens to a lot of old people.

I think there was a song recently about Saturday night or something by MADD where a fellow said he took up the grandmother's $100 bill that she keeps at home. A lot of that happens. We may not want to say it because we have a lot of pride in this country but we get a lot of complaints about the pensioners whose pensions the young people take. I feel it is an area in which we should punish those people. We should not just see it as some ordinary pensioner. I feel that when you steal from a pensioner, and particularly steal the pension, that there should be a much more severe punishment.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: As the Honourable Member for the City is saying we should make them do a lot of community service. A lot of old people are abandoned as well. I have a couple in my constituency and some of the stories they give me when you ask how they came to be by themselves would bring tears to your eyes.

Mr. Chairman, the point I want to make now is this. I feel there are far too many Barbadians my age, perhaps, younger than I am who are not making adequate provision for their retirement. I feel so. I believe a lot of us seem to think that retirement belongs to the world tomorrow and we should not think of retirement today. 5.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, there was a chap who returned from England years ago and when he came back he had the flashiest car, he had two girlfriends he brought down from England intermittently. Then he used to go up to England and so he was a playboy. We visited him and the first thing he wanted us to do was to top up his pension because he says that what he is getting from England is not as much as our old age pension. That was the first request he made.

He wants you not only to repair his house because he says it is too little but he wants an NAB house. Now this is a man that had more money at that time than anybody and he has now virtually come to nought. The point I am making is that too many Barbadians extend themselves to the limit. There are some people working for $3 000 a month and they do not think about tomorrow. I know of a situation where a boss who told me that his maid saves more money than he. Not that he does not have the money but he does not save and he does not think of his retirement.

I feel that Barbadians must be educated to save for a rainy day. I feel that they should be educated as to the benefit of retirement schemes. I feel that far too often, many of them who are well off become burdens to the State.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think this is your last point. You can wind up now.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I believe, Mr. Chairman, it is happening far too often. They are looking to us as their salvation when in fact they can do a little more to help themselves. I am grateful to you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I have taken part in many of these debates and I did not wish to speak particularly on this one but in view of the fact that we have created a new Ministry whose function is to rationalise social services I want to share a couple of thoughts with Members of the House.

My experience with the disparate agencies that we have is not a very happy one. I am aware of letters .that I have written on behalf of people to have their homes repaired which were put in the waste paper basket at the place below my Ministry, the National Assistance Board. I am aware of those things. I have used other techniques to try and get some help for people in St. Thomas.

The people in St. Thomas have been very badly disadvantaged by these agencies. I am going to speak frankly because I want to appeal to the Minister in his rationalisation to use some of the grant money to restructure the organisation that will now evolve as a family services agency. It will be money well spent if some of this money is used to create a proper organisation and management structure to ensure that a particular set of persons have responsibility for dealing with a particular type of need. Some will deal with old people's repairs, some will deal with the water and electricity service - clear functions under one umbrella. If you have one subvention, $8 million here, and another is $11 million, it is worthwhile to take $300 000 of some of that money and create a properly functioning department with persons who are committed to delivering services. There has to be an attitudinal change among the people in these departments.

I think it would do well, since this Government has made social transformation almost the primary focus of its programme for the next five years, to have a retreat day at Sherbourne for all of the workers in these organisations with the Minister and his technocrats developing a synergy among themselves so that they understand what is his policy and his philosophy and rather than that of the Government so that we could see a new change in the delivery of social services.

Point number two: I believe that this Ministry can also assist in a contribution to alleviating the problem of deviance and delinquency. I made a suggestion to the Prime Minister last year during the Budget but he did not have time to deal with it. I want to repeat it now to the Minister.

Hie task force report on criminal risk factors has identified one of the factors that may predispose to crime as a lack of interest by young people in the church and religion. A high proportion of those who were interviewed in prison said that they had contact with the church in their early years but later on they had abandoned it and had no interest in the church and things religious. I think we have to make an attempt as a Government to reinstate and reinforce spiritual and moral values among young people.

I believe, Sir, that we should approach the Barbados Christian Council since the manifesto says that this Ministry will work with NGOs and the Minister said it in his opening speech. Let us put a project to the Christian Council to find us 48 persons not necessarily from the Anglican Church, in fact spread across the various denominations. 5.55 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The magic in forty eight is that I say four per parish. That is eleven plus another four for the St. Michael areas.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You can add to it.

Asides.

Hon, D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is only an idea. If it is worth anything, build on it. I will just work some figures here, we have from the various denominations. I have four in St. Thomas and somebody will have four in St. Peter. They should be paid out of some of this money a stipend, an allowance. Say that, for the sake of argument, as these are not meant to be cast in stone, six hundred dollars a month to work with young people to minister to them on the block and talk to them...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Or under the tree.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Work it out. I want the church to be involved with the communities particularly young people and where the young people are. They would decide this. It is not a large amount of money. You will have to increase the numbers because Christ Church is a vast parish and St. Michael. Even at my four per parish and another four you are spending something like $345 000. That is no money in this kind of budget.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us try it, put it to them and see if it is workable. I feel that it is a way that the church can be made to play a meaningful role with the young people. The details of it we can work. It is an idea that I have been tossing about for a long time. I wish to throw it out to the Minister now to see if he can make provisions in his planning for it but we must involve the church in this. I know that he is a very religious person himself. I hope it would find favour with him as an idea and one of the strategies that we could use with a view to alleviating some of the social problems and some of the social dislocation that there is.

The social dislocation is worldwide. We have to continually try new things and be dynamic in this situation to respond to the challenges. I believe that Government and the churches can play a part together.

Mr. Chairman, I have opportunities otherwise to make specific calls for assistance but the final point I wish to make is that in St. Thomas we have no community centre. The Democratic Labour Party after the 1986 elections closed down the community centre in St. Thomas. I would invite the Minister in his long-term planning to let us look for somewhere for restoration of that community feeling. However, more immediately...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is on the border of St. Thomas and St. Michael so I am not quibbling. There is a location in Jacksons which is referred to in the manifesto where we had identified as suitable for the establishment of a community centre. The little community centre in Brownes Gap, we need to close that and build a proper community centre. On the Other Side of the road where there is the old shop...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Rio Grande that has been pulled down, that site is available and I think that Government should acquire it and redevelop it into something meaningful. The manifesto speaks to it and I will ask the Minister to bear it in mind in his short-term planning. I mean within the next two years. I am not putting any pressure otherwise on him, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, those are the few points that I wish to make. I do not want to speak to specific aspects of the Estimates because this is such a detailed area that one could speak for hours on it. I wanted to make those points about structured re-organisation of the various departments. You will create a few jobs - put in proper people who have an interest in social work who will help man these departments and take some of the strain off the existing staff that the Minister of Labour spoke about. Buy a couple more trucks if you need to, you have a lot of money - and get the thing properly organised so that we have a composite whole. What we have now are little departments here, there and

everywhere, the co-ordination of which is sadly lacking. I look forward to, within a year seeing a completely new transformation of those social services.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of this new Ministry was very enthusiastic, Sir, and I could see the vigour emanating as he put over this programme in these Estimates to this Honourable Chamber. I like the style that he has brought to this Ministry. To some people it might seem to be a little unorthodox because I saw him in the newspaper at the inception of taking up the Ministry, on the back of a truck going to the people. This is the kind of person he is.

Mr. Chairman, I would say he is a man who knows his beat. He worked in the National Assistance Board for some time so he has experience dealing with these matters. I said, Sir, I am totally committed to giving him any support that I can in order that he would fulfil his mandate.

I just want to make one or two interventions, Sir, under the Ministry of Social Transformation. I see that an amount of $12.6 million is provided in the Estimates to the Child Care Board to ensure the safekeeping of the nation's children in need of care and protection. In the constituency I represent, Sir, lies one such home, the Nightengale Home. I remember in December of 1997, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of International Transport made arrangements for me to make some presentation of toys to some of these needy children through the Cruise Terminal and so on. While at that institution I was asked at the end of the presentation to tour with some of the workers there to look at the condition of the Nightengale Home.

Sir, conditions at the Home are deplorable. In some instances walls are defaced, need painting and some need plastering. The ceiling in some of the cottages is falling and wardrobes broken, In some cases I was told that children did not have enough clothes. I was taken to one cottage where the actual water heater was broken and the children at the cottage were bathing in ice cold water early on mornings. 6.05 p.m.

As I said, Sir, these conditions I hope that the Honourable Minister will make note of it and probably arrange with me to tour the area and let us look at alleviating some of the problems that presently exist there.

The fences outside of the buildings are broken as well. There are big holes in the fences and the premises are being used as a corral for horses, in that people from around the neighbourhoods bring their horses - these are old race horses that are given to some of the young men in the community and they ride these horses until they die. They cannot maintain the horses and they just keep them around the place to run through the yard. I am hoping that something could be done about the security of the fences there for these people.

Mr. Chairman, the other thing I want to look at, are some of the conditions that presently exist and that can be corrected at the National Assistance Board. This institution is one for helping poor people who are in need of housing. The National Assistance Board owns a number of wooden houses throughout Barbados. In most cases these houses are on land rented by the persons who are living in the houses. Sometimes the land is offered to the National Assistance Board by some kindhearted landlord, free from rent. There are mainly old people in these houses. In most cases when that old person dies, the Board is asked to remove the house from the premises.

There is a situation existing in Barbados now where there is a shortage of house spots, so it is very difficult at times for the National Assistance Board to get somewhere to put the house. I find that many of these houses are in very bad condition. I have been able to get the National Assistance Board to carry out repairs for some of the people who live in these houses. When these people call to have their houses repaired, they have to wait a very long time and I find that when the representative intervenes, I guess he has a little clout and he is in a position to get things done for these people. 1 would also like to say, Sir, that many of these houses are without running water and electricity and I believe that the new Minister could look at having all of these houses equipped with running water and electricity.

I have an old lady in my constituency who is 93 years old who was going to be evicted by a landlord. I would not hold it against the landlord, because he is 75 years old and he is depending on that little rent. She could not pay the rent and he went to a lawyer and the lawyer was going to evict her. I went to the lawyer and told her that she could not evict the old lady because she is 93 years old and she told me, her client has to get his rent and I threatened her that if she had evicted the old lady, I would have taken some people out there and picketed her office. But this is the kind of behaviour you have out there with some of these lawyers, they would do anything to get a dollar.

Mr. Chairman, another thing I want the new Minister to look at, where the National Assistance Board houses are concerned is youth affairs. The National Assistance Board has a team of carpenters, mainly older men, who will do the repairs to the houses, but I find that at the end of the repairs, the house is still in a very bad state of disrepair. It is not finished properly and these are things that I am asking the Minister to look at.

I just had one in Clevedale repaired for a lady. She is not an old person, she is a young girl but needed some help. She has five children and she was in a one-bedroom place. I managed to get the NAB to build another room for her. This morning I was in the constituency doing some work and I saw her and she told me what the position was and that the work had been done so I am hoping that this is another area that the Minister would look at.

The other area I want to touch on, Sir, is situations in Barbados where there are many people who are still without running water. One of the reasons for that is that they are not in a position to pay for the water. I believe that we can run some programmes through the Poverty Alleviation Scheme where we can approach the Minister and tell him, for example, that we have 10 or 15 such cases and the programme can run whereas we can install the water for those people.

1 also wart to speak briefly on the Welfare Department. I believe that there will always be poor people. No matter what you do in a country, there will always be poor people. I do not believe that we can solve all the needs of our people. It is sad to say that we have a Welfare Department where some of our welfare officers do not believe that they themselves would get old at some time, or that one of their families could be in a position of poverty because the way some of these officers treat the people who go for welfare assistance, is appalling.

I have had complaints about a welfare officer, and when I went to the Welfare Department to have a chat with her, the lady at the front told her that someone was there to her and when she came out and saw me, she pushed her mouth in the air.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: I understand that she is not working in that department anymore, but these are things that you have to put up with out there with some of these officers.

I have met one officer over there who was so good with the people in the St. Michael West Central constituency and you know, I made comment about how good she works and do you know that within one month, they moved her, so these are the kinds of things that we have to put up with. Mr. Chairman, I am just asking that the Minister will, in his good nature look to remedy these kinds of things that are going on which need to be remedied.

And last, but not least, I just want to make one brief intervention on the Urban Development Programme. This is a programme, Sir, that is helping and giving and doing its upmost for the people of Barbados. I was going to say, Sir, that it is one of the best pieces of legislation ever passed in this Chamber. 6.15 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I see you are giving me the time limit which means that my time has expired but I do believe that I will come back and touch a bit on the urban development.

I thank you.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak on this Head 24. But before I delve too deeply I would just like to correct the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who, Sir, in his statement was trying to draw a similarity between the budget for this and the handing out of scratch grain.

I think, Sir, the Honourable Member ought to be ashamed of himself. When his Administration demitted office in 1994, Sir, the cuts to the social service sector, Sir, were so severe that one of the first things that a Barbados Labour Party Administration sought to do was to restore them from whence they came and in subsequent budgets, Sir, to take them way beyond. There is one Ministry which looks after all those entities, so I will just like to correct him on that, right now in the form of the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Sir, right here on page 7 of the Manifesto, it deals with social transformation and that section is subsumed by the words "every Barbadian has the right to a decent standard of living." In so doing, Sir, there are various departments that have been brought under one umbrella. These being the Welfare Department, the National-Assistance Board, the Child Care Board, Community Development Division, Women Affairs Bureau, all being referred to as family services.

Sir, the beneficiaries of these services are poor. There are no two ways about it. They are poor, humble people. Sir, the bringing together of these several departments, is novel, it is singular in its approach, it shows a degree of being well-informed and in keeping with certain international trends.

Not so long ago, I read of Canada doing a similar reformation bringing these similar ministries under one umbrella. Sir, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) has regarded sustainable development as its single most important area in its agenda. It is paramount in its charter. Sir, that body has come up with five subsets, being poverty alleviation, urban productivity, good governance, participation by civil society and women rights. Those five subsets are deeply embedded in a land policy issue.

Sir, do you notice a striking similarity, almost congruency, between that and the same classifications to which I referred as outlined in this Manifesto. Three out of five and there is a fourth one, Sir, land policy issues which is also at the heart of the urban renewal programme.

Sir, there are some people in our community, you just have to listen to some of the call-in programmes, who are selfish in their approach and, quite often they say, we were poor but that is not the correct approach. The poor will always be with us. I had to fend for myself. I had to push for myself.

Sir, lots of them say that there will always be poverty and that there will always be poor people. But they are only quoting parts - you know they like to be biblical — of Deuteronomy 15 which says,

> "there will always be poor people."

But it does not stop there, Sir, it goes on

> "in the land therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brother and toward the poor and needy in your land."

Therefore, it goes much further than just saying that there will always be poverty. Sir, if you are not pleased with what appears in the old testament, you go to the new testament which says:

> "Inasmuch as you have done it to me you have done it unto the father."

Poverty, Sir, reminds me to a great extent of an auto immune disease where the body starts fighting with itself and breaking down and decaying until there is total death. If you do not seek to remedy it now, by the turn of the century, Sir, there will be lots of other conditions which will be directly and indirectly linked. Sir, when this happens, people lose all respect as was alluded to by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. They lose respect for religion. They lose respect, Sir, for the state and law and order and I will refer this Honourable House, Sir, to some findings by the Sociologist, Mr. Carter, he has gone into it in-depth.

Sir, you go into this random situation almost like a free for all, where lots of the basic tenets which we use to guide us are forgotten or ignored.

Sir, the quotations which I made earlier on, Sir, there came as you know long before the principles, postulates, and the theories.

Sir, in my short period in politics, I have had quite a few experiences particularly so, Sir, with fire victims. Three years ago I remember working with three families that were displaced at one super fire which razed their houses to the ground. Sir, there was one family that was not so fortunate. It happened late in November and Sir, every day after that fire, up to Christmas Eve I had been in contact with the relevant agencies, Sir, it took one agency over a month to put on a ridge cap and a couple sheets of galvanise. 6.25 p.m.

Sir, it is more than distressful and disturbing to go to a fire and see the victims. This is the regimen - they call their representative or the representative's representative, if the representative is not in the island or cannot be found. The victims speak with the senior fire officer there. The next morning you go to the fire service - this is how it used to be - then from the fire service you go to the Welfare Department. Then you come back across and you go to National Housing. Then you rush back up the road to National Assistance. By mid-day that victim is dehumanised, distraught, demoralised to the point of tears.

Sir, there is a fire victim who came here to see one of our colleagues here late last year and when she saw me she was literally crying, she was in tears. This new Ministry seeks to alleviate that butting about and running about and associated dehumanising element.

Sir, I am in daily contact with people who have to go to these agencies who are the recipients or the beneficiaries whatever you care to call them. The experiences of my friend, my comrade with the constituency of St. Michael East, he calls it again and again - anomie. His training has taught him about that.

Sir, there is a case in point, that same fire to which I referred, where the officer was on holiday, on Christmas holiday, files could not have been found and therefore the bed and the stove which the two families individually had asked for were only received on Christmas Eve, "it was the day before Christmas" when they came, having brought on board and having made the Acting Chief miserable day after day.

Sir, I would hope that yet another Ministry would come to the assistance of my good friend and colleague the representative for St. Michael South East. I would like him to engage the services of the office of Public Sector Reform to help streamline and expedite matters by way of improving the approach to handling. They have worked already with other departments. They have worked with the polyclinics. They have worked with the post offices and I think they have worked with the licensing authority and this more than any single feature needed in his Ministry, Sir, as the representative for St. Thomas identified, is clearly demarcating the functions of some sections within his Ministry.

Sir, the old bad practices must go, the way of actually treating the recipients and the beneficiaries as mendicants. They have to be seen first and foremost as human beings. They must not be abrupt, the people who are dispensing these services, whom the social scientists refer to as the care givers, the care giver must not be abrupt. They must not be disrespectful. It would not take anything to spend the additional half hour with someone who is in need and in distress.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. D. T. GILL: I will do that, Sir. Before doing so, Sir, I would like to thank the Honourable Minister for coming to my assistance with the Valery project. Yes, Sir, I

can see your little frown on the eyebrow. You did your part there with respect to the hard courts. I would like to thank you too, Sir. There would be another time and another Head if we do find time.

As you know, Sir, this old building was abandoned after the Ministry of Education moved to the new headquarters and as was said by a senior member of this House some time ago it was a case of the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. The Vocational Board was looking for a building somewhere in that area and could not find one. National Housing was not aware and nonetheless, Sir, I was instrumental in bringing those two agencies together and now it will be a centre for learning. The Vocational Training Board expressed the view that they did not have enough money and this, education, is a form of transformation because if you improve that capacity - and I am touching down now, Sir - to come to grips and becoming employable and marketable. Too often we hear about young men in crisis and all that has happened is that they want an avenue to earn a dollar.

If both the young men and young women are equipped with skills and the skills I am looking at are not basketry and stuffed toys and cake icing. I am looking at electrical installation, electronics, mechanics and they are like businesses.

Sir, I shall be back and take another fifteen minutes. I am most grateful to you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to make this intervention at this time in what I think has been a very useful debate so far. I was tempted to say the Honourable Member for St. Lucy apart, but I shall not. You are always provoking.

I think that it has been a very useful debate so far. I am even more pleased to see the establishment of the Ministry of Social Transformation. It cannot be doubted. That there is a need to transform the way in which the departments and the Ministry deliver social services is performing. There is also a need for social transformation at the level of the communities of Barbados.

Let me speak first to the Ministry and the agencies which deliver social services. Some of the points have been made by other members speaking earlier during the course of the debate but it is a matter of such grave concern that in some instances it bears repetition.

Those of us who are in this Chamber know what it is like to be awakened at midnight, at one, two o'clock in the morning to be told that there is a fire in some part of the constituency or that a mother and children have just been ran out of a house by a man with whom they are living or somebody's child has run away and cannot be found and they want you to help call up a few people or help go out in search of this child. We know what it is like to be called in to give counselling to members of the family, husbands and wives or spouses in crisis, children whose parents feel are not listening to them and feel that because you have some measure of visibility or as they think authority that the children might listen to you. It does not matter to them that you are not trained yourself in counselling but they want you to intervene to help their families.

We know what it is like, even in the case of the fire or in other circumstances where people are not working to have from time to time to make sure that the family is being properly nourished, that the children are getting to school and that they have monies for lunch and monies to pay their bus fares and get their bus tickets and so on. 6.35 p.m.

What has been a great concern about the social service agencies is the nature of the complaints made about the way in which they deliver services. Invariably, social service departments are opened between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. or the hours of 8.00a.m. and 4.30 p.m. so that they do not deal immediately and are invariably inaccessible when there is a problem after regular working hours. That is often the time when they are most needed when the children are on the streets, when women are being put out of houses and when fires are taking place. Often it is difficult to make contact and get immediate help for individuals or a family who is thrown into crisis by some social circumstance whatever the nature of that crisis.

If we are to transform the way in which social services are delivered, we have to ensure that these services are adequately staffed with properly trained personnel, that they have numbers, that they work beyond 4.00 p.m. so that when there is a crisis that either the MP does not have to be called or when the MP is called that the MP can get the immediate assistance to put the person into a house to ensure that they have some cash in their pocket or some food. There is nothing worst than having to go to a fire where the family has lost everything, every item of furniture, every stitch of clothing and all of the food in the house. Some people still have money hidden under the mattress and in the wardrobe and so on and they did not have time to get it out.

These are very real problems that impact on our society, and the social services have to match the needs of individuals and have to meet people at their place and at their time and point of need. These services have to become more relevant especially in a world that has become more mobile. Years ago, even within my lifetime which by comparison with other Members has been relatively short, one would walk through villages and people would be going to bed very early or everybody would be inside of the house. These days

however, people are on the streets very late into the evening and therefore services which seek to touch these people whether it has to do with community development, whether it has to do with youth commissioners, however, these persons are to be serviced, they have to be serviced by persons who are also working shift systems and who are not coming only between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to do any kind of social investigation.

Sometimes people are at work or they are not at home or they are bored in the house during the day and they have gone somewhere else to be with friends or to be with other persons and those agencies cannot shut down at 4.00 p.m. They must be available all through the night and work must go on all through the night in re-engineering how these departments function, the hours that they work and the numbers of staff that they have because I know very frequently the civil servants have complained that they do not have adequate numbers and even where they have trained personnel they do not have adequate numbers to deliver the kind of comprehensive community care that is needed.

I speak to the transformation of the agencies themselves. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made a very relevant point when he spoke to the way in which people accessing services are treated. Many MPs know that very often people come to us because they are afraid to approach the bureaucracy. They do not understand it, they do not know which agency they should be going to get what service, they do not necessarily know that the service they need is in fact provided by a Government agency and when they go, they are not treated with courtesy and dignity by those persons who are paid by the taxpayers to deliver service.

I say this, having been into the Government agencies myself and observed people being treated with scant respect and myself having been treated with great discourtesy, going into a public institution and seeking to get something done. Even if this is perhaps part of the culture of Barbados at this time, then if we are talking about public sector reform, a major part of the reform process in this social transformation which the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is seeking to effect, is going to have to be attitudinal change. Persons who go to these services must feel that they are welcomed, they must be treated with courtesy and dignity and must not be made to feel as if they are part of an inferior class who are being done some kind of favour. If we can achieve that, that alone would make large numbers of people out there who have contact with these services happy, and we would have accomplished something which is good,

I do not believe that we should go into another century without dealing with this problem which is endemic, I think, throughout the Public Service, of attitudes and how we deal with attitudes. I am not saying that everybody in the Public Service is like that but there are far too many complaints.

If we are to effect social transformation, it must be done at the level of communities. I was making the point that whether it is through youth commissioners or community development workers or however these persons are to be classified, that they must be on the street at night and during the evening hours, not only during the day, when people can be found, when people are out there having problems. A lot more investigation needs to take place into the problems that exist in society. In one area of my constituency alone, I can identify four families tonight each of whom is constituted by minors - children whose parents have died or left for one reason or another and the social services are not dealing with them.

If the social services are to be effective, persons like those and families like those must be found and must be known to the social services agencies. There has got to be a higher degree of collaboration between one agency and the other so that a comprehensive grid work of care is developed and you do not have a mono-focus department which deals only with children or with one problem or another but does not make contact with the diverse needs that the entire family might have.

Very often, as currently exist, individual departments are dealing with disparate problems all belonging to the same family but the kind of discussion that should take place in respect of the case work for that family does not take place and you could well have overlapping of resources, mis-comprehension of the nature of the problem or mis-treatment of the problem because there is not an agency for coordination of activity whether it is the National Assistance Board, Child Care Board or Welfare Department. I do not know what configuration or name will ultimately be used but whatever the configuration or name, some higher degree of collaboration than currently exist must take place.

Intervention must also be made so that a lot more work is done with young people. Far too often we complain about our youth but the kind of intervention needed in the critical years, when they are starting to go astray, the hand which can guide them back on the correct path is often missing. We cannot complain about our young people unless we are willing to provide the kind of social support which stops them from feeling alienated and ostracised from society and which stops them from feeling that nobody cares about them, or like they do not matter to us. Because you hear that a lot. I think that all politicians hear it. You go into communities and the young people are saying you all do not really care about us, you are not providing services that cater to our needs. What really are their needs? 6.45 p.m.

We have got into a habit in Barbados of building communities like Haynesville, like Silver Hill, like Gall Hill, like the Pine, like Eden Lodge, like Grazettes Housing Area, massive developments where we put down hundreds of people. I can take you to units in my constituency where as

many as 20 people are living in one two-bedroom house and that is true in other housing areas in Barbados. The rooms are small but there are no recreational facilities of any type. Invariably there is not even a green space that people can sit and talk. Where do they congregate if not on the block? There is nowhere else for them to go. In building new communities in Barbados, we have to give people the kind of space that they need so that they can live with dignity in communities. So therefore, recreational facilities have to be part of the planning when we plan a community.

There has to be social work from the start. What are the age groups that we are likely to have? How are we going to meet the needs of those individual age groups? What sections are you going to have here? How do you deal with what their peculiar needs are going to be? If there is going to be true social transformation, there must be the kind of social planning and developmental planning that will allow for a different kind of community development and a different kind of community approach. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael East said today it has to be done on the ground.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. I wanted to speak more to this but very briefly I am going to make the point that, if there is to be social transformation, then the Ministry of Social Transformation also has an economic role in that many of the people who live in communities are not in structured work. Many MPs hear that, when people come to them at their constituency clinics. You ask them what skills they have and they tell you none, but they want to be a maid at the hospital, an NCC ranger or a school meals worker. Those are the three jobs of choice of single women and married women of a certain social class all over Barbados. Therefore if there is going to be social transformation, we have to move our women from the point where they feel that the ultimate job for them in life is a maid at the hospital or an NCC Ranger. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with those jobs. I am saying that what has to be given by the Ministry of Social Transformation is a range of skills and training that will allow for greater entrepreneurial activity on the part of these women, so that their lives are transformed economically and so that they do not see themselves coming to an MP and saying that I want to be an NCC Ranger, a maid at the hospital, or a school meals worker.

There has to be a linkage between the economy and social transformation that will make sure that there is upward, social mobility for those who now see themselves as an underclass and those who think of themselves as living in socially unacceptable, residential areas. There has to be a means by which those persons lives change, not only in terms of them getting support from NAB, from Poverty Alleviation, or from Urban Development but a real change in the quality of life that they enjoy because their economic status has changed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have to stop your flow now. You are going well.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Very well, Mr. Chairman, I will come back.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much. I want to focus on one of the aspects of the several groups within the community which will have the very clear and focused attention of this Ministry - the Ministry of Social Transformation. If there is a group that deserves special attention, that group would be the disabled within the community.

I want, Sir, to support the establishment of the National Disabilities Unit which is less than one year old. I believe this is the first Estimates in which it will have a full financial year, and in which funds have been provided. This year some $792 338 have been provided in these Estimates. That National Disability Unit, Sir, I hope would usher in a new day and a new approach to matters relating to the disabled.

Sir, I would want, however, to take this opportunity to salute the NGOs which have, over the years, done an excellent job and the private voluntary organisations with a special focus on the disabled and to set that, Sir, in the context of a society today, which is only now beginning to openly discuss matters relating to the disabled.

Let us not forget, Sir, that there was a time, unfortunately in Barbados, when the disabled, especially disabled children were - hidden away from even their immediate community. It was considered to be a shame to have someone in the family with a disability as opposed to being seen as just another medical complaint for which they may require some specific attention. So that those people, Sir, who have been at the forefront of this activity but who could do the little push from a national coordinating body, like the National Disability Unit need to be saluted. But they have not been left out into the cold, Sir.

I am pleased to note that the Ministry of Social Transformation has included in these Estimates, under the 315 Heading, Sir, Grants to Public Institutions, some financial assistance which I am sure will go along with the other technical assistance to these groups.

Groups, Sir, such as the special Olympics, BARNOD, the Barbados Association for the Blind and Deaf, the Barbados Council for the Disabled, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the New Life Deaf Club, the National United

Society for the Blind and the National Association of Parents for the Disabled. All of these groups which have been able to draw on the talents and energies of private citizens and other outstanding citizens in our community, to provide help for the disabled are now getting an additional push through the National Disabilities Unit. I therefore want to salute the Ministry of Social Transformation for that.

Sir, the Unit as I have been advised, has among its plans for this year a number of very necessary and very bold initiatives, including the creation of a national register of persons with disability. Again, this section of our society, just like any other that must be the beneficiary of special attention, we need to quantify and qualify who and what we are dealing with, so that you will know how to target, where to target and when to target - and again, Sir, drawing from the fact as I indicated earlier that we operate in Barbados where people are only now willing to admit to the existence of children with disabilities.

I know of stories, Sir, even of officers conducting the usual ten-year population censuses, when they are checking on population details, individuals in the society sometimes make an effort to hide the fact that there is a disabled person in the house.

Aside.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: That is a fact, Sir. I became aware of a household in which there was a 12-year old girl, who would have been born blind and I never saw the person on the street. I only happened to be passing in the area and I heard someone crying. I knew all the other folks in the household and when I inquired who it was, then I discovered that the child was there, and has never had the opportunity to be integrated as much as she could be into the society. She has not had the benefit of playing with other children, of coming out and enjoying the fresh air, sun light and so on. She was not given the opportunity within the limitations posed by the disability to enjoy life as fully as she could. That day must come to an end and the only way that the National Disabilities Unit will be able to effectively provide the kind of assistance that is needed, is if they are aware of where these individuals are and what is the extent of the disability. Of course, there are a whole range of disabilities, from the mild to the severe, from the physical to the mental and therefore this creation of a national register is an important first step in helping the Unit to properly deal with the problem.

We are also proposing, Sir, with the funds that are provided in these Estimates, I am pleased to note, to provide some materials, aids, adaptations and other technical support for persons with disabilities. This is very important. Sir, and again I have had the experience within a constituency of visiting a household where, it pained m\ heart to see her, a lady who lived alone with a disability. Granted she has a relative living nearby who comes by to assist but for the lack of a functioning wheelchair, Sir, this lady was forced - and of cour^v, ,ve are working on steps to alleviate that problem - to set everything in the kitchen, including the stove, Sir, at a very low level. It certainly struck me as very dangerous, Sir, to have someone moving around on the floor in the kitchen with their stove at eye level, Sir, and having to reach a little higher than head level to deal with matters in the saucepan, Sir. 6.55 p.m.

Therefore the provision of aids and adaptations and technical support, Sir, preparing gadgets and other attachments which in most cases are very simple but not affordable by some of the disabled persons because very often because of the inability to work they also fall into the poverty trap.

Again through lack of support, through lack of identification of these persons by their families, Sir, they have not so far been able to even tap into what support might be available in the wider society. Therefore, Sir, between these programmes and the provision of these services, Sir, and the register, I hope that some change would come.

I certainly, Sir, will be drawing every case of which I am aware, and there are several, of persons with disabilities to the National Disabilities Unit to make sure that they benefit from the programmes that are being offered.

Sir, all of that is fine. All of that is laudable, but we must go further. Whilst it is good to have these special programmes, our ultimate goal, Mr. Chairman, has to be the mainstreaming of the disabled in Barbados.

We cannot relegate them, Sir, to a parallel world of special projects. We must so adjust, what we consider to be the mainstream that they are able to fit in as well and in this regard Government must take the lead, Sir...

I therefore, Sir, look forward to the day, in the not too distant future, when as a matter of example, when as a matter of course, each and every government building, Sir, would be designed with appropriate access for physically challenged persons. Wheelchairs access for example, every government building, Sir.

Unfortunately, many government buildings are not designed that way, Sir. This came to me very starkly when a meeting was to be held at my office, Sir, in the other Ministries. My office is upstairs. The conference room is upstairs, the regular thing, but the gentleman who made the appointment to come, nobody knew that he moved around in a wheelchair. Very few persons knew that he came in a wheelchair and therefore other adjustments had to be made and we, very often those of us who are fully mobile, do not consider these simple things.

Yes, there is access to the main entrance of the building for wheelchair persons but then in terms of the way the

office is configured internally it still does not permit a person moving in a wheelchair for example to be able to easily get around.

Many of us would not even realize, Sir, that if unfortunately, we were to have a leg injury and we were walking even with one crutch let alone two crutches, that we would not be able to manoeuvre and get around some of the more fantastically designed buildings. The spiraling staircases and so on. Very attractive but dysfunctional.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute to wind up.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Already, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The Government has to take the initiative, Sir, but in the wider community there are also things that can be done to mainstream the disabled. For example, Sir, I cannot understand why in this day of readily available technology, the CBC-TV News, Sir, is not close-captioned. Yes, I appreciate the sign language that is done on the summary of the news but basically most of the Televisions you buy now have the close-captioned option except that CBC does not transmit in close-captioning mode. Therefore a person with a hearing disability, like my mother-in-law for example, Sir, while she can watch the cable channels, Sir, and get close-captions she cannot follow the CBC News, rather she has to wait to read the newspaper the following day.

The public telephone system, Sir. Amongst the public telephones should be the TTL phone, Sir, that is the technical term for it, but the teletype phones which are a prominent feature in other communities which allow hearing disabled persons to be able to make their phone calls, Sir.

Sir, affirmative action programmes need to be implemented for the employment, Sir, to give that extra opportunity for employment of disabled persons and in that regard. Sir, I am pleased to note that in recognition of the importance of this series, the social partners in Protocol III, 1998-2000, Sir, included a section on the disabled in which they have agreed to work closely with the agencies involved, Sir. They have agreed to assist in the development of a national database, Sir. They have agreed to assist in identifying employment opportunities and to make what adjustments are necessary to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities, so that they can sustain their own development, Sir.

• 1 know Government is firm in its commitment and 1 hope that we can hold the other two social partners to their commitments in this protocol, and Sir, working with the National Disabilities Unit that we can see into the new century, Sir, a new day and a new deal for persons with disabilities in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak in this debate and really to give my very strong support to the Honourable Minister, whom I believe has been most suitably chosen to deal with the task at hand of trying to transform this society by ensuring that each and every person who lives within this country can fully expect and receive all of the opportunities which will allow them to be able to chart for themselves a life in which they can move through and be independent and indeed move to the ultimate stage of interdependence because it is only in reaching that stage that a society can properly and truly function. 7.05 p.m.

May I say that I truly believe that there may be justification on all sides for the state of affairs which we find in Barbados today whether it is in the form of lack of staff on the part of departments and therefore the inability to truly meet the needs or whether it is from the perspective of that person who has truly met the one or two officers who really have stepped out of line in the way in which they have treated that person.

Suffice it to say that I think that the management systems in the areas of the various departments within the social services must now clearly reflect an objective in seeking to bring about that attitudinal change that has been the subject of so much debate here today. The systems of accountability which must be put in place must require of persons in the execution of their jobs that type of change of attitude that will allow persons not to feel embarrassed or not to feel as though they are being medicant in simply asking for what this Government so willingly puts there for their benefit in respect of the services that are to be at hand.

Equally, I believe that the systems of appraisal within the public service in the areas of the social services in particular must reflect a requirement for the inter-personal relations of the persons who are charged with the responsibility of delivering these services so that persons truly recognise that you can only be good at your job if you see the manner in which you interface with these people as a critical part of your job function. I do not want to rest too much on that because, as I said, there has been much debate on that today and last night.

I believe, Sir, that as I said, and like others in here have said, that every Barbadian and every person living in this country for that matter is entitled to a decent standard of living and is entitled to the opportunities that will allow them to develop the skills, benefits and resources where they can

provide for themselves and their families in a dignified way and one that does not require them to be in a state of dependency. If you start from that position, one therefore will argue strongly for the holistic delivery of social services that not only sees a person receiving a particular benefit to solve a problem but sees the social services agencies or agency, as I hope it would soon be in the singular, moving to a position where they see the individual as an individual and seeks to deal with their problems in terms of moving them from that state of dependency to a form of independence that will ultimately, as I said, be only a transient stage. It is only in their becoming interdependent, interacting with the rest of the community that we then build the other social structures within the society that are necessary for the successful evolution of societies.

I really believe, Sir, that you cannot proceed on the basis that simply to give a person a welfare cheque to help them make ends meet is a justifiable solution for dealing with the problems of a woman with three and four children who has no other sources of income. There must be a determination to work with that particular family and deal with all of the difficulties whether the difficulties relate to lack of training or lack of a job alone or whether they extend into other areas of social problems be it in any form of drugs, substance abuse, forms of poverty, forms of persons coming in and taking advantage of the children or persons not having access to decent housing. There must be a commitment to deal with them as individuals and to deal with all of their problems so that you can track how you can move them from that state of dependency to a form of independence.

I also believe, Sir, that Government cannot be responsible for solving all of these problems. Hence I speak about interdependence which is where the other institutions of civil society, the non-governmental organisations, the community groups, the Church groups, the sports groups, the cultural groups, the teams, the schools, they all must play a role in helping to foster the environment within which persons feel that they can make that transition to independence.

Indeed, Sir, one of the things that we have done within the Ministry of Education, because we believe that the most fundamental way to bring about independence of a person is through the provision of a sound education, is to determine why all children or more children are not learning at the levels that we believe they should be learning. Whether there are impediments that prevent them from learning at those levels and if there are impediments, whether those impediments are physical, emotional, or whatever they are and seek to determine how we can remove those impediments.

The physical ones are the easiest to deal with because invariably the tests are very objective in terms of hearing, speech and sight but it is the social and the psychological problems that may be more difficult (1) to diagnose and (2) to remediate.

In respect of the social problems, Mr. Chairman, we have set up within the Ministry of Education since last year, I would have spoken to it in this Honourable Chamber before, a committee for the delivery of social services among students in our schools. That committee is chaired in the Ministry by Senator Forde, the Parliamentary Secretary. It deals in a very real way on a day-to-day and weekly basis with the very real problems of individual children and from the perspective of that committee on which is represented many of the social agencies as well as other people from within the Ministry, we just do not assume that that child has a problem. We immediately start to find out what is the problem, or what may be the problem in the family that might have led that child to having this particular problem and how do we remove that problem from the family invariably in order to help that particular child because if you seek to help the child's immediate problem alone without dealing with the environment within which the child is functioning, the child may end up suffering f om that same problem again.

I am happy to report, Sir, it is functioning. It is not a committee that will ever have 100% success because that is not the way how human beings operate but every child that we help in a meaningful way is one more that we have less to worry about in the medium to long term.

I truly believe, Sir, that the experiment which we started at St. George Secondary School with the placement of social workers is one that we need to extend to three or four other schools. I hope that during the course of this financial year that there would be three or four other schools specifically chosen, given the ratio of problems that we see within Senator Forde's Committee that would also have the services of social workers attached to them because very often a guidance counsellor either does not have the training or the time to do the kind of serious in-depth work that is necessary in terms of investigations or remediation to deal with that child and the environment within which that child lives. It is no use believing that you can solve that child's problem at lunch time at school or after school and the child goes back into a home with the same problems being created day after day.

I really believe that we are seeing an evolution in the way in which we seek to remove these learning impediments, in recognising that some of them have their root in social problems and that there must be greater coordination which we have already set up the mechanism for.

I am happy to report from our experience in the Ministry that we have generally received tremendous assistance from the social services agencies over the last two to three years in seeking to deal with these problems. I am happy to report from our experience in the Ministry that we have generally received tremendous assistance from the social service agencies over the last two to three years in

seeking to deal with these problems and I hope that that assistance will continue.
7.15p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, 1 want to speak very clearly also in making those points that unless we have a more user friendly environment where people know what rights and what privileges they are entitled to and what services are available you could as well not have those services or even those rights.

Part of the problem is that too many people in this county do not know what benefits are available within the social services and how to access them. I call therefore for the Honourable Minister to implement a strong public relations programme at all levels, levels to go through the church, levels to go through the media, levels using popular entertainment, all levels, so that all aspects of the society will be truly able to recognise what rights and benefits they have under it.

Sir, I want to speak to the matter of the Urban Development Commission and to laud it for its tremendous works done throughout St. Michael. I believe that in the judgment of the people of St. Michael is a reflection of gratitude because of the holistic way in which we treated their problems. You have to deal with the renewal of communities not just in terms of giving a man a house and leaving him but a holistic approach again that sees to your taking care of the infrastructure, the roads, the drainage, etc. in the community in which he lives, your making available to him funds to improve his house and putting at his disposal funds that would allow him to enter into entrepreneurial activity if he is not employed and then to provide the recreational facilities. That has been the approach of the Urban Development Commission.

1 will come back and talk more about it because it is the most revolutionary agency in terms of bringing about the change from dependence to independence to inter-dependence that must be the hallmark of social transformation. Thank you.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, it is now time for the dinner break. I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 8.00 o'clock tonight.

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. D. A. CARTER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to see that the sum of approximately $60 million has been allocated to the Ministry of Social Transformation to be exact, $59.8 million. Obviously this has resulted from the economy being well managed by the Ministry of Finance and as a result of that Government has been able to put some additional resources to assist the poor and the elderly and the disadvantaged groups in this country.

During the last 18 months or so, in going through the constituency of Christ Church West Central, I was able to identify many houses which were owned by the old people in the Christ Church West Central constituency and these houses were in a very bad state of disrepair. Fortunately I was able to get quite a number of these houses fixed by the National Assistance Board.

However the past three months in going through the constituency of Christ Church West Central, I have been able to identify another 35 or 40 houses which I would like done under the Poverty Alleviation Fund because where my constituency is geographically located it comes under the auspices of the Rural Development Commission. However, I am fortunate in that this could be done through Poverty Alleviation as was done some 18 months ago.

There are also a number of houses in my constituency which need water borne facilities and it may shock you to know that there are approximately 70 houses in the Christ Church West Central constituency which need these types of facilities. I am happy that I was able to get these facilities or these things done under Poverty Alleviation and to some extent through the National Assistance Board but I have had some disappointments with the way the National Assistance Board carries on its business.

I think that very often they have been extremely tardy and this mitigates against the poor people of Barbados. I also

find that there appears to be a real problem not necessarily at a managerial level but right down the line where when the contractors or the carpenters who are doing these houses try to get lumber or material sometimes they have to wait weeks to get the materials to fix these houses.

I do not think it is right for these poor people to be disadvantaged as a result of the sloppiness of these people who work at the National Assistance Board.

I was listening to the Minister talking about community development and he was talking about certain communities which will have recreational facilities during the next financial year. I would like to beg the Minister to do something for me in the Silver Hill district. I do not think that very much has to be done to the bottom of a building which is presently owned by National Assistance Board which has"a supermarket to the top. This building needs to be surrounded by blocks and it could also do with some toilet facilities and it is my estimation having talked to a contractor from the area that this additional work cannot cost more than $12 000 or $13 000. I am hoping that the Minister will be able to take this small amount of $12 000 or $13 000 out of the kitty and make sure that the people in Silver Hill have a recreational facility. I must say that I have asked in the last two years either Ministry to do something to help me in this respect but so far it has fallen on deaf ears. I have all the confidence in the Minister that he will look after this problem as soon as possible. 8.05 p.m.

This morning, as well as last night, I listened to the Minister in his presentation and I was impressed with all the projects which he has in mind for the poor people of this country. I also heard him talk about community projects under Community Development but sadly enough I did not hear him mention anything about substance abuse or for that matter drug abuse when in actual fact, drug abuse is about the biggest social problem facing the young people of this country. All over Barbados, especially the housing areas like Silver Hill, Haynesville, Gall Hill and other districts such as those you recognise that almost 50% of the young boys in those districts are on herb as well as on more potent substances. If you are going to address problems associated with the poor and problems associated with the disadvantaged, I think it is high time that some sort of emphasis is placed on the people who use and abuse substances.

I must say that substance abuse is not something which has just started. Substance abuse started many centuries ago. As a matter of fact, the oldest drug which is abused is alcohol. This was abused many centuries ago. However, the other drugs which are commonly used now were not significantly abused and it is only at the turn of the 16th century that records became available about the abuse of these drugs,

Asides

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: It was somewhere around the 16th century. Prior to that there was no real record of substance abuse. As a matter of fact, opium which is abused worldwide was used medicinally in the 1500 B.C. and marijuana was used since about the 2nd century in Asia. However, significant problems did not occur with the abuse of these drugs until the 16th century when records began to be made about the abuse of these drugs.

However, coming on to the 17th century, psycho-active drug abuse began to increase and as a result of the developments that were taking place then and similarly in Barbados as a result of Barbados being transformed into the society that it is, drug abuse had started to become a real problem as a result of the socio-cultural problems which we have encountered. As a result of these problems, we have become a lot more receptive to the innovative drug use and this has also been facilitated by the urban populations rising and this has actually given rise to this drug behaviour pattern being noticed in these very big urban populations.

In Barbados we also have a decline in moral standards where the church has actually loosen their control as to the way people behave. I think the drug user behaviour has actually intensified. I also think that as a result of technological advancements where the world is becoming smaller and where people in Barbados are travelling, we have actually got used to a lot of the bad habits emanating from the United States and most of these developed countries.

It is very difficult to see, the way things are going now, how we can control the abuse of drugs which is really the number one social problem in Barbados. Something has to be done by the Ministry of Social Transformation to assist in this problem. I think that we will have to use a very massive public relations programme to sensitize the young people in Barbados as to the negatives in using drugs whereby we could have a better society.

I think, Mr. Chairman, you will recognise that about 60% of the people who are in prison are there as a result of drug related problems and if we can do something to sensitize these people about the bad effects of drugs on them, 1 think that we will have a better society.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: Thank you. I am hoping that the Minister of Social Transformation puts a lot more emphasis to this particular problem.

I would like to say that I am very happy to see that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has been given this tremendous task. I know him very well and I also recognise the enthusiasm he is carrying into this portfolio. I am quite sure, that the Minister, being a good listener and

having listened to the people on this Side, will be able to come together with some good plans and programmes so that...

Asides.

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: We have so many people over here that I do not think that it is necessary to listen to the two over there.

! think the Minister will be able to come up with some good programmes to assist the poor people of this country, the disadvantaged as well as the elderly and I look forward to being in communication or very much being in contact with the Honourable Minister over the next four to five years.

Thank you very much.
8,15p.m.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, in winding up this debate, Sir, first of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Honourable Members in this Chamber, who have contributed so immensely and significantly to this debate. I have been in this Honourable Chamber for over four and a half years and it is the first time that we have had such a cross section and wide range of different views and injection of ideas, in and on how to propel the new Ministry of Social Transformation into a new direction.

Sir, I would also like to give credit too, to the Opposition, who through its two Members have also given some ideas and impetus into the way that they feel the new Ministry of Social Transformation should function. Now what I would also like to do is to give to Barbadians a detailed understanding of the whole Ministry of Social Transformation, that is, the agencies or those Government departments that are currently under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Transformation. We have eight different departments:

1. The National Assistance Board
2. The Child Care Board
3. The Disabilities Unit
4. The Women's Bureau
5. Community Development
6. Urban Development Commission
7. The Poverty Alleviation Bureau
8. The Welfare Department

Sir, a lot of ideas were expressed in this Chamber and 1 would like to give a few clarifications on the way that we perceive, or when the new policy paper for the Ministry will be submitted to Cabinet.

First of all, we will be implementing a Development and Coordinating Unit within this Ministry and this Coordinating Unit will ensure an efficient delivery of services within all the departments of this Ministry including the Statutory Board, Sir. The Unit will also engage in critical research to inform policy and development planning, as well as devising the legislative framework that will be the right process of governing institutional changes.

Sir, in order to preserve equity in the Ministry, and a fair share of distribution of the resources of the Ministry, one of the things that we want to do is to set up an Appeals Committee, so that those persons and recipients from the various social agencies under the Ministry who have a problem or a grouse, they could appeal, or bring their grouses to this special Committee that is put in place.

One of the areas, Sir, that was not touched by most of the Members was the Women's Bureau. Some $565 969 was allocated to this particular department. Mr. Chairman, shortly a bureau of gender affairs will be set up. How do we intend to do this? We want to have a forum for discussion and engage all Barbadians to share ideas on how best we could develop and formulate this new Bureau of Gender Affairs.

In addition to that, Sir, I also want to look at the Urban Development Commission and also want to inform Parliament that shortly we will be looking at developing a new project for the residents of Cats Castle. It is currently going through a feasibility study and we are hoping that during this same year, we will be able to bring this housing programme for the residents of Cats Castle. You heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East talk about the deplorable conditions in the Barracks and Martindales Road. We will also be looking at a developmental housing programme for that area.

Also there is an area in the Honourable Member for St. Michael West constituency that is referred to as 'Viet Nam' and we will look at that area. Then, Danesbury is in urgent need of attention and also other areas in St. Michael. But when one looks at the names: Cats Castle, The Barracks and Viet Nam, these are all nicknames that have been assigned to these communities because of the depressing state of these communities. I would like Honourable Members, if they think that I am exaggerating, to go into these communities and see for themselves, the deplorable conditions that these residents are currently living under, Sir.

Sir, through the Urban Development Commission 105 persons were granted assistance in the last financial year totalling SI 200 513.37 and that was through the Urban Enterprise Loan Scheme, Sir. Under the programme unemployed and underemployed residents of the Greater Bridgetown accessed loans to a maximum ceiling of $25 000 and persons have been given assistance to start businesses in

a wide area of activities. These include catering services, gift shops, tailoring, photography and some aspects of the music industry, Sir.

The Urban Development Commission has started all of these projects and has been able to create 309 jobs as a direct result of the financial assistance given to these small businesses, Sir. In addition, for the period April 4, 1998 to March 15, 1999, the Urban Development Commission has repaired 106 houses. They have also dug 120 wells. They have installed 22 septic tanks and 104 houses were repaired. I am particularly happy about the work that the Urban Development Commission has been doing and I would like to use this opportunity again, Sir, to compliment the staff at the Urban Development Commission. Because, if we could use this double track engine forward of Urban Development Commission and National Assistance Board, we would be able to effectively tackle some of the housing problems that our poor people are currently experiencing, Sir.

I believe that the National Assistance Board's role in this whole transforming exercise, Sir, would be to target those rural areas along with the Rural Development Commission, so that it would add that much needed impetus, targeting areas like St. John, St. Philip and St. Andrew and particularly, St. John.

As I went into St. John, I realised that there is a great deal of work that has to be done - not due to the fact that the Honourable Member for St. John did not make the request. But it is a matter of response, Sir, and response normally comes very, very slow, if we are going to leave everything entirely to certain sections of our civil service.

Sir, I believe, philosophically that no obstacle is greater than the cause. I would like to salute the former Minister of Community Development, who would have practically laid the groundwork for the new Ministry of Social Transformation and I would hope that as we go on, since I am the new Minister, I will be working very closely with him and try to get as much advice from his experience in running these departments.

Sir, since I took up the mantle for this new Ministry there has been a tremendous avalanche of goodwill and support from Barbadians and even volunteer efforts coming from Barbadians to help us in the new Ministry of Social Transformation. 8.25 p.m.

Where we are currently located, Sir, I am very skeptical about the security arrangements because there is none. The building in my view, Sir, is one that is not too secure and we are hoping to be out of that building hi fact in another four to five weeks. I am hoping for that, Sir.

So, Sir, finally as I said I would like to express thanks to all the Honourable Members for participating in the debate Sir. Surely, Sir, for this ensuing financial year we cannot do it alone. I have outlined very clearly, Sir, the assistance that we would need. The parts that we would need. The partnerships that we are hoping to develop. Sir, the programmes that we are hoping to implement within the community, so that we could add more stability to this country that we love so much, Sir. I am hoping that we will be able to engage the private sector, the media and ail responsible Barbadians in this exercise, Sir.

I talked about a new set of social initiatives, Sir, that would propel communities particularly the point of empowering those community councils across Barbados, Sir. Also, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau which will have a more individualistic approach. Eight million dollars has been allocated to that department, Sir. Also, the further empowerment of the NGO's and CBO's across Barbados, Sir.

Sir, I believe that with all the discussions that took place in this Honourable Chamber and some of those persons who are attached to the various Ministries within the Civil Service, Sir, would have a little softening of heart and understand that we are all in this process together to help reform.

As I said earlier, Sir, we cannot create miracles. We are not in the business of giving away. We are hoping to help people on a path of sustainable development, Sir, as the Chinese would say, "it is better to teach a person to fish than to just give him the fish like that."

This Ministry is not a give away Ministry. I intend to continue, Sir, to take a hands on approach of the Ministry, because if I sit down and wait for the information just to come to me and act on it, Sir, I do not believe that I will be doing justice to the Ministry, Sir. So I would continue to take that approach, Sir, and it is a long road ahead and as I said, Sir, no obstacle is greater than the cause.

I want to again thank you, Sir, for your indulgence and I want again to thank Honourable Members and all those persons who came to listen to the debate, Sir.

I now beg to move that Head 24 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 20 - MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT- $6,355 380.00

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, in moving that Head 20 stand part, I think I should begin by saying a bit about the areas of responsibility that the Ministry has,

particularly as it is a new Ministry operating for the first time in the coming financial year.

The Ministry, Mr. Chairman, has ministerial responsibility for Commerce, Cooperatives and Friendly Societies, Internal Trade, Small Business, Consumer Affairs, Metrication, National Information Technology, Price Control, Science and Technology, Utilities Regulations, the Cooperatives Department, the Liquor Licensing Authority, Barbados National Standards Institution, the National Council for Science and Technology, the Public Utilities Board and the Fair Trading Commission.

It is not a big spending Ministry. In fact the amount involved is some $8.1 million, $5.5 million for current expenditure and $2.5 million for capital expenditure to implement the programmes for the coming financial year.

The foremost challenge of the Ministry and the more or *less the global economy in which we now survive is really to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of Barbados by implementing strategies aimed at encouraging and fostering domestic investment, further developing small business and protecting consumers.

If I may begin, Mr. Chairman, by saying something in respect of small business development. I will firstly say just again to set the matter in proper perspective that the Business Development Unit of the Ministry has responsibility for the formulation of business policy, while the Small Business Centre of the BIDC has responsibility for the implementation of policy in relation to small business.

But it is intended however to tidy up that arrangement so that we bring all responsibility for small business development under the Ministry and that is now being studied and it is expected that in approximately four to six months from now that it would be tidied up to ensure that the Ministry has full responsibility for all aspects of small business development.

Over the past year, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry has made considerable strides in providing an enabling environment and support systems for the operation of small business. I will just give a few examples.

The Ministry over the last few years spent considerable time and effort in ensuring that a Small Business Development Act was prepared and drafted and fully circulated for comments from several vested interests including the Small Business Association, the Central Bank, the Department of Inland Revenue, the Rural Development Commission and the Small Business and New Enterprise Centre of the BIDC.

All those agencies have made comments on the draft Small Business Development Act and the Ministry has received their comments, has evaluated the comments and will now be seeking to forward it to Cabinet for Cabinet to sign off on it before it is finalised.

When enacted, the legislation will provide a working definition of a small business and will also provide a package of fiscal and other incentives which will benefit the small business sector.

The Prime Minister has already outlined in the budgetary proposals of last year for a certain regime in relation to small business and the Act will certainly incorporate that when finalised.

The Ministry also with the assistance of consultants has formulated a set of proposals for the establishment of an innovation fund. These proposals as well would be submitted to Cabinet shortly for its consideration.

But the aim of this innovation fund is really to enhance the entrepreneurial environment for small business specifically to provide not only funding but technical assistance as well to assist small and new business people and persons with workable business ideas basically to convert the idea into reality.

In other words to help them to properly develop the concept and also assist them in the preparation of a business plan so that they can fully commercialise the product.

The fund will really be used to finance projects, not through loan contribution but through equity participation and really will be assisting projects that are considered to be innovative and marketable, falling into a new emerging or underdeveloped sector and subsector, are likely to be net earning as a saver of foreign exchange and are at least 90% locally owned and are not focused on the traditional areas such as real estate development, traditional agriculture or manufacturing.

So really, it really is an innovation fund to deal with ideas which are new and marketable and have proper prospects for revenue generation. Perhaps, initially, the fluids will be funded by the Government.

With respect though to some other matters in relation to the development of small business over the last year. It would be remiss of me not to mention one or two other areas, particularly the establishment of Fund Access or the Micro Enterprise Lending Institution as it is really properly called.

That really provided considerable assistance to a number of small entrepreneurs who could not obtain assistance from commercial banks with not only money for the business but it also offer their clients some basic training

to enable them to use the money which they had borrowed and also to develop some managerial skills. Courses were actually offered for each borrower and a project officer was available to monitor progress and provide any assistance that was needed. 8.35 p.m.

Significantly this Fund Access in 1998 granted 169 loans totalling some $1.6 million and the loans created over 100 new jobs and assisted a number of small businesses to remain viable. That was just one area.

The Rural Development Commission which the Minister of Agriculture will expand on if we reach him during the course of these Estimates, made some 96 loans in 1998 totalling some $841 375 to assist small rural entrepreneurs in their development. They too not only provided the cash but they also provided technical and training assistance enabling many start-up businesses to have a measure of competence and confidence which, again, is not available from the traditional banking sector.

The Urban Enterprise Loan Scheme in 1998, another programme that assisted small business, granted some 105 persons in assistance totalling some $1.2 million. Under-Employed Residents of the Greater Bridgetown Area had access to loans to a maximum of $25 000 from the Commission to assist them in starting or upgrading their own small businesses. Under that programme and the dispensation of funds, some 309 jobs were created as a result of the financial assistance given to this small business sector under that Scheme which meant that in the area of small business for 1998 approximately some 600 jobs were created.

Now, it is not our intention, Mr. Chairman, to relax. We intend to continue this year that thrust in the area of the development of small business and we have some programmes for 1999-2000 as well. It is intended to finalise during the course of the coming financial year the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act along with the related rules, of course. In fact, it has already been drafted and following the necessary Cabinet approval it is going to be circulated to relevant parties for comment. The important thing about this Bill and piece of legislation is that it will be a radical departure from the procedure that normally obtains when a business man now declares himself insolvent or unable to pay his debts and to continue in business.

The current approach, in my opinion, is quite merciless where receivers and liquidators merely move in and shut the business down paying out creditors and in effect bring the business to an end. This legislation will be akin to the Chapter 11 Proceedings in the United States where once a business...

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Not quite, but very similar to that legislation where once a business person declares himself unable to pay his debts and conduct his business the receivers will now move in not with the intention of closing down and paying creditors but to assist him to get his business back around and turn around and be able to be up and running and functioning properly so that jobs would be maintained and the small businessman would be able to continue in the business he was previously operating. So it really is a radical departure from the approach being presently used.

There is also the issue of a small business venture capital fund. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy looks as though he is acquainted with this issue but that is not an unusual look for him to have. Some four years ago, Mr. Chairman, Government provided a sum of $2 million for the Small Business Association to assist them with setting up a facility to provide equity financing for small business ventures. That was approximately four years ago. Four years later, as I speak to you today, not one cent of the money has been used.

The Small Business Association has somehow been experiencing difficulty in personalising the Fund. This is extremely frustrating, I must tell you, and having met with the Small Business Association it is my intention to use my every effort to follow through on this to ensure that the funds can be utilised. There appear to be some niggling problems that, in my view, should not be preventing the usage of those funds.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: No, it has nothing to do with the Minister. I am not going to go into details but it has nothing to do with the Minister or any Minister for that matter. The fact is that it is my intention to have further meetings, to use more suasion and failing that I believe it would necessitate intervention at perhaps a very high level if it comes to that to ensure that the funds are utilised because it appears to me that there is a bit of nit-picking going on which is preventing the use of the funds and it is really operating to the hindrance of a number of small business people who need equity financing or who are deprived of it because of certain matters remaining to be resolved.

One other area, Mr. Chairman, in which the Ministry will be very involved is in the area of what is referred to as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Contact Point Programme.

It is clear that the small business sector must be competitive in light of the international environment in which we are going to be operating. This project is going to be a major activity to the undertaking.

The Hazard Analysis and Critical Contact Point Programme is essentially a quality assurance system which

all food producers who wish to export to the United States of America and to the European Union are required to implement. A certification is necessary if you want to enter the exotic LOME niche market which a number of persons seem very interested in getting into.

This process really involves analysing the procedures used in manufacturing for food handling from beginning to end of the process with a view to identifying any critical points in the process, put simply, those points in the process at which the product is likely to become contaminated and what you have to do is any such location in the process where there can be possible contamination of the product, you have to put measures in place to ensure that you eliminate the possibility of the contamination.

Now, it is going to be necessary to bring consultants in on this because the skills are not as yet available in Barbados to do that but funds are in the Estimates, as you will see, to fund the necessary consultants who will be in very shortly to start to work in this area with the Ministry, the BNSI to ensure that the system is put in place. It is the intention that during the course of the next financial year that some 30 small food producers will become certified and will thereafter be fully entitled to export into the United States their food products.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes to wind up his presentation.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, those are some of the short-term measures but with a view to looking at the small business sector in the long term, the Ministry has already prepared a draft Green Paper on small business. The paper, like any Green Paper, gives a history of the small business sector. It analyses the problems which preclude the development of the sector and outlines a number of proposals for the development of the small business sector having regard again to the environment that is likely to prevail as we move into the 21st century. As usual with all Green Papers, once it goes to Cabinet for Cabinet's vetting it will be distributed and comments and discussion of the Paper will follow prior to fmalisation. 8.45 p.m.

The last point before I close but, obviously, I will have to come back, is in relation to the fact that the Ministry is also going to be doing a census in relation to small business activity. At present there is a clear absence of any database in the Ministry or in existence at all in relation to the information on small business.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I made a mistake.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The census will really provide planners, analysts and development strategists with accurate and reliable information for the purposes of planning in relation to the small business sector. The information that the Centre intends to gather really and truly would be the number of small businesses that are out there. Nobody at present knows the number of small businesses that really exist, particularly the number of small businesses by type exactly where they are, the location of the small businesses, the number of employees by gender and the annual earnings of the particular small and microenterprise. The problems facing the sector will also be gathered in the course of conducting the census so that proper planning over a long-term basis can be undertaken, particularly when this is taken in context of a Green Paper being prepared almost at the same time so that proper long-term planning can be done for the Small Business Centre.

The Small Business Centre is also intended to benefit from the Government's economic affirmative action programme. As you know, many complaints were made over the years and perhaps rightly so that in the distribution of contracts, particularly Government contracts, the small businessman felt certainly that he was not being given an adequate percentage of those contracts of. that Government work.

This Government has taken the firm view and, in fact, implemented from before but now formally its intention to ensure that there is this economic affirmative action programme for small businesses where small businessmen can feel assured that a satisfactory percentage of all Government's works will in fact be allocated to them. The Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development will of course be assisting in the formulation and implementation of that programme. Those are the few comments, Mr. Chairman, in relation to small business.

With respect to commerce, very briefly, I will say commerce, as everyone knows, is the buying and selling of goods and services. Provisional figures provided by the Central Bank indicate that over 1998 the wholesale and retail sector expanded by around 7% in the context of an economy which grew by some 4.8%. The value of retained imports increased from $1.8 billion in 1997 to $1.9 billion in 1998. The value of imported vehicles also recorded growth.

One interesting statistic which I would point out for Honourable Members is from the Price Control Division. Figures indicate that in fact some 3 898 licences were issued in 1998 for the importation of vehicles, new, used and reconditioned. Total number of vehicles actually imported was 5 202 for 1998 in contrast to 2 774 in 1997 so that last year in fact there was the importation of some 2 428 more vehicles than there were for 1997.

I would like to say a few words in relation to standards and prices. As the Minister indicated earlier, I have responsibility for these issues. The Barbados National

Standards Institution is really charged with the mandate to ensure that goods and services produced or used in this country satisfy the criteria for acceptable performance as established by the Barbados National Standards Institution.

In that regard, BNSI also gets some help from the Price Control Division. At present there are some 42 mandatory standards in place in Barbados, some 200-odd *bona fide* standards. These mandatory standards are monitored by inspecting containers at importers' premises, inspecting goods displayed at retail outlets, inspecting goods on stuff at the Bridgetown Port and also sometimes visiting local manufacturing enterprises to undertake checks and of course testing is also being done.

The point, Mr. Chairman, that I really want to make under this issue of standards, and I am making fairly stern comment here, is that there is going to be a crackdown on all persons who seek to import any product into Barbados that does not conform with the status and acceptable standards. I want to repeat. There is going to be a crackdown on all persons who seek to bring any commodities into Barbados that do not conform to the required standards. There is also going to be increased vigilance in this area to ensure that there is no dumping of substandard products in Barbados as well.

In fact, if necessary, I will be going to the Minister of Finance with a proposal for an increase in the number of inspectors to ensure that we can monitor adequately these things.

Why I am saying this, Mr. Chairman, is that I have not been in the Ministry long but already since I have come, there have been cases of importers seeking to bring perishable commodities into Barbados which do not conform to the standard in relation to labelling.

Labelling, Mr. Chairman, is a mandatory standard but mandatory does not mean that it was unilaterally imposed. It was a mandatory consensus standard. It was agreed to. By labelling I am talking in this particular case of the perishable commodity. It had no expiry date and yet an importer sought to bring it into Barbados. The Ministry is really not going to be accepting that and it was promptly refused in terms of being allowed to be put on the shelves.

Similarly, there was another case of an expired date written in a code that no one can understand. Really and truly, importers must be warned here and now that there is going to be no acceptance whatsoever of such, what I call, malpractices. When those things happen and the Ministry rightly refuses to allow them to go on the shelves there is no point writing me any letter or appealing to me in anyway because the safety in terms of consuming good quality food in Barbados will not be compromised.

Similarly, importers have this habit - perhaps habit is a strong word - but one case again where an importer decides that he can go ahead and import products that are subject to licence before he gets the licence and the licence was refused on the advice I had.

There is going to be a crackdown and when these things happen I am saying there is no point in writing any letter or making any call. Zero tolerance for these things. I want to make it clear. I believe that having made it, I have said enough on that and a word to the wise is enough. That has been a lot more than a word.

Mr. Chairman, for general information I would just want to speak on the question of prices because price is always an issue that excites a lot of comment and a lot of interest. People like to know movement in prices. The Price Control Division continues to monitor the movement of prices on a basket of basic consumer items, both food and non-food items. You will recall that the Prime Minister in his Budgetary Proposals of September 29,1997 announced that effective October 1, 1997 there was going to be a zero rate of VAT on certain food items. The Price Control Division has continued to monitor the price movement in relation to those goods. As you go out on the streets or even sometimes you go into your constituency and you hear people telling you that things have gone up and that things are expensive but there is nothing like the actual facts to substantiate the movement in price. 8.55p.m.

The Price Control Division is there to monitor the movement of prices as one of its functions. It has been monitoring the movement of price both in relation to the food items which were zero rated and also some other non-food items which were not zero rated. The figures are quite interesting because they show that as at October 1,1997, the price of the food items that were zero rated was $222.95. As at the end of December last year, that basket of food items, the cost had fallen by $19.81 to $203.14. In relation to the non-food items which were not zero rated, those had cost $178.43 as at October 1,1997 and then they had gone up to $185.19 at December 31st last year, an increase of $6.76, but, Mr. Chairman, an overall decrease of the food and non-food basic items of some $13.05. That, Mr. Chairman, should put an end to a lot of the speculation of comment about the cost of living and the direction in which it is moving.

We all have heard the food items that were zero rated. I have a list of the non-food items and if need be I can read them but they are certainly the ones that you use every day. The information given is entirely reliable, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I now want to turn to the issue of the Fair Trading Commission. This is a matter which the Ministry will be spending considerable time on over the course of the next several months as the intention is to ensure that we have a Fair Trading Commission up and running by January 1, 2000, some nine months away. It is accurate to

say, Mr. Chairman, that the origin of the Fair Trading Commission can be found in the fact that there were a number of important and outstanding issues between business and consumer and between business and business as well; that had to be sorted out. Those issues were really in three areas. Those issues were in the aii§2i of utility regulations, competition and consumer protection. Those were the three areas in which those issues were most seen and felt.

Obviously, a decision was made rather than set up a separate administrative body to handle any reform in relation to those three areas, that we should group all three of them under one umbrella administrative body primarily to achieve certain economies of scale that you would not achieve obviously if you had everything loosely operating under different heads. That really, in a nutshell is the origin of the Fair Trading Commission.

As I have said, the three areas involved are utility regulation, competition and consumer protection where reform is now to be implemented in all three of those areas under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I could not possibly expand on the Fair Trading Commission in two minutes so I will at this stage give way to any of my colleagues if they wish to make any comments on what I have said so far or raise any issues and come back and speak on the Fair Trading Commission at greater length.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I will not be long because I will let my colleague from St. Lucy hopefully tonight get in some of his comments. The first point I want to make is that I am glad that the obvious free-for-all which must have obtained in the Ministry before this new zero tolerance Minister took over has come to an end and that a more aggressive and adamant approach to the safety of the Barbadian consumer is now in effect.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: My friend from Christ Church East will also be happy to know that he can continue to display his affable side without invoking the ire of the business community which has now been thrust on the broad shoulders of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

I think that conceptually, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has a more interesting task than the size of his Ministry's budget would reveal because the areas of competition, law and fair trade to my mind are areas that cry out for attention in Barbados as well as consumer legislation and I hope that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North will use his early days of apprenticeship in the Ministry to really bring some creative legislation to Barbados in this regard.

What I think the Honourable Member needs to do when he gets back up to speak is to explain with more clarity first of all what the policy objectives of the legislation will be. In other words, what is it that you want to do in relation to trade to make it fair? What is and who is it that you are seeking to protect by competition law? Where will the balance of power and responsibility lie? Whose interest will the consumer policy serve at the end of the day. Once we have an idea of that, it will make it a lot easier. I say that because I am still in the dark about why in Barbados the aspect of competition law is coming under the rubrics of a Fair Trading Commission because in most other countries as I understand it, there is a distinction between fair trading legislation and competition legislation. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North if he is in a position to do so, needs to explain it because this is a new area. Prior to that we have had all kinds of comments about the need for consumer legislation and so on. In recent times I have heard people seeking to suggest that matters which actually would be dealt with by the introduction of traditional competition law should come before a Fair Trading Commission.

I think we need some clarity and the Minister needs to sort out in his mind what the policy objectives in each of those three areas will be because nine months is a short time to get this legislation on the statute books. There are Ministers on that Side of the House who would know that it has taken four years and they cannot even get less conceptually difficult pieces of legislation on the statute books. We have had pledges for all kinds of legislation.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North though he has a limited budget, will need a lot of intellectual brain power in that Ministry to achieve these objectives. Hopefully, some of the task in that Ministry which are now redundant or should be made redundant - I am not saying that positions should be made redundant - I am saying that tasks in the Ministry should be made redundant and that the skills of those officers could be employed in more challenging areas such as soliciting the views of people in relation to consumer competition and fair trade legislation. 9.05 p.m.

So I would really like to know, because the public utilities' companies, I am certain themselves could provide the Government with a lot of assistance and they should see it as in their interest in relation to their regulation and how they are going to be regulated. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North also needs to appreciate that in this particular area it is in their interest to have good legislation on the statute books, because utilities regulation is

a very expensive business. One utility hearing could cost more than the entire budget for your Ministry for one year and that probably will tell you the extent to which, as I say, you are going to be dealing with matters which have a tremendous impact on our consumers, but also in relation to trading relationships, and in relation to the development of new businesses in Barbados and the power relationships that exist in the country.

The most important point is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has been charged with the responsibility of putting in place an economic affirmative action programme and I believe that...

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: On a point of order, Sir. The point I made is that we are going to be assisting the formulation and implementation of the programme. We are not charged with the responsibility.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Oh, I see. Perhaps, I should then say that you should be charged with it and that as Minister of Small Business that you should tell this House today as the Democratic Labour Party did in the last election campaign, first of all what your definition of small business is, but secondly exactly what, either in dollar terms or percentages, the Barbados Labour Party Government is going to target as its objective for getting into the hands of small businesses, in terms of Government contracts.

Again, we have had debates about this time and time again in here. This is going to be a very critical -and important area, because while the Government makes available fund access and the micro business fund and even the venture capital fund, making that initial money available to those businesses is not enough. Many of the larger businesses in Barbados - even white owfted businesses that some people in this country who are psychologically affected, believe have been built only on the basis of the colour of the skins of the owners - have actually been supported by significant injections of money through Government contracts. The largest businesses in Barbados in the distributive sector, the largest businesses in the construction sector and some of the largest businesses, even in the hotel sector have all benefited significantly from contracts given by the Government to them in the formative stages of their businesses. Businesses like that cannot survive without Government patronage.

Likewise, small businesses need that cash flow and what you need to do is to say to these small businesses that we want to set employment targets for you. We expect you to employ 20 people within the next 24 months. We expect you to start exporting and we expect you to do these other things and in return the Government is going to guarantee you a certain percentage of its business in this area and will guarantee you some contracts which will gross a certain amount to assist with your cash flow.

You can do a lot and I urge the Honourable Member for St. Michael North not to be passive, to adopt a zero tolerance approach to this too, and take hold of the small business sector, to set the quotas and as a Minister responsible, because somebody on the Government's Side is going to have to take control of this issue because we agreed three years ago in here, in a debate in which all three political parties agreed that an Affirmative Action Programme for small business is necessary.

And if you do not identify somebody, just as you do in the area of social transformation, to undertake that specific task, that alone is enough work for a single Minister of Government, because you are talking about a goods and services budget, total of the Government, which is significant - 40% of that is millions of dollars which could be put in the hands of small businesses to ensure their survival and to ensure that they have the cash flow. And, your belief should be that every small business man in Barbados can become a medium-sized or large businessman within a certain time.

Another condition that must be put in place is that where that company has benefited from the Government's patronage and is successful, and many of these merchants have been successful on Government patronage, that they must make shares available to the public by listing them on the securities exchange. I feel very strongly about this, and I think it is the only way that you are going to successfully build black businesses and new businesses in Barbados and make a major push.

We have talked a lot about social transformation today. I did not get into that debate because I know what that is about and I am going to wait on my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, until next year and see how he is making progress and I wish him all the best. But I want to say to you that the real social and economic transformation is not only going to come from infrastructural development, welfare assistance, home help and so on, it is going to come from a very strong push by a Government, if it is sincerely committed to identify, as I say, a fixed quota of Government's patronage which must be directed to someone and it must be done by legislation.

It must be done in a transparent way too. We must not believe that it is only if you give certain kinds of businesses in Barbados, Government work that you would get good quality work. The Government must also set standards and must have a way of ensuring that those standards are met and have people to assess the success of those businesses.

You will be accused, as would any other person charged with that responsibility of partisanship because there has never been a Government contract in Barbados given to any new black businessman in this country, for which the accusation has not been made that it has been done on partisan, political terms. There are civil servants who will rush to give the Opposition information. They are not going

to give you information when C. O. Williams gets a contract; They do not give you information when R. L. Scale gets the lion share of the school meal's contract. But if you try to give Julie'N or...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have two minutes remaining.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...Jordan Supermarket, since you are going south. I do not care. You see the same point you are making you have a partisan perspective of the companies I am talking about. I do not. I grew up in Fitts Village. I never checked to see who the Jordans support is. It is not of interest to me, but I would like to see them become successful.

The point being that if you choose them, you are going to be accused of patronage. If you chose somebody's cousin, but you need to identify the 10 or 15 potentially strongest businesses and nurture those businesses and that is the way you will carry out true economic and social transformation in Barbados. This is where the essence of the debate must be, because that is the only kind of thing that is going to be sustainable, that will sustain your children and mine, feeling that they truly have a stake in the future development of the country.

It is not going to be only on the basis of giving them a house spot and running water to their house. That will never be enough. Good, though it may be to this stage, there is also going to be a time when you will have to answer the pleas and supplications of those, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said, who do not want to work. It is not that they do not want to work, but they want to feel that the rewards from their work and the effort and contribution that they make, give them a greater stake in the enterprise in which they are working.

I will return to deal with that a bit more shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9.15p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful to enter this debate at this time, Sir. I want to say that it is like fresh air, Sir, to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North speak on these matters. Because it is exactly what I have been calling on this House now for four and a half years to do, and that is to give a commitment to this country, Sir. If this is the direction that we are going in and I would say to you, Sir, if the word is kept, that the small producers in this country seem to have some hope now. But I do not expect, Sir, to have a situation, Sir, that we could easily label this as an animal farm replay.

I expect the Minister to do exactly what he says and not to get a situation where we talk about zero tolerance and when pressure is applied something else happens.

I expect, Sir, that I can now go to the small farmers, Sir, on the Land Lease Project in St. Lucy and tell them that they need not worry about licences being issued for the importation of vegetables and other poultry products in this country, at a time when they should be making profits.

You see, Mr. Chairman, we have a particular problem in this country and the small man in this country will never develop. He will never develop until we get this zero tolerance that we speak of today, for the simple reason, Sir, that the small man is expected to produce goods and sell them when there is a surplus at lower prices but as soon as there is a shortage, the businessman who has no trouble in his fields or with his bankers can go to certain government departments and ask them to issue licences to import goods in this country.

I have said to this House already, that the same way a small farmer is asked to produce and when he produces a surplus he has to sell them at a low price, Sir, I believe that the same way that the market forces are allowed to operate then, that the market forces should be allowed to operate when there is a shortage.

Because one only has to understand the particular problems of the particular small farmers and the particular manufacturers in this country and one would understand the severe pressure that they go under.

You take a farmer. Sir, who has to plant an onion crop. He has to spend thousands and thousands of dollars, Sir, and what is hurtful, he is not sure, Sir, that when that crop is ready that somebody would not import a ship load of onions in this country and he has his onions in his backyard hoping that there will be sunshine every day. Hoping that the home that he has them in that there would not be rain and the rain fall upon them, Sir. Hoping that there would not be some selfish importer who will still go ahead and import onions even though he knows that the onions are in the country and that a small farmer who sometimes has to go and ask people for credit, finds himself in a situation where he has spent a lot of money but he cannot in his own country sell the particular product to his country.

I ask you Mr. Chairman, how can we ask small people to get involved in the economy of Barbados when they are faced with these particular problems. I want to warn this country of one thing. You know, it appears, to me Mr. Chairman, that we do not learn.

In 1991, through the period of 1991 and the period of 1981 when this country was in trouble, it was the small

manufacturers and the small farmers who were here stiU producing.

Many large companies, Sir, took their money and they went and set up companies down in the islands and all about through the world. But as soon as the economy got back better, Sir, they were back here and they are expecting to get the same share they were getting before and more.

But the small farmer and the small manufacturer, he could not do that, Sir. But the time comes when he should be sharing in the pie and he is not allowed to do it, and that is why I said, Sir, I welcome the pronouncement by the new Minister, Sir, and I will be monitoring him because I expect, Sir, that he will deliver and when I say to the new Minister, Sir, he is speaking to the Honourable Member the zero tolerance minister, the one for St. Michael North.

I know some people would say that he is not new but it is the first time, Sir, that he has control of his Ministry. No interference. He cannot claim interference. That is why I expect him to put his image on this particular Ministry.

I also expect him, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, to go and ask his advisors about the particular problem that the poultry processors and the poultry growers in this country and contractors to the large processors are suffering at this point in time. Because once he understands that, Sir, I am sure, Sir, that within two days he would send the necessary Cabinet papers to Cabinet and ask the Minister of Finance to do the necessary thing.

That necessary thing, Sir, would have to block the sale of that plant down the Harbour Road and the one in St. Lucy. Because, Sir, when one studies what has happened in the poultry industry in this country, the small farmers have developed this industry into a multimillion dollar industry and now the profits are to be made, those same said farmers are being pushed out through the backdoor by some large company from overseas whose interest is only in flour and not really in the poultry industry but who now recognize that the industry is making money and want a piece of the pie.

I am saying, today, Sir, I know where I stand. I ask this House to declare where they stand. 1 stand on the side of those small producers out there in Barbados, from St. Philip to St. Lucy. I stand on their side and you know why it hurts, Sir, those small farmers were asked to spend large sums of money constructing chicken pens. They have done it, Sir. They have built these processing plants up to the space they are at today, so much so, Sir, that some could buy out one, buy out two and all of that, and now they feel within themselves that they have the capital to introduce something called tunnel ventilation, which they feel that the small farmers cannot do, and they are now asking them to introduce that also, because they know that they do not have the capital.

I am saying, Sir, they also know, the amount of money made by those small farmers and this country, Sir, I warned this country four and a half years ago that we would be developing the all-inclusive concept. We saw it in tourism, Sir, and now we are seeing it in agriculture, Sir. What next?

The next thing they would probably try to do is do it in education, now they hear about EduTech looking after the interest of all in Barbados they might soon feel that they could hold on to that pie and take it for themselves.

We are developing a particular culture of greed in this country, where people feel that because they have money they can do whatever they like in this country and they feel and I know they cannot do anything to influence the mind of the Minister.

So whether ADM offers $500 000.00 or not to the Ministry of Education, I am sure that the Minister of Education would support on this particular matter, because the $500 000.00 that they offer EduTech cannot influence the decisions of the Minister of Education to support them in taking over, Sir, the poultry industry in this country. No $500 000.00 would buy out the Minister of Education because she knows what is money.

So I am saying, Sir, that we on this Side, we know where we stand. We know where we are grounded. We were taught by that great man the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and we are well-grounded on this Side. 9.25 p.m.

There is no wonder that you have one from St. John and one from St. Lucy. There is no error, Sir. He represented that parish and he was born in St. Lucy so he knows well that we will continue to flag that ship and look after the interest of the small man in this country. That is why, Sir, I am calling on all of those over there who had the benefit of free secondary education to put that benefit to the interest of the small man and not to the interest of greed because today is decision day where we are going to decide whether we are going to line up against those small people out there or whether we are going to line up against the capital class in this country who are about to devour the small ones.

It is a situation like the shark in the picture and we have to understand which side we are on. That is why I stand here today in representation of those people who I have fought for for years and will continue to fight for because 1 know your heart is in the right place too.

I understand, Sir, that part of your constituency happens to be in rural Barbados too which tells me that you also have farmers and I know that 1 also speak on your behalf, Sir. 1 know you cannot do it and that is why I will do it. I hope that when you are out of that Chair and you have the opportunity to speak on this particular matter that you will join your voice in this matter also.

I am also calling on the Honourable Member for the City who for all the years since I came to this Parliament she has tried to convince me that her heart is in the right place and the time is now. Judgment time is here. I want to see where the Honourable Member will line up her position, whether the Honourable Member is going to line it up for that class that is about to destroy the small man in this country or whether the Honourable Member is going to protect the interest of the small man in this country.

I have no doubt, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas seeing he is in rural Barbados will join hands with me on this particular matter. I have no doubt he will join hands with me on this matter because he knows that in Rock Hall, St. Thomas there are poultry processors who will be depending on him. I have no doubt, Sir, that they have already made calls to him to find out where he stands on this particular matter. I know full well, Sir, because if I know my people right they will make sure they get the right people to call.

I am saying, Sir, I appreciate the factor of labelling but I also want the Minister to understand that there are officials in the Ministry of Agriculture who feel that they can use labelling to destroy small fanners too who happen to be processors so we have to be careful that they are not people working in the interest of other people who are prepared to destroy the same small farmers and processors that I speak of.

Mr. Chairman, I am asking you and this Honourable House to let us make a decision on this matter as soon as possible because we have to understand that the poultry industry in this country is an industry that needs not to be a local industry but it has the capacity to be an industry where we can export.

I am saying to this House that the local farmers need to be protected in the local market and those large farmers need to be told to go and export. I am saying this to this House because we have the climatic conditions in our favour and there is no reason why we should be eating American chicken when the Americans should be eating ours. It is foolishness and we need to stop it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am asking the Honourable Member to wind up.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: How many more minutes, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that I will leave this one with you. The $2 million that was sitting in a fund for four and a half years something must be done to that $2 million because if that money was voted or given to a large company in this country I would tell you it would have been spent 20 times already so because it is given to small people in this country I cannot understand why that money is still there and the small companies in this country are still suffering. I will come back, Sir.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I just want to pick up on the very last point the Honourable Member made first. He is acting as though the money has not been handed over and that there has been some intervention by Government to prevent the money from being operationalised. That is not the case. The money is in the hands of the Small Business Association to be used for the benefit of the small business sector and it is not being used.

I am going to ensure that it is used this year but someone has said they have to get their act together. What I am saying is that every effort is going to be made this year to ensure that it is made use of but it has nothing whatsoever to do with any Government policy or Government intervention in any way. In fact, Government is who provided the funds for use by the small business sector so, please, get your facts right before you speak.

I want to get back to the Fair Trading Commission. I am ready to give the assurance that the proposed Fair Trading Commission really seeks to modernise the framework for utility regulation, fair competition and consumer protection. It is expected that the reforms will, in fact, operate in such a way that the businesses can thrive and flourish while at the same time the consumers are not unduly disadvantaged in the process in the marketplace. It is a body that is intended to really, if you want to say, make everybody happy at the same that you make sure that nobody is being abused or disadvantaged.

I want to get back to some of the reforms that will take place in the area to ensure that the Fair Trading Commission becomes a reality. As I said, utility regulation is one area. The truth is that the deregulatory mechanisms in place in relation to utilities are really archaic and anachronistic and really quite arguably do not work right now either for the benefit of the company or the consumer. That is a very arguable position.

There are a number of problems confronting the deregulatory process and I am going to list at least four of them to see the areas in which we have to do reform and we will be making reforms in those areas.

The area of public hearings in relation to utility regulations: Public consultations in rate hearings are necessary and they are part of the Barbadian way of life, and, in my view, they should be retained except for maybe some small matters that can be heard outside the public domain but basically the public consultation in relation to rate hearings are a good thing and are part of our culture and should be preserved.

The problem is that everything now is too haywire and too many of the parties involved can, in the words of Mr. Justice Frank King in one of his decisions, they can just be rung far and wide and really cause a very lengthy process to ensue unnecessarily because really there is no established criteria, at present, for decision making. That is one area we will reform. There is no established criteria for decision making.

We are also going to ensure that there are rules of procedure for hearings. This will include requirements to submit objections and information requests in writing in advance of the hearing and for oral submissions to stay within certain time limits to be on the point and not to be repetitive.

Now, if I can just go back to a case that actually took place in 1992, one of the B ARTEL hearings, you will see the problems there associated with having no proper rules and procedure or established criteria for decision making. You had a hearing that lasted some 37 days and there were some 3 426 pages of transcribed evidence, 190 exhibits, the expenses were some $3 876 820. That was the cost of the hearing before the Board and not the cost in relation to the appeal. 9.35 p.m.

The unfair thing about all of that is that it is the consumer who eventually has to pay all that money. So right away you see there is need for immediate reform in that area in terms of the process and procedure used in relation to rate hearings. That is one area in which* we are going to be making reforms that I just outlined.

To strengthen that point you have to ensure that there is someone present who can assist objectors to structure the points they wish to make. We are putting of course a peoples' council. This is in our manifesto and that is a pledge we will carry through in relation to utilities and reform. This will make the process more effective and efficient because it will help objectors to comply with all of the procedural rules, advise them if their objections are likely to be considered relevant in the first place and also encourage objectors who are making similar points to combine their submissions and thereby reduce the process and cut down the length of time it would take for the hearing to be completed.

The next point in which there is an obsolete type of approach is in the area of the rate of return regulation which determines the rates that the utility companies can charge. That mechanism gives the companies no incentive to increase their efficiency. On the contrary, the proposal is that you will have now some incentive compatible regulatory mechanism such as price caps or profit sharing that can benefit both the consumers and the investor by increasing the incentives for efficiency thereby enabling the company to make higher profits through efficiency gains but at the same time requiring the investors to pass on to the consumers a share of the efficiency gains that the company makes in the form of lower prices.

That is quite logical and that is the system we intend to utilise to ensure that you move away from that anachronistic method of charging which is simply guaranteeing a certain rate of return on investment and which does not provide in any way incentive for any utility company to strive to be efficient because they have a certain guaranteed rate of return whether or not it is efficient. We are now going to look to have incentive compatible type mechanisms for setting rates by utility companies.

We also have to make the ambit a little broader for the utility regulator which will be the Fair Trading Commission by ensuring that they now regulate the quality of service not only tariffs but also regulating quality of service. Consumers right now are concerned about the quality of service provided by several of the utilities and that is a fact.

I went to have a tyre patched this morning and in the course of the 15 minutes that I was at the tyre shop I had complaints about both the electricity and water and in fact there are a lot of complaints in relation to electricity, about voltage surges taking place in some parts of the island and there is dissatisfaction about the way in which the Water Authority works to respond to complaints about leaks in mains, sometimes to the great expense of the consumer. They take forever to get it rectified if they ever do and there are massive complaints about that.

It is therefore intended that the Fair Trading Commission as it will be will have to draw on its experience and establish quality and service, customer targets for each utility company together with the appropriate mechanism for monitoring and enforcing compliance mechanisms.

It is also recommended that the Commission will look at establishing a customer service facility in house in the Commission itself to help resolve disputes which consumers cannot resolve directly with the utility companies.

Those broadly speaking are the areas of reform we are looking at in relation to the utility regulation and of course I omitted to mention at the beginning that in addition to the two companies now being regulated by the Public Utilities Board which incidentally will be abolished when the Fair Trading Commission comes into existence which are the Light and Power and the Telephone Company.

Three other utility companies will be brought on board which will be the National Petroleum Corporation, the Barbados Water Authority and the Transport Board. In fact, there is even a school of thought that says we should look at

other agencies such as the Airport and the Bridgetown Port as well, to bring them on board but that has not yet been considered by us in these parts. Certainly those three will be added to the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission.

One of the other areas that I mentioned was in the area of fair competition. It has to be acknowledged by all parties, even the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that active competition among suppliers is the consumers' best guarantee for minimum prices, variety of choice, adequate information and overall value for money. Open markets operating without distortions to competition are the key to a competitive economy where there are no barriers to competition but where competition is stifled by any anti-competitive practices or behaviour and abuse of market power then the consumer suffers and economic efficiency is reduced. Those are basic terms that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy I hope will understand.

Government policy really recognises the need to provide a proper legal framework within which anti-competitive practices by monopolies, cartels or dominant firms will be deterred and there will be the maintenance of free and fair competition.

Honourable Members continue to raise the point about this issue of amalgamation and so on. The truth of the matter is as I believe another Minister may be more competent than I am to speak on it and I would just briefly say that it is unfortunate that as the law now stands there is nothing you can do to prevent it. But certainly were the Fair Trading Commission to be in existence now and when it comes into existence issues such as those, are issues that would certainly come before the purview of a fair trading commission for analysis to see if they are in any way uncompetitive or restrictive or running afoul of any other requirement of the Fair Trading Commission to give the Commission some leverage to decide whether or not such agreements, sales, mergers or whatever you call them can in fact go forward. As it stands now, there is nothing that a Government can do in a situation such as Members continue to raise.

The other sordid aspects of that matter were already dealt with by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East at a previous sitting. I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy sought to raise it again after the battering he got on that occasion but apparently he is either mischievous or a glutton for punishment. I believe that such punishment as he wants will in fact be inflicted in the not too distant future tonight.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The point is that at present there is no comprehensive legislation in Barbados on unfair competition. Several laws exist scattered around the place such as the Control of Standards Act, Certification Marks Act, Customs Duties (Dumping of Subsidies) Act, the Food and Drug Adulteration Act, the Weights and Measures Act, the Therapeutic Substances Act. All those pieces of legislation which sort of impact on the area of fair competition exist but they do not adequately address the subject of fair and unfair competition in Barbados, given the reality of today's commercial world. There are certain complex issues that are arising relating for example to the issue of the abuse of market power by dominant firms which results in a substantial lessening of competition. There are other areas as well which we are monitoring and recognise to exist - exclusive dealings, time selling, market restrictions, false advertising, conspiracy, bill rigging, double ticketing, vague advertising - all these things impact on the existence of fair competition. The Ministry, therefore, has decided that the time has come for there to be the enactment now of some fair trading legislation which is relevant to current commercial needs and practices. Some research will have to be done - economic reports and so on to assist in the preparation of draft legislation. That is being secured at this time and it is anticipated that will be ready for forwarding to the Attorney General's Chambers in the very near future. 9.45 p.m.

In the area of Consumer Protection legislation - bits and pieces of legislation in that area are scattered all around the place and we believe that protection of the rights of consumers is one of our basic responsibilities as a Government. Therefore, it is intended to enact as well some modern consumer legislation to respond to the present needs of consumers. Already drafting instructions have been sent up to the Attorney General's Chambers for the preparation of draft consumer protectionlegislation. I will have to await word from the Attorney General as to how quickly we can get them back to the Ministry. Basically, the Fair Trading Commission if it is to function, its primary duty is to ensure that the rights of consumers are protected. In terms of its ambit and responsibility, utility regulation, fair competition and consumer protection, its primary responsibility and function is to ensure that the rights of consumers are protected and secondly, to ensure that small businesses as well are protected. In fact, in the area of those three functions that it has, its secondary function would be to ensure that there is protection and so on of the utilities but its primary function is in relation to the protection of the consumer.

I hope that would briefly answer in some way the questions raised by the Honourable Member for St. John. If necessary, Mr. Chairman, I will return.

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

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to make a contribution to this debate. The matters which have been raised by the Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development are really part of the fundamental restructuring which has been undertaken by this administration since coming to office in 1994.

The matters at hand, Sir, particularly the establishment of the Fair Trading Commission, instruction of the Small Business Development Act and the Economic Affirmative Action Programme for Small Businesses represent some of the last elements of those arrangements which are being put in place to usher in a truly competitive economy recognising, of course, that in many situations as is starkly represented in areas such as utility regulation and in management of competition policy, that very often regulation has to be used as a proxy for competition. The matter of introducing a competitive market does not mean a free for all *laissez-faire* approach but rather appropriate guidelines which are there to ensure fairness equity and justice.

I would want to first of all start by saluting the Minister for indicating that he plans to continue on the Ministry's long programme, at least four and a half years old of zero tolerance.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: He is walking the good footsteps in that regard. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will appreciate that.

Asides,

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I will also make the point which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy seems to like to forget. He makes this point about farmers and licences all the time. However, he was there, not in his place but he was around both in agriculture and close to the regime at hand in the trade reforms of 1993 where in those reforms as part of the liberalisation process, the entire non-tariff barrier system was reformed. The Honourable Member for St. John knows about it. We participated in it on different sides of the fence.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Not the political fence but Government and Business.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I was a professional doing my business. It was not a contentious issue. It is a factual issue and the facts of the matter, Sir, is that where in 1993 there was a long negative list, T-shirts, panties and a whole range of things, where, Sir, there was a quota system. There was a quota for English apples into the country and one or two other products. Whereas you required import licences for a range of products from CARICOM and not from CARICOM. There were two sets of licences, the CARICOM list...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: You would not know about that. I am sorry. The Honourable Member for St. John knows about it but you might not know about it. Tell him, Honourable Member for St. John.

There was a list for extra-regional sources and there was a CARICOM list. Essentially, the CARICOM list disappeared because it was a part of the natural process of putting the single market and economy in place and it was now overdue. The things that remained, Sir, are the things which would always remain which are on the security list. I remember them well, mace and so on. Handcuffs, ammunition and what not, fireworks - those things on the security list and one or two other controlled areas like gaming machines, LPG and so on.

The extra-regional list was shortened a little bit. The Government of the day was able to prevail upon the World Bank, which was the principal advisor in that particular matter, not to go as far as the World Bank wanted to go at the time. Apart from more items remaining on the licensed schedule than the World Bank wanted, this was where the surtax also came into being, where a number of areas where licences were removed, the surtax was applied on a phased basis.

The point of relevance here, Sir, in relation to what the Honourable Member likes to sing about is that right now -I had forgotten about this matter for a while too, Sir, until I got stopped on the road one day when I used to be responsible for import lists, by a farmer who wondered how come I let watermelons into the country when his watermelons are here. I checked back because I knew that no licences had come our way for the importation of watermelons. It is because, Sir, that much of the produce that comes in at all types of wrong times in relation to the production cycle of farmers is from CARICOM. There is no license requirement. Where the license requirement is, Sir, is for extra-regional products and those have all been banned as well. There have been cases where people landed items here and wanted to get a licence and they could not get them. The glut was already there and they said too bad, you will have to perish. That is the way it goes.

Anyway, Sir, I do not want to spend all my time on the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Sir. He is mischievous and he knows that the Government has a very strong, positive programme, Sir. A programme for the total reform of the relationship between buyer and seller in this country and reform of the relationship between Government and business

in this country. The origin of all of this, Sir, is that over several years, we go back into the early 90s again, you will remember Dr. Rose who was a consultant paid for by the Commonwealth Secretariat who was doing some work on consumer protection in the Ministry of Labour and Consumer Affairs at the time. I think Wes Hall was the Minister at the time...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: That is true. Wes Hall is still a Minister, I am reminded. God Bless Him.

Sir, it was a recognition that there was a need for a reform in consumer protection legislation and the law faculty did some work for the Caribbean Law Institute looking at consumer protection across the Caribbean because there was a need for change. There was also recognition of a need for the introduction of competition policy legislation. The UK had a Fair Competition Act. Jamaica used that same model to introduce the Fair Competition Act in 1993 and Barbados has been looking at it. In addition as well, it was recognised that the regime for the regulation of public utilities is as old as the utilities are in Barbados and there was a need for a change.

What we came upon, Sir, I have had the privilege and pleasure of working on this matter for a few years and what we decided as well was that given the size of those entities in Barbados that it made better sense to have a single body called Fair Trading Commission which would have both an adjudicated arm and an administrative arm. The administrative arm would in effect be in three divisions representing the utility regulation section as would be provided by the existing PUB, competition policy area which would be a new one but which would deal with competition policy issues as applies, and consumer protection roles and matters to be adjudicated. And, rather than having three separate commissions or three separate tribunals, we could have a single one. 9.55 p.m.

Different aspects of these three pieces of legislation have been drafted over time by the Attorney General's chambers. The main drafting which is required now, Sir, is drafting with respect to the administrative provision. For example, how does the Fair Trading Commission have its functions listed and have power over these three areas?

The Honourable Member for St. John raised the question as to whether, nine months was enough to put what are presently complex structures and the legal framework in place, we are very far along in the process. We are not now starting. The policy issues have already been signed on. Like I said, it is only just the technical matters of how do you give the power to the Commission and how you actually have it function. So that is not an issue.

I want to highlight, Sir, the critical importance of the introduction of competition policy legislation into Barbados at this point in time. Sir, I said at the beginning, we must not make the mistake of thinking that establishment of a private sector market driven economy means the introduction of *laissez-faire* approaches. Regulation is necessary in order for there to be fairness in equity. What the competition legislation will do, Sir, is to ensure that everyone is clear on the issues particularly as they relate to the abuse of dominant market position, and that is the problem that we have over time.

The problem, Sir, as it relates to the interaction between interconnected firms in vertically, integrated, economic arrangements, where you have a firm which, either by itself or through its subsidiaries owns the production, distribution, insurance and all aspects relating to matters, and the matter replicates itself in several areas, whether it be in the poultry industry, as the case that is mentioned, whether it be in the beverages sector and so on.

For example, Sir, under a competition policy framework, and under the legislation you would have a situation in which any agreements which have the effect of lessening competition in an industry, can be ruled 'void' by the Commission - in this case the Fair Trading Commission. An agreement is deemed to have the effect of lessening competition, if it contains provisions which, for example, either directly or indirectly attempt to fix the prices, or other trading conditions or if it attempts to limit or control production and distribution. In other words, if this agreement between two parties, especially if they are competing parties - Firm A and Firm B joined together to decide to whom they will sell to, what trading arrangements they should have, anything that would lessen competition, if those agreements are part of the arrangement, the Fair Trading Commission will basically say, 'no way, it cannot happen here'. That is what is involved, Sir.

If the agreement, Sir, contains provisions for share markets, you cannot be competing and agreeing how you are going to develop markets. If they have provisions which include how they are going to set up and tender for jobs, because you know that this business of written tender is a serious thing. We cannot prove it, but it happens. Firms can agree how they are going to submit their tenders. There are limited firms in the area. You can agree on how you are going to structure your tenders, so that you know 'you win this one' and 'I win the other one'. Or that you will win it and we will share it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got two minutes.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: If these agreements, Sir, are part of the provision in a business transaction, then the Fair

Trading Commission administering competition policy legislation can say, "No way, not in here".

Sir, basically, anything which would put other firms in the industry at a competitive disadvantage through means like that would be deemed, null and void. Of course, this is not to say that you will not have a situation in which there is either a single firm in an industry or in which there is a dominant firm in an industry. Because, certainly, Sir, the Fair Trading Commission, or whatever authority administers competition policy, is in a position, if it deems that the arrangement is in the best interest of the economy, to approve it. So that this is not to say, Sir, you will not have amalgamations and mergers of firms, but subject to the approval of the Fair Trading Commission. For example, if the arrangement contributes to the general improvement, or production, or distribution of the goods or the promotion of technical and economic progress, that can be allowed, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member please wind up?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Yes, Sir. There is much more that I propose to say by way of giving some insight into the philosophical concepts which underpin these new aspects of commercial law. But essentially, Sir, in the absence of competition policy law and modern insolvency legislation which facilitates company reorganisations rather than simply throwing a business to the knacker, as you would say in old English literature, after it has run into problems and in the absence of new consumer protection legislation which moves away from the Sale of Goods Act philosophy of merely *caveat emptor*, but rather putting some pressure on the seller to bear some responsibility for the wholesomeness and quality of the product, then our commercial relationships cannot be worthy of being taken into the next century.

We, on this Side, Sir, do not propose to do that and that is why we have made the bold announcement that by the 1st January, in the year 2000, the Fair Trading Commission, these pieces of legislation and the administrative arrangements will be up and running and open for business.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to start where the Honourable Member has ended. One would appreciate that between March 1999 and January 2000 is a considerable long period of time and a lot of things could happen between March 1999 and January 2000. Because if a company knows what is planning, they can set about to make sure that everything they want done that it is done between now and January 1.

I am saying that the flexibility that the Government is giving to the private sector will not work in the interest of the small farmers and the small manufacturers. They can now sit in their board rooms and decide which category they want to control and to put the necessary things in place to make sure they do the necessary mergers and takeovers between now and January 2000.

I am calling on the Honourable Minister to make sure that the same way when the Government wants certain properties and certain companies that they use the Land Acquisition Act, Sir, even if they have to use the Land Acquisition Act in this particular instance that it is used in the interest of the people of Barbados. Because, I do not accept, Sir, that we are going to give all of this time and, the mere fact that the Government is prepared to pass this legislation, it tells me that it has something to protect. So if you have something to protect, why are you going to give so much leeway to those people who want to take over and control the destiny of everything in Barbados. 10.05 p.m.

I also want to go back to the $2 million, Sir, that was voted and given four and a half years ago, Sir, to the small business sector in this country.

I am told by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, Sir, that the problem has nothing to do with Government. I would like to know from the Honourable Member, Sir, if the problem of joint ventures, if that is still a problem. Because if that is not a problem, Sir, I will then have to ask the small business sector and the Small Business Association how come they have $2 million in their coffers and they are not lending that money to the small business people in this country, who want to have some of that money to increase their cash flow and in some cases to protect their cash flow.

So I am saying, Sir, if the problem is not Government, Government would have to come out and explain to the public of Barbados because we all on this Side and on that Side knew that there was a particular problem with joint ventures and that $2 million.

If that has changed Government needs to make an announcement about it, Sir, and I could then go back and inform the necessary players in this particular matter, that they need to speak to their Association because it is their Association that is holding up this money.

But I do not understand it that way, Sir. Because we had a debate in here and I have not heard from anybody until tonight that the matters pertaining to the $2 million has been clarified and that the demand of venture capital is not there anymore.

If we are not demanding venture capital from the Small Business Association, I am happy to hear that, Sir. But I expect, Sir, that there will be an announcement from the Small Business Association stating that that is correct and also an announcement from Government that the Small Business Association is misleading its members.

So we expect, Sir, if that is true that the money is there we would expect it to be disbursed before June. Because then, if the Small Business Association, if they cannot disburse the money before June then the Government would have to find somewhere to disburse that money to the members. Because the main fact that that money was budgeted and given to the Small Business Association, it tells me that it has to be given for an important reason. We cannot have money that is given for an important reason still sitting in a bank account for over four and a half years and that is all I would say on this particular matter, Sir.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr, Chairman, I am pleased to respond to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He asked some questions about the $2 million with the Small Business Venture Capital Inc., the venture capital fund associated with the Small Business Association.

I will take this with the kind permission of my colleague, Minister.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: So Sir, I hope that at the end of the night, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would leave this point and go on to something else.

But, Sir, here is the crux of the matter. First of all let me indicate Government's seriousness and capacity to not only commit funds to the matter of financing the small business sector but also to actually get those funds disbursed.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you very much for that reminder of the time frame. Four and a half years for this $2 million requested by the Small Business Association.

What we have done, let me trace the relationship between the Government and the small business sector of Barbados.

Unlike the Side that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy represents, we were not just in to talk about small business. We in our 1994 Manifesto made commitments to revitalize the small business sector of Barbados.

We recognised as well that no sector can be as effective as a voice within the community without having a functioning Secretariat.

It was our desire and our view, that the Small Business Association, small business sector of Barbados should be in no less a position to articulate issues as they affect small business than was the Chamber of Commerce 01 the Manufacturers Association or the Tourism Authority or the Barbados Agricultural Society.

We however, recognised that the association which from its height of activity in the early 1970s had gone through a period of dormancy from 1974 or thereabout, would require a shot in the arm, not a shot in the heart. And we, Sir, committed to providing funding for the small business secretariat and $75 000.00, in the first year, is what we provided to fully fund the operation of a Secretariat.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy always makes the point that a small business person is the chief cook and bottle washer of his enterprise, and that he has not time to be running around with government bureaucracy in doing this and doing that.

Quite so, neither would he have time as President, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Member of the Small Business Association to be running around doing Association business when he has to look after his own. That is a fact and we agreed on that.

But, Sir, this is why we decided to fund the Secretariat. Arising out of that, Sir, the Small Business Association came to the Government and said, look, we want to do some programmes. We said, fine, we have agreed to give you this money for the Secretariat but we know that you have to do programmes.

Most of us in here are members of an association and associations cannot exist forever by way of claiming to have done things in general for the members. You need to be able to point to specific programmes, specific ways in which you have assisted individual members. This is what we should find whether it be a sports club, a business association or even a church. If you do not deal with somebody, who could do a miracle or something you will lose your members.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, recognising this reality in terms of ensuring the sustainability of the operation of the Small Business Association, when they came to us, Sir, with several programmes, they came to us with the idea of a leasing programme where they would buy some equipment which is in common usage and they would lease it out to their members, not only to help the members but also to raise funds. We said, cool, go right ahead.

They had several joint programmes. Amongst these programmes, Sir, was a programme for the provision of financing for their members. They proposed, Sir, on the letter from the Small Business Association on the Small Business Association letterhead and signed by the President of the day, Sir, that they will have this venture capital fund. The initial injection they agreed to provide was two million dollars.

Why did we go that route, Sir? Now, Sir, you must remember that this was occurring at the time of the insolvency of the Barbados Development Bank. You will remember as well, Sir, that the future for the Government run development finance institutions was not bright. Unlike the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. John would know about these things. But I am just trying to help him by speaking to the Deputy Leader, Sir, about these matters.

But, Sir, the future for development banks in the region, across the world was not good. International finance was no longer available for Government run entities. However, under the multilateral investment facility of the Inter-American Development Bank, funds were available for the provision of financing for NGOs, especially if you mention the two sexy words, youth and women. Those are the two sexy words for them. 10.15p.m.

Aside.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you very much, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. The fact of the matter is that the funds were identified and compartmentalised by the IDB and they said we are not giving this money to any Government entity. This is for the private sector and NGOs especially if they are funds for the youth and women.

The Honourable Minister of Education knows about this because the Youth Entrepreneur Scheme had targeted that as well. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East knows about it because the Pinelands Creative Workshop was party to accessing these funds and we were supporting these efforts because we knew we could not get it from BDB but there were institutions in Barbados which would be able to funnel that money into the needed sectors and we supported them. We survived. Let us help you by providing initial capital.

This is no $2 million solution to a whole business sector in Barbados. This was initial capital to get a financial institution up and running which would in turn be able to make submission to the multilateral investment facility of the Inter-American Development Bank to tap into the US $20 million that had been identified for the Caribbean region. Check the Inter-American Development Bank documents and you will see. No Government entity would have been able to do that and that was the fact, Sir.

The association, unfortunately, w th a change of administration in the association, came back to us and said, "What about this? We were not part of this. That executive went off and requested this thing and we like we are not sure. We like we changed our minds." Then they said: "We like we do not like the institutional arrangements because what we are saying is simply you cannot develop this project by way of what the second group was proposing which is that you just give it to the association as an association." They said: "No, you have to create the company as an arm inclined financial institution. You have the association account with your money. There is an institution there and there are models."

The Caribbean Financial Services is a venture capital company that manages different funds from different sources. They manage the Barbados Investment Fund which was capitalised by a $6 million injection from the Central Bank of Barbados in the 1980s. The Caribbean Financial Services also manages funds on its own borrowed at concessionary rates from the European Investment Bank. That is a fact. They also have other lines of funds so we are saying there are models that exist. You form your management company, you have a board of trustees and in the case of the Barbados Investment Fund, the trustees which would agree on the disbursements of the $6 million provided by the Central Bank including the Caribbean Financial Services people and Central Bank of Barbados appointed people. It is as simple as that.

Here we said, fine, you have a management institution but the trustees who will sign off on this thing will contain the Small Business Association people and the Government of Barbados people. It is a straightforward business model in use every day all over the world and they did not want that. They said: "No. Put it in the association and we will deal with it otherwise".

How could we as custodians of money to which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have contributed, and which the Honourable Member for St. John as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee has the responsibility to ensure that we do not fritter it away without appropriate controls being in place, how could we have agreed to a situation like that. All of the too-ing and fro-ing was for the Small Business Association to decide within itself whether it wanted to still go ahead with it or not, and if it wanted to, whether the institutional arrangements satisfied what was the worth.

I will put just another point as I know my time is going, Sir. The other point that it mentioned - I will still come back to this point about our intention about our capacity. While all of that was going on, Sir, the Government of Barbados was able to conclude a study on the Barbados Development Bank. It was decided that needed to be closed. It was insolvent. It could not lend 10 cents to anybody. It could not lend 10 cents to anybody from Venture in St. John or Parish Land in Christ Church. We decided we would have the successor institutions, Fund Access and the Enterprise Growth Fund.

We were able to have those institutions up and running and open for business and providing finance which clearly shows that we both have the intention of providing financing

for the sector and we have the capacity. We have the capability. If we can do it for ourselves, we can certainly help an association to do it. However, the elderly folk always had a saying that you can take a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink. There was mutual respect on the two sides, yes, we have our view, our model, these are the stipulations we would make but at the end of the day there is still a limit to the extent to which the Government can direct the Small Business Association on how to proceed in the matter.

We certainly would have preferred if the Small Business Association had done all those things that were necessary to have that institution up and running because by now I am sure that we would have been able to tap into the US $20 million that had been identified by the Inter-American Development Bank for countries in the Caribbean if they were able to develop projects.

I participated myself, Sir, in several meetings with the last representative of the Inter-American Development Bank as well as joint meetings with the IDB folks and the Small Business Association, with Small Business Associations' Presidents going way back with the members of the company that was established, all in an effort to get this matter resolved.

The Government paid for consultants' assistance in resolving the matter and really we will hope that the proposal which is currently on the table which would lead to the substantive Minister to speak to, will bring the matter to a resolution.

In closing on this matter, Sir, I would simply make the point that the Government had a very clear view of what it wanted to do in relation to the proposal for the Small Business Association. The Government had a very clear intention to provide financing for the Small Business sector of Barbados and the Government also had clear and present success in actually putting money in there. Ask the over 100 persons who obtained financing from Fund Access. Ask the over 100 who obtained financing from the Urban Development Commission and ask the 192 who obtained financing from the Rural Development Commission. Ask them and you will see whether this Administration has been messing about for four and a half years as far as providing financing to the small business sector of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I must admit it is very shocking to me to be told that for four and a half years $42 million could have been available to the small business sector in Barbados and that the Government did not use the various Ministries and the various experts within the Ministries to help the small business sector come up with a programme so that they could tap into $42 million. 10.25 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is clearly misleading the House by a gross misrepresentation of the facts. The last few things that I said indicated that the Government had paid for consultants to help them with models to convince the Association. The Government itself had been represented on the Board of Small Business Venture Capital Inc. which was the company which was formed to administer the funds. Government representatives on that Board were the minority compared to the representatives of the Small Business Association so that at the time of voting on proposals and recommendations and divisions the Government was outvoted.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am even more astonished that a matter as important as this the Government which is supposed to be working in the interest of the small business sector in this country would allow the Small Business Association, if I am to take the Minister to his w6rd, to be outvoted on a matter as important as this and they did not use the leverage they have to protect the economy and also to protect the Small Business Association because $42 million as you would agree is a lot of money to be injected in the Small Business Association and this is a matter that is regrettable that the Prime Minister is not here to deal with this particular matter. This is a matter that I feel is important enough for the intervention of the Prime Minister because the $42 million that is not in the economy as it should be I am saying that we are messing around with our economy.

This matter should not now be left in the hands of the Minister of Trade but I am calling on the Prime Minister to take over and to deal with it because for four and a half years we have played around with this particular matter. Forty million dollars a large injection in the small business sector and up to this day, Sir, the small business sector in this country has not seen forty-two cents of that money and I am calling on the Prime Minister to get involved in this particular matter. It is important enough for the intervention of the Prime Minister in this matter and to make sure that the small business sector is able to get this money by June. Four and a half years ago is a long time to deprive any sector of $42 million.

Sir, when the Barbados Agricultural Management Company needs money it does not take four and a half years. When the BADMC needs money it does not take four and a half years. When the private sector in this country wants money from Government it does not take four and a half years.

I want to know, Sir, why $42 million to a sector of this economy that is starved for funds has to take four and a half years for something to be done. Is it because it is called the Small Business Association? We need an answer to this particular question. I am saying that this economy is not performing well because the sector that can provide the growth is not given funds to generate that particular growth.

No wonder, Sir, that ABM feels they can come in here because they have money because they know that a particular Ministry is starving the sector that will need to get that $42 million to help buy the particular plant. If they had the $42 million they could backraise the particular venture that is trying to buy out and merge but today because they do not have $42 million they cannot do that.

I am wondering, Sir, if Government has refused to put that $42 million into the sector because they know that the small business sector would have capital to have leverage. I want to know and I want to know what the Attorney General has to say on this particular matter. I want to know what the Deputy Prime Minister has to say on this matter because the Prime Minister is not here and I feel that when the Prime Minister is out that the Deputy should be the Leader. I do not know if that stands over there.

I am saying that this particular matter should not wait for the Prime Minister to come back into this Assembly but we should have a response from the Deputy Prime Minister on this particular matter. It is that important. I believe if the Deputy Prime Minister cannot give this House an opinion on it that this Parliament could close down and we can go along home because the economy cannot be functioning in matters as important as this without the voice of the Deputy Prime Minister. I will sit to hear the Deputy Prime Minister or the Attorney General on this particular matter.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, with the kind permission of the Honourable Minister I just want to deal with one or two other matters.

Sir, the matter of standards is one on which I wish to speak. Sir, this matter of standards is very important to the economy of Barbados. This matter of enforcement of standards has cried out for much attention over the years and I want to salute the Minister for his plan to ensure that the standards legislation are used to ensure that the consumers of Barbados are well and truly protected.

Sir, there is another aspect to this matter. Standards are now being used as one of the new non-tariff barriers as far as manufactured products but also the saniury standards as used in agricultural plant products are now being used by the industrialised countries as the new non-tariff barriers to trade.

There are two reasons why we have to improve our standards. The first one, Sir, is that while they are insisting on having high standards for products entering or sold on their markets they feel that they are legally and morally entitled to send products to a third country which is compatible with the standards of that third country. So if there is a standard for chicken wings, for example, in the United States of America which properly describe the wholesomeness of these chicken wings, the products produced in the United States may not meet the standards for chicken wings but it does not mean however that those products will not find themselves in a third country whose standards are not so rigorous. I am sure that Honourable Members in here have from time to time seen products marked "for export only". That happens.

We are so seeking to put our standards in place so that we do not become the dumping ground for inferior products but also we made mention of the matter of competition, policy legislation and the need to put measures in place to ensure that competition occurs on a fair basis. How can our products, Sir, compete with the imported products when because they look alike and they smell alike and feel alike they may not be alike. If we do not properly define what are the basic inherent features cf the product then consumers who are not in a position to take the product home and test it could very well be fooled. This happens for example in juices and in processed meats. It happens as well with tomato ketchup. There is a big difference between tomato ketchup and tomato sauce. You need to have certain percentages of tomato solids to make it a ketchup. If it is running it is a sauce.

To the average consumer however if it looks reddish and it sells cheap they may well buy it but in fact they may be buying corn starch with some colouring and lots of salt in it.

What the presence of a standard for tomato ketchup as we have now - and the Honourable Members over there would not know I have had to take responsibility of banning shipments of ketchup that were not the standard. When it was tested it was found to be just tomato sauce and'therefore could not be masquerading as ketchup.

The point I am making Sir, is that no matter what the products are and this happens ranging from pesticides to food and manufactured products that there are countries out there who, if we do not have rigorous standards in place, are willing to dump their inferior products on us.

The other reason why we need to have standards is that our manufacturers in an effort to boost their exports are trying to produce products of the best quality standards so they are seeking guidance from our National Standards Institution as to what are the right standards for their products. Obviously a higher quality product which is at an international standard costs more and when they are forced to compete with cheap imports which do not meet these standards then we are putting our manufacturers under pressure.

Through the National Standards Institution and the Barbados Investment Development Corporation we are assisting a number of small manufacturers. In 1998 we were able to provide technical assistance in such a manner as to put us in a position where 27 small new manufacturing firms that never exported even to Culpepper or Pelican Island before 1998 were able to make their first exports and that is largely because we had in place a programme of technical assistance which included helping them to design their packaging, their labelling and to redesign their products where necessary in order to meet the standards of the market they are shipping to. You have a programme of technical assistance which included, Sir, helping them to design their packaging, their labelling and to re-design their product where that was necessary in order to meet the standards of the market to which you are shipping. 10.35 p.m.

Sir, if you are exporting to England, we advise you on what the standards are. If you are exporting to Martinique which is part of the European Union, we help you to meet those standards. Our simple view is, Sir, is that if you are exporting from Barbados then you have to meet the Barbados standards.

Mr. Chairman, I am therefore very supportive of this work which the Minister has outlined as far as development standards are concerned. I would just ask for one thing and that, Sir, is to bring to conclusion work which was started some time ago between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Works and the Standards Institution for which the constituency of Christ Church East and the citizens of Barbados generally would like to see, that is some resolution and determination on the matter of the standards for emission from vehicles. That is an area of concern, of discomfort and it is one, Sir, which we need to address right away. All of us, Sir, I am sure have had the most disgusting experience of travelling behind a vehicle belching out reams and reams - billowing out lots of black smoke and choking you and not to mention that scientific studies have indicated that for residences adjacent to highways the plants and all the features around them show more contaminants than is normally found elsewhere.

I am just urging the Minister, hopefully, not too far away, Sir, to be able to bring that matter to conclusion.

Mr. Chairman, I am therefore very supportive of the Minister in his efforts at enforcing firm and rigid standards in Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER , Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: If it be the will of the House we will now re-commit to Government Notices.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, at the close of the debate of the Appropriation Bill, the Government would wish to do three other matters. Resolutions including a money Resolution for supplementary provision to close off the accounts and a Bill, the Customs (Amendment) Bill. There is also a Resolution to approve the borrowing of up to US$75 000 000 from Citibank which the Right Honourable Prime Minister mentioned in his opening speech at the Second Reading on Monday, Sir. In the light of those requests, I am obliged to give notice of the following:

1. Customs (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

2. Resolution to rescind Resolution 15/1998, to regularise the post of Executive Assistant and to establish a post of Press Secretary to the Prime Minister.

3. Resolution to approve the grant of the sum of $ 4 260 387 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1998-99 as shown in the supplementary Estimates 1998-99 No. 7 and to amend Explanatory Notes to Head 10.

4. Resolutions to approve:

   (a) the borrowing of the sum up to US$75 000 000 from Citibank (Trinidad and Tobago) Limited by the issue of securities on the regional market for the primary purpose of financing the Government's capital programme; and

   (b) the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of each issue of securities and monies necessary to maintain and service that fund.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move, Sir, that the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 1999 be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow morning, Sir.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 10.00 a. m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.
10.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to rise to support the Head under the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development.

Yesterday, Honourable Members on the Other Side suggested that the $6.4 million allocated to this Ministry when compared to the overall amounts in the Estimates of Expenditure, 1999-2000 suggest in some way that the Ministry is not a very important one. I beg to differ because when one looks at the objectives of this Ministry, in particular a Ministry which is responsible for the facilitation of business development, a Ministry which has responsibility for consumer affairs and distributive trading the focus of this Ministry is to provide, the framework in which businesses could be developed in this country. We do not need a very large allocation for this Ministry to do its work efficiently, all we need is competent staff and a clear direction of policies for this Ministry to be effective.

One of the things I want to focus on this morning relates to the promotion of small business development in this country. It is well known that businesses are of varying types and one of the things in a small developing country like Barbados that is important, is for us to seek at all times to have a small business class which is properly organised and well supported by the Government, in order to ensure that employment prospects are improved.

The Barbados Labour Party Administration has been very supportive of small businesses in this country over the years. When one looks at the types of agencies which were established within the last couple of years one is left with no doubt as to the commitment on the part of this administration to the small business class.

It was regrettable that the Government of Barbados under the Barbados Labour Party Administration had to take a decision that it was in the interest of the taxpayers to close the Barbados Development Bank which played a very important role in the provision of funding for this business class. However, a number of successor institutions came into being and these institutions, learning from the experience of the Barbados Development Bank, have been able to play a very important role within the last couple of years.

The agency that I am talking about is the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development familiarly known as the "FUNDACCESS" which was established in 1997. As the name suggests, this agency was created to foster the development of micro enterprises and by micro enterprises we mean the smaller businesses which in the normal scheme of things might be unable to access valuable institutional finance base from the commercial institutions like the commercial banks. FUND ACCESS has been doing a wonderful job providing credit, technical assistance, enterprise training and accounting services for small business.

The performance of the FUNDACCESS can be measured in terms of the number of loans provided and the number of jobs created in the process. Over 70 loans have been granted by FUNDACCESS totalling $1.88 million and over 200 jobs have been created. It is this aspect of these development finance institutions who cater to the smaller end of the business class that is vitally important.

Another fund which was established was the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited which was also established in 1997 to promote finance for small business. To date, Enterprise Growth Fund Limited has granted $1.7 million in funds for projects. In more recent times, the Government of the day in response to the need to deal with the social problems confronting Barbadians established two agencies, namely the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission. These Commissions, in addition to the mandate which was given to them to improve the physical infrastructure, in the case of the Rural Development Commission in the rural constituencies and in the case of the Urban Development Commission in the urban constituencies,

have a very important role to play and I dare say they have been doing a tremendous job in looking after the facilitation of small business development.

The Honourable Member for St. John can attest to this because the statistics reaching myself indicate that small business persons in St. John, like small business persons in St. Philip South, have been able to benefit from the Rural Enterprise Fund. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, despite the impression he gives this Honourable House about his constituency being left out, can also attest to the fact that the Rural Development Commission has been doing tremendous work in facilitating businesses in his constituency.

The Rural Development Commission via the Rural Enterprise Fund has been able to provide since its establishment a couple of years ago, 192 loans totalling about $1.4 million. The type of areas which are targetted by this fund will give an indication of the Government's commitment to small business development in Barbados. The type of areas which are covered include agricultural loans, loans for catering purposes, loans for the poultry industry and loans even for involvement in baking.

The Urban Development Commission which has been in existence for a fairly short time has been able to provide in 1998 alone 105 persons with finance and the total value of those loans is in excess of $1.2 million. Those loans are provided through the Enterprise Loan Scheme.

The Government's commitment to the sector can be seen via the boosting of the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation. The technical arm of that Ministry has been boosted so that in terms of the provision of technical advice such as examining business proposals, the Government through those agencies is ensuring that before persons engage in business activity their proposals are well thought out and plans are carefully designed so that when the business starts the incidence of failure would be reduced.

Mr. Chairman, I am in no doubt that the Government is indeed very responsive to the needs of the business class in Barbados. As I said earlier, what is very encouraging is the emphasis placed on small business development. We hear from the Honourable Members on the Other Side and uninformed commentators elsewhere that the Government of the day is just interested in the promotion of the medium sized and of unemployment in those rural districts, that agencies like the Rural Development Commission and the FUND ACCESS have been created to do just that.

I am also happy to report to this Honourable Chamber that the staffing of these agencies are such that the capabilities of the agencies to access and evaluate proposals and to stay with the projects after the granting of loans to ensure that these projects maintain their viability, thereby giving these small business persons an opportunity to improve their livelihood for the benefit of themselves and their families.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes to wind up.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I am now embarking on my second point so I will have to return. It has to do with another aspect of the Ministry's work. This Ministry has been given the responsibility to ensure that a Fair Trading Commission is established in this country by January 1, 2000. The mandate which is given to this Fair Trading Commission is very important. As far as I am concerned, this is one of the most important institutions which will be created by the Barbados Labour Party.

The Fair Trading Commission will change the pace of how business is conducted in this country once and for all. The Fair Trading Commission has a responsibility for utilities regulation and for the introduction of competition law and it has a responsibility for the introduction of consumer protection legislation. 10.15a.m.

Those projects, Mr. Chairman, are vitally important.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I want to urge the Honourable Prime Minister at this time and based on the progress made by those who are responsible for the preparation of the framework on which this Fair Trading Commission will be launched, that I am a little skeptical that the pace at which the work is proceeding is fast enough.

I want to implore the Minister responsible for this portfolio to move with greater speed to ensure that the staff requirements which are necessary to get the planning for the establishment of this Commission organised, that that staff compliment is improved. I also want to implore the Minister to build on what already exist at the Public Utilities Board to ensure that the planning stages which are vitally necessary for the successful launching of this Commission, that those persons there are involved more in the process of planning for this Fair Trading Commission.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your indulgence. I will return later.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am glad to enter this debate at this time in the morning for the simple reason, Sir, that after listening to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South one would have thought that he would have recognised that the small farmers throughout Barbados are also small business people and that he would have taken the

opportunity, seeing that we might not get to his Head to deal with the plight of those small farmers. I am not dealing today with the chicken aspects, I am dealing, Sir, with those small farmers in Barbados who ^t present lease land from the Government of Barbados and who, at present in some cases have twenty-five acres of land and who by rights should not be in control of twenty-five acres of land.

I thought that the Honourable Member - and I will give him the opportunity to come back and deal with the particular matter but before he does that, Sir, I think in all fairness to him, seeing that he is a new Minister that I should give him some ideas on this particular matter. That is, Sir, Ministers before the Honourable Member for St. Philip South have been saying that they cannot do anything on the particular matter because of a lease arrangement between themselves and a particular Government agency.

I think, Sir, that any enlightened Minister, recognising the particular problem and recognising that there is a large acreage of land within the land lease project that is not being worked, will come up with a lease arrangement where they can use their bargaining power. My suggestion to him, Sir, is that a lot of these farmers owe for water and a lot of them owe on their leases. My honest opinion of what the Government should do is to call these farmers in, the ones that cannot work the twenty five acres...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: This is small business. Call these farmers in, offer to write off their debts and in return ask these farmers to give up their lease and find out from them how many acres of land they can use to help their small business. It is my suggestion, Sir, that a trial and error approach was adopted by the Democratic Labour Party where some of these farmers were given five-acre lots....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. There are rules of this House regarding relevance. We are in Committee and we are dealing with matters pertaining to commerce. I would want to respectfully suggest that the very torturous speech of which the Member is seeking to deliver himself would better be delivered on that Head dealing with agriculture rather than trespass dangerously on matters of irrelevance and seeking to have it dealt with at this time. I would ask you also to rule, Sir. We must as a House respect our own Standing Orders.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member I know there are times when you have to divert slightly but I wish that you will keep to the subject. We are now on Head 24 on Commerce. I hope that you stick to the relevant Head.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I do respect your ruling. I am yet to be guided, Sir, in this House....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the confession by the Member that he is unguided is a confession that he has been wanting to deliver himself of for a long time. In acknowledging his faults he cannot disrespect the Chair, Sir. That he will not be guided is an affront to the Chair. That cannot stand, Sir, and I would wish that those very offensive remarks be withdrawn. The remarks that a Member cannot be guided is totally unparliamentary and I am asking for the integrity of Parliament's sake that they be withdrawn and expunged from the records.

I said he was trespassing on matters of irrelevance, Sir, he is now trespassing dangerously on matters of discipline.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to hear the Honourable Member finish his sentence before delving into such. Today is the fifth day and I know that people are getting tired. I sincerely hope that Honourable Members will stick to the subject and let us proceed and finish this last day.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, that is why I said before that I will be guided by you and I will not be guided by the Honourable Member for St. Peter because he holds the same seat that I hold in this House. It is you, Sir, who directs this House. I know that you can understand the relationship between a small farmer and a small business-man but the Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot. I will be guided by you, Sir.

I will also deal with another issue seeing that the Honourable Member for St. Peter understands what I am saying and he wants to protect his side from this particular matter. I will deal with another matter, Sir. That matter is one that was raised in the House last night. A $20 million loan that the Small Business Association could have been receiving if we had disbursed the $2 million.

It is not just the Small Business Association, Sir, that will be affected by this loan. I believe that in a couple of months from now that this House will be forced to borrow money on the loan market but if we were able to access that $20 million, we would not have to borrow the same amount that we would be borrowing later.

I am calling on the Right Honourable Prime Minister to make sure that the relevant Minister put the necessary framework in place so that the Small Business Association can disburse that $2 million and that the Honourable Member for St. Peter will be able to access that $20 million for the Small Business Association that he will not now have to borrow money at a higher rate of interest to help the foreign exchange of this country when we could be borrowing a loan at a much lower rate of interest.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman*. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is deliberately and mischievously attempting to mislead the House and perpetrating an untruth. The Honourable Member is seeking to suggest that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter as the Minister of Finance is able to access a loan facility which as identified, cannot be accessed by Government or governmental institutions as is clearly stated in here. The $20 million to the region is earmarked for NGOs and the private sector particularly NGOs which deal with the youth and with women. Therefore, it is impossible, Sir, for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter or any other person or an authority representing the Government to access that. To suggest, therefore, that the fortunes of Barbados turn or do not turn on that, Sir, is really trying to perpetrate an untruth on this House. The Honourable Member should be asked to withdraw that inaccurate statement. It does not bear any resemblance to the facts of the matter. 10.25 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, I would say, Sir, that if any untruth was told in this Parliament, Sir, it did not come from this Side. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East had ample time last night when I called on the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to get up and defend the particular position. I said to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that I was prepared to listen to the Honourable Member for St. Peter on this matter. I am now convinced, Sir, that the evidence about this loan will be better said by the Honourable Member for St. Peter than the Honourable Member for Christ Church East because we heard one story last night and another this morning. I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is here because at least we have been told the true story about this $20 million.

I am saying, Sir, that we were given the impression last night that the Government of Barbados was being stopped from borrowing this $20 million because of certain matters pertaining to the Small Business Association and we were given the impression, Mr. Chairman, that that $20 million was for Barbados alone. I am glad to hear this morning that it is not for Barbados alone and I am saying, Sir, we need to see the Minutes of the House.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Hopefully, the Honourable Member's capacity to understand what is in Hansard would be better than it is for him to understand what he hears across the Floor.

What was clearly indicated, Sir, on the Floor of this Parliament last night and what will be supported by the documents which have been published in the newspaper and the IADB report is first of all, as was indicated very clearly last night that the matter of the support for the Small Business Association rests on the fact that the BDB, for example, could not access that private sector NGOs earmarked fund.

I also stated quite clearly, Sir, that the Fund was earmarked for the Caribbean Region and that therefore the potential existed for NGOs - I mentioned the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme andPinelands Creative Workshop which were accessing funds as well. There was no indication that it was for Barbados or that Government could have accessed it. The Honourable Member must not breach the rules of the House by seeking to read untruths into the record. I would also ask that the last statement that he made be struck from the record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely happy this morning that we have the Honourable Member for St. Peter who is quite capable of enlightening us on financial matters, Sir. I will respect his opinion provided it is not guided by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, because in financial matters on that Side, I will respect the opinion of the Honourable Member for St. Peter because at least for the last four and a half years, I have been able to guide him a little better than when he started so I am extremely grateful to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The House has just been titillated by a speech that has issued from the lips of an Honourable Member, has the product of a confused mind. I believe that I have a responsibility again to clarify a number of matters which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has helped to distort, particularly in the public domain.

Mr. Chairman, in 1994, the then Small Business Association which was at that time led by a Mr. Clarke, commissioned a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a venture capital facility for the small business sector of Barbados. I stress that point, Sir, because it has been for a long time recognised that a large part of the problem with our small business sector is that too many small businesses are too thinly capitalised. They depend too exclusively and heavily on loan financing and hence the desirability of bringing equity capital to the small business sector of Barbados was seen as a necessary and a highly desirable initiative.

From the outset therefore, Mr. Chairman, the Government saw its relationship with the sector on this matter as providing resources to the sector, a grant to enable it to deal with the provisioning of a venture capital facility as part of a general effort to change the method of financing and the structure of small businesses in this country.

We in fact saw it, Sir, not only as necessary, but perhaps as something that would fundamentally go to the

restructuring of the relationship between small businesses and this country. Because, once businesses have to start to use equity capital of other parties, then all of the discipline that is involved in an enterprise having to report to shareholders and to have to deal with the business of managing equity, would trip in.

We understood clearly, Sir, that the problem with the small business sector in Barbados was not only that it was thinly capitalized but that the corporate disciplines that ensue from managing other people's capital, have not yet started to infuse our small business sector and we hence saw the venture capital facilities made available to the sector as crucially part of a comprehensive restructuring of the industry, an initiative without which the sector would never find its appropriate place in the mainstream of our economic and social life. And certainly, the role of venture capital facilities in simulating small business development is perhaps best and most amply represented in the experience of the California economy where a lot of the new information technology industry has been created by venture capital facilities.

It was at no stage, therefore, within the contemplation of Government - and I want to stress that point, Sir - it was at no stage, at no time within the contemplation of the Government that the resources that we were making available to the small business sector were intended to create a loan facility in the small business sector, a venture capital facility. The Small Business Association however, went through a series of institutional contortions. The leadership changed and it was taken over by some people, Sir, who felt that the $2 million that the Government had committed to the sector should have been diverted from its intended use and used only as a loan facility.

Mr. Chairman, $2 million in loans would hardly go anywhere, but a $2 million venture capital facility could itself trigger other loans such that the amount of financing available, if that was properly utilised, could be very ample for the small business sector, if it stayed the course of using the grants to establish a venture capital facility.

The Small Business Association has wavered at one stage, although I am told that it is coming back now to the original concept of having a venture capital facility, it was at one stage where it was pressuring the Government to use the funds, Sir, to create a loan facility. The Government has never wavered because we believe that the Funds have to be used and will only be used for the purpose intended to create a venture capital facility and the Ministry of Finance will not give any comfort to anybody to use these resources for loan financing. There are now a number of state coded micro and small business lending institutions, including FUND-ACCESS and the micro enterprise window at the BNB where persons can access loan financing for small business activities.

The small business sector does need a venture capital facility and we will support that, Sir, and steer the course in relation to it, despite the criticism from the Other Side as regards its disbursement.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a lot of confusion in people who do not understand the issue as regards how venture capital facilities work relative to loan financing. A venture capital facility does not go out immediately and just lend money. It evaluates investment proposals. It has to evaluate them with regard to the question as to whether or not they are sufficiently feasible to be able to generate a rate of return on the equity. And, it should not come as a surprise to Honourable Members that a venture capital facility will not begin to turn over resources available to it from day one, Sir, because it has to receive the investment proposals. 10.35 a.m.

There has to be a process of evaluation, very often a feasibility study. Each proposal therefore has to be measured by reference not just to credit worthiness but to a rate of return criteria that would not even be involved if we are talking about a loan facility, Sir.

The Enterprise Growth Fund which was established as the counterpart and as one of the institutions to go with the Fund Access has faced a similar situation. You just cannot start making equity investment in the same way as you make the loan investments. It therefore should not come as a surprise that the Small Business Association has not been able to disburse venture capital quickly because it have to receive from its client class a range of bankable projects which can warrant the commitment of equity resources.

I want to say, Sir, that it is a matter of great regret for me that Mrs. Chadderton, a university person who had been the pioneer behind the initiative to create a venture capital facility for small businesses was so distressed by the goings and froings in the institution that she has dropped out.

The Small Business Association, and this being my next point, if it is going to be a major economic and social gain in the country, Sir, needs to look to its institutional strengthening and I want to stress that point, Sir, in light of the argument that is being advanced about it being able to use large sums of money from multilateral institutions.

For the last four years, Mr. Chairman, the Government has fully funded the Secretariat of the Small Business Association because we recognize that a lot of false tears have been shed on the behalf of the small man in this country. However, unless the Small Business Association develops a strong institutional capacity of its own to manage its affairs, the Small Business Association will just continue perpetually to function on the margins on our economy and

on the periphery of our society. It has never had a strong institutional capacity, neither has it had an institutional home, Sir, and in addition to funding the Secretariat, the Government is now at Fontabelle building a facility to constitute the Secretariat for the Small Business Association of Barbados.

The point I am coming to, Sir, is that the development of the small businesses in Barbados cannot be isolated any longer from the institutionist thinking of those parts of our society which deal with small business issues as a special case. The Government has been committed and will continue to be committed to support the institutionist thinking of the Small Business Association.

I would shudder to imagine, Sir, that the House would have been told that a Small Business Association which has not been able to disburse a $2 million venture capital facility would be looking to raise $20 million on ah international capital market to disburse. Because clearly people would have seriously before they commit themselves to any such venture, to look to the issues of institutional capacity.

The truth is that until the Small Business Association establishes otherwise, persons who are interested in financing small business through their association will raise serious issues about its capacity to deliver.

There is a very proactive and new dynamic management and leadership of the sector who have a new and different corporate image and corporate vision and who understand that is necessary to put the Small Business Association in a condition where it can use financial resources well and how to be able to attract resources from non-governmental groups.

I am really thankful to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for having clarified the purposes of the multilateral investment fund. The Government of Barbados, Sir, cannot direct how the multilateral investment fund resources of the IDB are to be spent. Not because they are IDB funding, Sir, but because they are by their very nature and design intended to be used exclusively by non-governmental organizations. That is the point. So, funds intended for use exclusively by non-governmental organizations clearly cannot be under the thumbs and control of the Government. The Government can facilitate institutions in the process of seeking to apply for use of funds from the multilateral investment facility.

Sir, I am glad this matter is being raised because one of the pre-conditions for a country being able to access multilateral investment facility funds was that it should have an investment sector loan programme in place. In 1994, when we had to make a decision as to whether we were going to have an investment sector loan in place or not, one of the reasons why we decided to go with the investment sector loan was that we understood that it could not be in itself a factor which triggers non-governmental institutions to be able to access the multilateral investment fund.

Like most things, Sir, under the IADB the rate of disbursement as it is called has not been swift and I am not surprised that the myriad of institutions which has sought to access the multilateral investment fund, Sir, has found the barriers somewhat stiff to hurdle.

The trade union movement of Barbados has sought to put to the IADB a programme to support their own training, a human resource development programme during an information technology project that bears a relationship to EduTech. I am not sure that that has met with any success, Sir.

Generally speaking it is very difficult to access swiftly IADB resources even when they are intended to be the fastest to deliver funds. The Democratic Labour Party should know, Sir, because the Democratic Labour Party knows that the investment sector loan was intended to be a fast disbursement facility of the IADB but it took them four years not to be able to do anything about it. It took years of negotiation that were not concluded, for the DLP not to be able to draw a penny from an investment sector loan programme, Sir, that they were negotiating.

I could only then in this matter, Sir, say that the DLP finds a comfort and a sympathy in the behaviour of the Small Business Association as regard its capacity to quickly access and disburse fast disbursement funds.

Sir, there is no basis upon which this administration will agree to 'tokenise' the small business sector of Barbados. Too many false tears have been shed in this country historically on the part of this sector, Sir. There are too many political reputations that are made by those who fancy themselves as to be self-appointed champions of the small black man. These are just issues from the lips, Sir, without there being any concerted or structured approach on the person who is bleeding these false tears to seriously address the fundamental issues that particularly the small black business associations are facing, Sir?

I made a reference once, that they need serious institutional capacity to do things that the rest of corporate Barbados does. I stress that point, Sir, that there is really no one set of rules for big businesses and another set for small businesses. That there are certain things that all businesses must do and do well and among them, Sir, to manage their affairs well. Some businesses have to learn how to use equity and to deal with the informational and other disciplines involved in using equity, Sir. The small businesses must develop those habits, Sir.

Too many of our small businesses are confusing ownership with management, Sir. Owners need not be managers and in fact, Sir, I keep making the point that in the history of Barbados small businesses some have lasted only a generation. The last has been N. E. Wilson. People believe that because they are the owners they have to be managers. They do not give the small business a legal identity that is separate from the owner, so that when the owner died, the business died. They do not understand the need to engage professional management because it is not necessarily true that a person who is an owner of a business will be able to manage, Sir.

There are many persons in Barbados who are small businessmen who have some of the most wonderful ideas. There is a person who has been a candidate in my party who has never been lacking in ideas about business development. He is a wonderful man to have, therefore, creating the ownership of a business, but he has, I would venture to suggest without being derogatory, not the faintest clue as to how to properly manage his affairs. Had that person at an early stage in his own professional life understood the wisdom of having professional management to work with him, his business, I think, would be successful today. 10.45 a.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I want to stress this point that my administration has established in our Manifesto that we intend to have an economic affirmative action programme for small businesses. We did not go to the extent of saying that they had to get 40% of Government's contracts but we recognised that there is a need for economic affirmative action programmes for small businesses, meaning that if the Government has the chance and the choice between giving business to small businesses or to other businesses that once the small business is even near competitive we would give them the choice and the chance. We have committed that as a Manifesto pledge.

The House would be shocked how much of Government's contracts are already being enjoyed by small business. Indeed, last year we did a comprehensive survey and found that a large quantity of it was being committed to small businesses but we want to carry forward an economic affirmative action programme for small businesses and we shall do so.

Our feeling, Mr. Chairman, is that the Small Business Association has to get its act together. I am pleased that this existing management and the leadership of the sector in many respects seem to have new instincts about corporate organisation that may enable the Association to become a serious player but we must not continue to believe that without a determined effort to bring the best business discipline to small businesses that they will survive long in Barbados.

I would think that the debate, as we go into this Head, should be on how that can be accomplished. We have established a Division of Business Development to work with small businesses to help them get that business ethos to infuse a corporate affairs.

I want to close on this point before I come back, Sir. Some people feel that big businesses and medium size businesses should have good financial practices, effective management and so on but that is for them, and that you can use sociology in running a small business. I want to say to the House, Sir, that it is not to the detriment of small businesses to get them to understand that if even applied on a smaller scale, the ethos of business development and business management that are used by the rest of corporate Barbados must come to infuse their activity. This loose relationship that has always obtained that they must be owner-manager is a recipe for failure. They have to learn to use capital properly and they have to learn to use professional management.

Small businesses must reach the stage where they recognise that they must have a distinction between the owner and the business as legal entities and that they too have a responsibility for us if we are to see development like a relay race where you pass on the baton to a succeeding runner, that they too have to put in place the corporate systems that will allow small businesses to survive beyond the lifespan of their leaders.

One of these days, Sir, I have threatened to write a book about it that when you study corporate Barbados and you look at the distinction between white business and black business, the white business has learnt how to use other people's capital and use it well, how to establish companies where the identity of the owner and the company is different so that they have a perpetuity that goes beyond the life of the owner and that they use professional management as well. The small business sector must come to learn the tricks of the trade because the 20th century will go down as a century where there was once on Swan Street, in particular, a large number of small black businesses and each one lasted about one generation.

Roebuck Street was the same thing, Sir, powerful small businesses whose owners educated their children in other professions so their children have no interest in coming back to selling the salt meats and so on. Some had a strong financial base together with political base. The DLP should study the Tudor empire. You had a situation where at a point in this country's history the James A. Tudor business was one of the most powerful corporate businesses in this country. It lasted one generation.

We must begin seriously to address the issue why do small businesses in this country last but one generation and what must we do now through the public support that we provide, through the principles that we adumbrate to cause them to have a different perspective as to the context within which small businesses should function.

I am supporting this Head, Sir, in that context. This new Ministry of Consumer Affairs it is a people focus Ministry which has, I believe, a capacity to do some corporate transformation of Barbados of a kind that has never before been contemplated.

I close on this point, Sir. The Fair Trading Commission is intended to be part of that corporate transformation of Barbados which this Ministry is intended to spearhead. People think it is a Ministry that because it is not spending a lot of money it does not have the teeth to keep functions but its functions are profound.

We have set up a new Ministry. I am pleased to be here today to share my perspective as to what is the Government's expectation of this Ministry in the context of some of the challenges. I have adumbrated the need for us to put behind us the tragedy of the 20th century in Barbados which has been that the small black business class has not mastered the techniques of corporate development and that history will show that they came and they left with no permanent presence. It is not only because of political influence but it is because the business ethos necessary for this support has not been mastered. I will come back in this debate, if necessary.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely happy to hear the speech from the Honourable Member for St. Peter but the Honourable Member for St. Peter must recognise also that we live in a time where the impression has always been given that black people should not be in business and that they should be workers. I am happy to hear that the Honourable Member for St. Peter's view on this matter is quite different from that view that has always been put out there, for the simple reason that if you were to have a discussion - this morning, I had one with a businessman who told me that because he bought a car the worker felt that the car was out of the business and that he was making money and he the worker was not making money.

For too long, Sir, it appears hi Barbados that no small businessman should buy anything for himself once he is in business because you hear around the street corners that all small black businessmen want is to buy new vehicles, live in a big house and have a lot of women. That myth must stop for the simple reason that myth out there sometimes creates problems for the same businessman and he finds himself sometimes having to be financial controller, the owner, the supervisor, even sometimes the maid because some people feel that he should not be entitled to own a business and instead of performing the role sometimes as supervisors they behave sometimes as if they are lower down the ranks.

I personally feel that if you were to ask somebody in Barbados hi a supervisory capacity that works for a small business what is their role you will be shocked, Mr. Chairman, to find out the answer they give you, and if you were to take that self same person and send them to one of the white businesses in Barbados and if you were to hear them give you a definition of their role sometimes you would think they were the managers of the business.

I will tell you all you have to do, and I will say this to Government, if they feel it is only capital, they are fooling themselves. They need now to do a survey of black businesses and the workers who work within these black businesses to find out.

You cannot get vexed sometimes with the workers because there is a history, we came out of the slave trade and our fore-parents and our great foreparents were all workers. There are still people in this country who feel that we should remain workers. We have to use the educational system in this country to change that direction or not you are going to get businesses coming up being successful and when the owner dies the business goes with him. We need to lift the mentality of some of our people to a stage that they can appreciate that small business people have a role to play.

It is not only the workers. It is the Governments too because sometimes when one listens to the speeches of the leaders they fall into the same trap by giving the impression that the only problem is that these owners want to be everything. It is not that. They would like to give up positions to other people but the people must understand that they must be treated as owners just like anybody else. I am aware that there are a lot of members on the Other Side who understand exactly what I speak of. We cannot just come in here and give the impression that the Government cannot dish out $2 million to the Small Business Association because the owner needs to relinquish some of his positions. It is far greater than that. I understand what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is looking at, but I would say to him that this one needs a careful study. 10.55 a.m.

I would also say if the Right Honourable Member is admitting that the Small Business Association needs an instant injection of capital and the Honourable Member has admitted that because of the joint venture it is going to create a time lag, then it tells me, based on the Right Honourable Member's argument alone that he also needs to see the venture capital solution as a long-term solution and not a

short-term solution. That is why I do not have a problem with the Government of the day offering the Small Business Association a loan at half percent to solve the particular problem of the Small Business Association, if you are arguing that they have a cash flow problem.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. I would have indicated in my speech that the Government of Barbados is both fully funding the operation of the Small Business Secretariat and we are building a headquarters for them and once the headquarters have been built, we are committed to fund fully the operation of the Secretariat. Lest the member's views receive wide and popular dissemination, I cannot understand why instead of giving grant financing he would now want us to give them lower finances than what we are already helping them with.

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN: The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is dealing with an association without recognising that the main thrust of the problem is with the individuals. If we are to solve the individual problems of the members of the Small Business Association, that is why I am suggesting to the Right Honourable Prime Minister that what he should do is to give a soft loan and I say .5% because they must recognise that it is a loan and it is not a grant and they must understand that because the money is coming from the Government they must not see this as money not to be repaid.

The Government cannot continue to believe that because the larger businesses in this country have used funds that were given as soft loans and treated them as grants especially those that were given to import cows in this country that the small business sector would do likewise.

I am saying and I will still stick to this point, Mr. Chairman, that the Government should give a soft loan to the Small Business Association to lend to its members. The Small Business Association and its members must understand that when the Government is prepared to reach out to them they must be prepared to pay back the taxpayers' money too. I am not going to be party to a situation where the Government is lending money to the Small Business Association for its members and they feel that it should be seen as a grant. I know that they do not feel that way and I hope I am right on this matter and that the other suggestions I am wrong on. People must understand, and I understand, what the Prime Minister is saying because too many people in this country feel that when you help them and accommodate them that they should not recognise that you are doing them a favour and offering them a soft loan and that it should be repaid. This foolishness must stop.

Many of us cannot continue helping people then to see a situation where they feel it is a grant and not a soft loan. We would then be accused of not wanting to help our brothers but our brothers must understand also that a soft loan is not a grant. I therefore do not mind the interruption by the Prime Minister. It is timely.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to say that I am extremely grateful for the clarification given to this particular matter of the loan given by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. One can understand now, Sir, why the Honourable Member for St. Thomas did not close this Head last night and he allowed the House to start off with this Head. He was quite aware that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter who understood what was going on in the Small Business Association and in this particular Ministry would have been here this morning to enlighten the House and that we would not be misguided. I am extremely grateful not only to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter but to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for allowing the Prime Minister the opportunity to speak on this particular Head.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Prime Minister to make sure that this particular Ministry even though it is not one of his Ministries that he gives careful attention to what is going on in this particular Ministry.

You might have made an error, Sir, for the last four and a half years, but I beseech you, Sir, not to make the same error for the next five years. Thank you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I won't be long but I want to urge the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in relation to the... I did not hear the entire presentation so if I am coming in the wrong moment then I am certain the House would forgive me. I would urge the Government to indicate very early as it did last night the full extent and mandate which it is giving to the Minister of Business or the mandate that it believes it has in relation to its goal to get Government contracts into the hands of small business. The reason why I say this is that I think that the country should know from the outset what is the contribution that Government is going to make to the cash flow of these businesses.

I heard what the Honourable Member for St. Peter said about the difference between traditional business in Barbados and emerging businesses and so on but there is still a gap there which I wish to reiterate. That gap is that many of those traditional businesses not only exploit other people's capital in the pure sense of the word "capital", they exploit contacts between each other and strategic alliances and they network as well.

As I say, they meet at Cattlewash every weekend. They marry each other's children and they do other things which support the development of business. Beyond that, they also

exploited significant patronage from Government which assisted their cash flow. That patronage, when directed towards non-traditional players, whether physio-typically or non-traditional in the sense that they represent a new class of business people, has always been the subject of criticism. When I entered the debate last time, I pointed it out because I have had that experience before that when Government gives business to new players people are always quick to bring that information to the Opposition and say the Minister or politician has used his influence to give a friend a contract. That may be so in some cases but it is not so in all. What we do not know about is the true value of the contracts for goods and services that go to traditional business in Barbados.

I still feel that a case must be made for spreading those opportunities more evenly and not just to spread the contract for, let's say, supplying the hospital with a commodity to existing merchants or people who have already established some enterprises, whether black or white, but a small man with a shop in a strategic area who is now having to compete with the marketing companies in the petroleum sector. He has just as much right to expect that he can bid on a contract to supply the hospital or the Ministry of Education, School Meals Department with a particular commodity for six months of the year which again would assist in the cash flow, create jobs and opportunities, particularly in rural Barbados where many of those shops are struggling to stay alive - except the shop owned by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy which is built on good business practices. The point is that many of those rural businesses could do with a shot in the arm so it is not just that there are cultural factors. Yes, there are factors about exploitation but to reverse that cycle of exploitation Government is going to have to hold the hands of these businesses.

The initial loan is not going to be enough. It is true that a bold Government will face the criticism that it is giving business to its friends but as long as people can see that business in a certain direction meeting employment targets, paying its taxes, being a good corporate citizen, expanding and starting perhaps to export, going into new markets, then you have a justifiable basis to say we invested in this enterprise and these are the returns that we have seen.

I know the Minister is new but if the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter says as I said last night that though this Ministry has a small budget it has the potential to be even more than the Ministry of Social Transformation in terms of transforming Barbados socially and politically then that means that the Minister must have a very clear mandate of the magnitude of his task. If he does not yet understand it, there is nothing wrong with acknowledging that. There are many assignments you are sometimes given in life, even briefs as a lawyer, it takes a long time for you to understand and you have to consult others. 11.10a.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Then bring in some thinkers or some doers - some practical people to sit at a round table and say, gentlemen, this is what the Government's target is, "how can we reach this target, what are your thoughts, to what extent can we work together towards these ends?" If not, you will find yourself forever swimming against the tide because you will get caught up in the irrelevancies of a Ministry like that, humbugging yourself about licences and some things which I hear you talking about last night which are important, the quality of goods and so on but I am talking about import licences and things that I say are not even as relevant as they were five years ago. Focus on the broad goals. Where can this Ministry take Barbados between 1999 and...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Right Honourable Prime Minister has a proclivity for calling elections when he thinks he is in the strongest position so he may hold it next year.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He may hold it next year because the year 2004 will not be an easy year and the players may change. One never knows, all kinds of things will change. But work it out in relation as I have said to the three areas, consumer law, competition law and fair trade.

I have heard the former Minister yesterday and I am still not clear whether all of these are going to come under the rubric of one Fair Trading Commission or whether there is in fact going to be a discreet division and policy direction for each area. That is the real question because as I have said, there is a difference between competition law and law which seeks to regulate fair trade and law which seeks to regulate the rights of consumers. You might be clear in your mind that the three are not the same thing because I heard the Minister of Energy talking about regulating the marketers of the petrol stations. I did not get the impression that he fully understood that distinction.

I think yesterday that the former Minister took it for granted that people do understand the distinction between the three and that one Ministry co-ordinating all of these had one central responsibility. In a sense it is a balancing of economic power relationship. In every sense you have to determine whose side you are on. There are times when you justifiably have to be on the side of business because it is a small emerging business so there is a justification for saying yes.

I believe that business must be successful and this is where the relationship is. There is a time when you must say

yes, I am in favour of the consumer. There is a time for a zero tolerance policy in relation to imported goods that do not reach a certain standard. That is a very fine balancing act but then beyond that, this over-arching consideration of the development of small business and economic empowerment and affirmative action programme is important.

This is, in the context of Barbados, unlike other countries, not an affirmative action programme to empower a minority. We are in the exercise of empowering a majority economically and that means that perhaps since that majority is not monolithic, since we do not all share the same goals, since many of that majority who have succeeded become reactionary and may not want others to succeed like them and since many of them feel they have no chance of success, on the other hand, you have to be very clear, to my mind in the policy objectives which you bring to bear on this responsibility.

The Honourable Member should not be disappointed by the smallness of the budget even if it is the smallest Ministry in the history of Barbados - I am not sure it is. Do not let that sidetrack you. It might be a small Ministry but with a core, as I have said, of doers and thinkers sitting down and helping to design the architecture of a new Barbados, you will be successful. If you fail, it will be because you have not yet identified that strategy. Next time you speak this Opposition is not going to be sparing because you have men sitting behind you who like us, will expect you to tell them what that architecture is about - small businessmen, Pan Africanist and people who have promoted those objectives with which we have agreed.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Nobody has ever put their finger on how a Government administration, using a central core of people, as I have said, can undertake that exercise. You will not get away on the next occasion. I want to hear that clarity from the Minister of Business and Consumer Affairs.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. John also called upon me to give some conceptual guidance as to what could have been in my mind when I created, what he has called the smallest Ministry in the history of Barbados, Sir.

Two years ago, I gave a speech to a private sector agency and the burden of the speech was to say that Barbados must enter Structural Adjustment Phase 2. Structural Adjustment Phase 1 was involved in putting in place a number of fiscal and other arrangements to make the economy more competitive. We are now living under a new economic paradigm which presumes that private sector led market driven activity is the way to go. The truth is that Barbados does not have a properly developed private sector and it would be a great error to imagine that in our economic system that market forces work in the way in which we would want them to work if we are to depend upon market forces for our survival.

Sir, it is not something that is sociologically contrived. There is a natural tendency in small economies for monopolies to predominate. One of the things that will face us as we go into this new global economic era is in our own instance to create an economy within which market forces can work.

Equally, Mr. Chairman, we do not believe in unbridled liberalisation. The world is already paying a very savage price for the practice of unbridled liberalisation thus leaving everything to the presumed benign working of free market forces and no role for the state. I believe, Sir, in markets but I believe that markets should be managed. If the financial markets of the East Asian countries were properly managed, Sir, there would not be in this crisis today.

We need a State and the State has a role in ensuring in a country such as ours that market forces not only emerge but go deeply into the workings of the economy as a force for progress. We also have to be able, Sir, to constrain those market forces by applying such regulatory and supervisory constraints that would enable our economy to evolve properly as a market driven private sector led economy. They also still perform problems of distribution of weight and economic influence because we are not standing in a moment of time. We have inherited an economic system that has evolved over time in which there are demonstrably powerful actors and weak actors. If we take that into account, Sir, we will better begin to understand the purposes of this Ministry.

There has never been a vibrant consumer movement in Barbados but the consumer in a market driven economy is the powerful agent for change. This Ministry of Consumer Affairs really must preside over the emergence of a consumer movement in Barbados that can enable market forces to take root in this country, hence the need for strong consumer laws. Monopolies in this country, Sir, have had a ride that has not always been to the public good. I am not only speaking, Sir, about private sector monopolies, I am also speaking about public monopolies as well.

There is evidence to suggest that some entities in the public sector, state enterprises that are carrying out commercial functions, have not always crafted their policies nor their prices to accord with what is always in the interest of the consumer public that they must serve. I am not only talking about the Transport Board, Sir, I am also including NPC and others. 11.20a.m.

We need, if we are going to have an economy in which the consumer is really sovereign and where people produce goods and services to meet people's needs, to have all of these monopolistic institutions brought within Christian manners and have their behaviour exposed fully to the scrutiny of the public; to have their pricing policies exposed; to have any request for changes in prices rationalised; to have people councils that can take up consumer causes in the confines of these Commissions, and equally, Mr. Chairman, to have not only the prices of these utilities but also their business practices governed by rules and regulations that are clear and subject to strong challenge by members of the public with a council appointed to act on the public's behalf to ensure that the consuming public gets value for its money.

That aspect of building a modern Barbados, Sir, is very challenging and interesting work. It cannot be measured in dollars and cents terms, but it really stands on the eve of the 21st Century as one of the major, challenges facing us. There are other economies in societies where the consumer movement is powerful. Ours is not, Sir, so that this Ministry has that kind of function.

I am also satisfied that the Cooperative Movement and the Credit Union Movement, now that they have built capital, are poised to play fundamentally important roles in the further transformation of the Barbadian Society. This sector has set it quite clearly where that the small man's institutions are located and we envision that now, particularly the credit unions, have built capital and have had an extended period of accruing savings that in the next period, they would move away from being just financiers of consumption in a large respect, to being financiers of investment on behalf of the people who save with them. There is tremendous scope for those institutions to play an expanded role in the Barbados economy.

The Fair Trading Commission, I believe, must help to transform the relationship between the providers of services and the public in circumstances where they are provided by a monopoly. I am anxious to have that Committee in existence.

The Honourable Member for St. John spoke about the Economic Affirmative Action Programme that the Government has said is going to follow for small businesses. The truth is, Sir, I would not want this debate to perceive that nothing is being done for the small businesses in relation to their access to the award of Government contracts. We did a survey and this administration did a compilation of the number of contracts that small businesses are awarded by ministries. There are many functions exercised by the State that have been and are continuing to be performed almost exclusively by small contractors.

All the capital works in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Home Affairs, Sir, are done by small contractors. In the Ministry of Education, and this is not new, historically and today, most of the maintenance work which is substantial in both the Ministry of Health and in the Ministry of Education are done by the Small Business Association. A lot of the work of both the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission is done by small businesses as well as the work of the Ministry of Public Works. In the area of drainage, Mr. Chairman, I want to touch on that area because I want to make a point on this Floor that I do not want to be polluted in the public domain. In the area of drainage, most of the contractual work is done by small businesses.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Therefore, the word should not go forward from this Chamber that historically and today, small contractors have not had a strong share of a lot of the Government's work. I want to say that in some areas, some small contractors who have had in some instances a disproportionate access to work in some critical areas have not performed.

I really want to use this opportunity to speak about the drainage, because we have historically designated drainage, well cleaning and well digging to small contractors, Sir, and we often find that we had to pay, over and over again to do the same work. The work was not properly done and it is a matter, Sir, that has been most upsetting to the Government. There are drainage problems in this country and we have created a drainage unit to get the work done, we committed the resources, money appeared to be spent and when you check, the work has not satisfactorily been done. I said that is one area where there is a need for a drastic improvement in the quality of work that is done on behalf of the State, by small contractors who get exclusive access to those contracts.

There are instances in the Ministry of Education as well, Mr. Chairman, where the quality of work leaves a lot to be desired. There are instances where we have to go back and spend in a short period of time to do the same work over again.

In the area of small road construction, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has become a specialist in commenting upon sometimes the inadequate performance of some small contractors. Some of it, Sir, obviously has to do with the fact that many of them are now emerging and do not have the capital to get the work done but there is also a long tradition in this country of some small contractors not using their financial resources wisely. And I said not wifely, Sir, but wisely.

We have, as we are discussing this business, Sir, to balance. There is a need for us to continue as has been the pattern to look out for the small businessman in relation to

the award of the Government's contracts and they can be sure that this administration will continue to give them an expanding share of Government contracts, but the word has to go forward that they have to justify as well, the use of the taxpayers' funds, because it is not the Government's funds that is being spent,«Sir, it is the taxpayers' funds.

There are too many instances in which work being done by small contractors leave too much to be desired. This is not because of the lack of resources, or the lack of equipment, but because very often they bring an attitude that because you are a small man, you do not have to meet deadlines and you can use resources in ways that are not intended, on the understanding that if you keep noise the Press will pick up what you say and put pressure on the Government to give you more money to do the same work.

We can get a more satisfied public if a lot of these contractors will just do what they are required to do in the time frame in which they are required to do it within and according to the plan that they are intended to follow. Sir, let me just say as well that it is a political problem because some of the contractors tend to be your political supporters, who believe that because they are supporters, they have a licence to be inefficient.

At my Party's annual conference three years ago, I said that I expect the highest standards from all supporters who get the contracts because they should know better. They know that they are failing politicians who depended upon them who would have argued their case in the first instance and then they get these contracts, Sir, and they are failing the Politicians. We have to say these things. I am all for expanding the contract but we have to hold them to at least minimum standards of performance, because all of us in this House are being held by our own constituents to get the job done and you give out these contracts, Sir, and people take too long and they do the work badly,sometimes too. I sometimes sympathize with the Minister of Education's Estimates, because every year she comes with a long list of schools that she wants done and my point is that these schools were done two years ago, why do you want them to do them again. They did not treat the wood and wood ants eating out the wood again. All types of small things that are not being done, Sir.

So let the word go forward as a balanced word in this Chamber that the House, on both sides, supports an expansion of the share that the small contractors get of the Government's contracts. All of us support that, Sir, but the small contractors also must see themselves as having an obligation to Parliament and to our constituents to deliver. Also, Sir, that when they do not deliver and they do not use their financial resources well and they find themselves in situations where they are facing problems at the banks, they are doing themselves an injustice when they do not apply the best practices of management in their businesses.

I thought I would respond in part to support, to amplify but also to add to what the Honourable Member for St. John has said that we on this Side do not at all feel any diffidence about supporting the small contractor, but we want them to give us the very, very best and to support our constituents in terms of improved quality of services and goods and to do so in a timely fashion. 11.30a.m.

I want to psych you on the question of timeliness, Sir. There are too many of these activities that they commit to the small businesses where it takes us too long to do simple things. In some instances of course it is because a few of them are now choking on how much they are doing and they are stretched and they have and want more but they cannot do what they are doing well and they do not want to share with other small contractors, Sir.

I would like to see the Small Business Association address the problem of the timeliness of the delivery of services by their members by encouraging their members to collaborate in instances where they cannot get the job done with other small businesses to be able to establish a record of serious performance, Sir. There is not enough cooperation among the small businesses themselves in circumstances where they individually cannot perform and that ethos has to be brought to small business operations in this country.

One of the powerful roles of the Association, I feel, Sir, is not just to lobby for more government work but to put in place a framework for strategic alliances between small businesses such that when they get the work, Sir, that all of us and our constituents and Parliament can be satisfied that the job has been well done and that we have empowered people to help build a better society.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Thank you, Sir. I think it will be a little remiss of me not to join this debate. I intend not to be too long. Sir, analysis and inspection would show that the problems plaguing the small businesses are, and I do not know if necessarily in this order, capital and its management, human resources and its management.

Sir, there is no difference between a child and an adult, a small business person and a big business person with respect to the vagaries or the illnesses which will beset small business and large business or child and adult.

Sir, I think the problem comes, and a friend of mine likes to describe it as, when the suit goes to the laundry it comes back fitting a bit tighter than the first time. In truth

and in fact what he is saying is, when you have gone a cycle or a few cycles in turning the initial capital at the end of the first or second term the amount of profit available to carry that business into subsequent cycles is vastly reduced and that is the point and time where difficulties set in.

If the correct plans are not done and if the correct analyses are not done at an early stage, Sir, then four, five years down the road it would be very difficult for small businesses to go back to the original lenders or the original investors to start all over again.

Sir, there are three types of financing available for such small businesses. That which comes from within the family and has finite level. That which comes, Sir, from what the international business community refer to as angel financing and that which is now new to Barbados which is referred to as venture capital.

About two years ago, Sir, I was privileged to have a conversation with a Canadian Consultant in business and he said to me that looking at the history, Canada or Canadians in general were not as open to venture capital arrangements as their counterparts in America and in his opinion Barbados is not much different from Canada and therefore the Government would have to play a very important role in being the pioneer of venture capital.

I heard the Honourable Prime Minister refer to the myths associated with people in venture capital, that it is felt that the people who pioneered venture capital are not in truth and in fact looking for huge profits. Sir, there are looking for good profits and therefore the system which is employed is like a screening system before small businesses are given the go-ahead. The literature shows that maybe a hundred such companies come forward for assistance and by a series of deletions, by a series of inspections, and by a series of eliminations, you might end up with only two such businesses being eligible for such capital financing. Sir, there is one area which I would like to make mention of and we hear it repeatedly about the blacks having failed in business. Sir, I do not think that we really look at the businesses that the blacks are in today. If you visit Belleville, you would see an emergency clinic which is headed by all blacks, and which is operated by all blacks. It is a medical clinic. Sir, if you canvass the entire of that area and parts of the south coast and parts of the west coast, you would find that the medical profession is perhaps 99% managed, owned and executed by blacks. These, Sir, are the sons and the grandsons and granddaughters of those who did not want their offspring to be caught up in the same day by day profession as they themselves were.

I am always quick to remember my father who went to work at an early age and he said to me "David, I went to what was called the apprenticeship engineer on the factory at age 14 or 15 working with the boilers and the mills and what not." He said that it was difficult, some weeks you were paid but they were in the minority. Others you were not paid. He said to me, "I would never have wanted one of my sons to follow in that field."

Mr. Chairman, I have a brother who is extremely technically gifted and I remember when he was at the Lodge School, he made up in his mind that he wanted to go to the technical institute, it was not as sophisticated as today. He wanted to go to the technical institute and they thought, well look the boy who left Harrison and Lodge and went down to the technical institute were straying away from the straight and beaten path, and I know that my father dissuaded him in all ways possible from getting into what then was the blue-collar work.

As I said there was no polytechnic like today and although he has ended up in commerce, today he can do virtually anything to his car or his house whereas there are others in the family who would have done all the academic work pertaining to the technical area and cannot change a light bulb. So, Sir, we have to be very careful how we make *our analyses and our comparisons. 11.40a.m.

I do not think blacks have been in business long enough that you can do a real good comparative analysis. The whites have been because you can trace them from the growing of the sugar to moving into Broad Street and its environs and dealing in the retail trade. We all know how Plantation's Limited got its name. Then, Sir, their children going on their own and setting up their own commission agents, then their children going even in the hospitality. There were some of my school contemporaries who would not go near to their parents' business. They have gone into things like management information services.

It has a lot to do, Sir, with how widely travelled you are, your moment in time, whether you were exposed to an early overseas education and it goes with generations and successive generations. As you know most blacks, we have heard this being said here, have gone into or ended up in retailing but the retailing has become too congested and it has ended up with, no matter what form of retailing it is, people throwing good money behind bad money to save face. It is a small society. You do not want to appear to be a loser or to be unsuccessful and you hang in there for as long as you can. You always think, I can do it better next time around.

If we look at what obtains or has obtained in North America and England, you know who the small shops belong to. They are predominantly of Asian extract. What has happened today, and sometime ago I read an article

pertaining to that, is that the original owners now in their 60s, 70s and 80s, the first generation, they are annoyed with their children and their childrens' children for pursuing studies in management. They are still of the opinion that their children and their grandchildren should still be in the businesses which open long hours to sell a bottle of milk and some fruit for breakfast the next morning or in the clothing and textile industry. They have become the management information specialists so what obtains there is more or less what will obtain here.

We also, Sir, were faced with lots of blacks going into manufacturing not knowing the pitfalls of manufacturing. Trinidad and Jamaica, well advanced, well ahead of us because of their resources other than human, energy much cheaper, population much bigger, international investors moving into Trinidad and Jamaica a lot earlier than they did in Barbados again for obvious reasons so there has been a culture.

A lot of what determines success is what I prefer to call a headstart. The fellow who has the headstart on you is better equipped, more able to succeed and have a greater longevity in that field.

Sir, lots of us went into manufacturing not having a good knowledge of economies of scale. It looked good. You went to a few seminars and you thought I should go ahead foremost into furniture manufacturing not knowing the pitfalls, not knowing the quality controls, not knowing that if you move from the shed in the backyard to the industrial estate the commensurate requirements both financially and technically... When you move now from supplying, as I said earlier, your finite market to where you want to move overseas not knowing the problems which will come up in terms of moisture content in the wood and not knowing who will represent you there when the furniture reaches the Port to which you are exporting and if the person is *bona fide* and so you run into problems.

What is required apart from good financial resources and good management resources is the resilience to brush yourself off, get going, start all over again. By the time the entrepreneur has reached his sixth or so decade he does not have that energy to go again.

In winding up, Sir, I would like to implore upon the substantive Minister of this Head, I do not know what his intentions are, but I would like to see his dep rtment, the Fair Trade, reach the same level as the Office of Fair Trade (OFT) as exists in Britain.

One of the things which I would like to see the Minister work toward is making it illegal for one to wholesale and retail at the same time. This practice has caused and brought great difficulty upon many a small retailer who has to go and buy from the wholesaler at the wholesaler's terms only to discover that after a few rounds of trading the purchaser in the market place could go to the same person from whom he bought his stock, the wholesaler, and buy small quantities at the same price at which the retailer bought it in the first place.

Sir, there are lots of small and not so known factors involved and which plague small businesses, those which are taught at university and business schools and those which are not taught and all are inextricably intertwined. It takes time. It takes good management. It takes good consultancy.

Sir, I am pleased nonetheless to see the bold move which Government has pioneered, that of venture capital. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to be able to make a few comments on this Head. I also want to say that my honourable friend and colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, has really presented last evening a very educational and enlightening exposition of his department. I also want to say, Sir, that I am sure that Honourable Members are more informed today by the comments that he made and other Honourable Members made in the course of this particular debate. 11.50a.m.

I am one of the persons, Sir, who, like the Honourable Member for St. John believes that this Ministry has the capacity to transform our society in a meaningful way. In fact, Mr. Chairman, we know that over the last five years or so a number of small businessmen have sprung up and I would like to say something on this aspect.

Small businessmen have sprung up in all areas of economic activity, in the retail trade, fruits and vegetables, in garments. They have also sprung up in construction. In fact, I would like to say that over the last two years or so over 60 small contractors were seeking to find work in Barbados at a time when the construction industry was really booming. Many of them have found employment, got contracts from the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Social Transformation through the Urban Development Commission and from the Rural Development Commission. Business seems to be flourishing and I believe most of the business people recognise that business usually gives them that form of independence. Some of them without any form of training venture into business and we have a number of them who are making tremendous losses every year. I understand from the Minister that his department offers training to the small business people.

I would want to encourage the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development to push that element because a number of small businessmen do not keep records. They do not keep bills and it is very difficult for them sometimes to access loans from the bank. When they go to the bank they get trouble and of course we know of the problem of financing for small business people.

One of the problems that business men face, not the only problem, is financing. We have found this over and over again that even though in a climate where construction is booming, everybody wants to build a house and everybody wants to construct a toilet, everybody wants to construct a step, yet businessmen find it so difficult to pay wages at the end of the week.

I have found many small contractors coming under stress. When they go to the bank they cannot get their over-draft facilities and we have to really bend over backwards to make sure that we provide the mechanisms through which they can get additional funds and I would hope that the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development would continue to push that element that businessmen must be trained. They must pool their resources and hire an accountant. They must hire persons to promote their businesses. They must have expertise in this field so that training that is vital for their development will continue.

I have also found, Mr. Chairman, that many small businessmen have to leave the country and the reason why they have to leave the country and run is because of this financing. Some of them cannot return because of financing. I would urge this Ministry to help.

I also want to make the point, Mr. Chairman, that the people that they serve, the consumers, are also important. The consumer must be protected. I understand that the consumer protection legislation is being amended and that further considerations will be in this field. A consumer needs to know his rights or her rights. Too many times consumers are ripped off because they do not know their rights. The consumer has a right to a fair price not only in construction but in the retail trade as well. The consumer should make sure that the price is right. How should the consumer do this? The consumer sometimes does not know the cost of the product and I think that it may be instructive that the seller should put the cost of the product at arriving at his mark-up. A fair price is important.

In house construction you find contractors charging all types of fancy prices especially to women who they think do not know. Sometimes contractors may charge as much as $ 125 a day as a mason, or a carpenter. You find they charge all types of fancy prices because the demand is so strong.

I think also, Mr. Chairman, a consumer should have and should make sure that the quality is there. Many cases end up in law courts because of lack of quality and I hope that the Barbados National Standards Institute will make sure that manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and the like put quality products on the market. They must be ever vigilant in this regard and the consumer must at all times seek a quality product.

It is very instructive too, Mr. Chairman, that the consumer returns products that do not have quality. If a product is not good the consumer should return it. In North America it happens. People do not accept inferior products. We need to do all of these things.

Labelling is important as well. The labels that you put on products should tell the consumer what the product is made of, the expiry date, any problems that the product may have should be known. In the case of wood, sometimes consumers accept non-treated wood for treated wood. They do not know the difference and these are things that happen.

I went at a construction site only last year where houses were being constructed and in less than a year some of the doors are rotten and all types of bubbling, termites after one year. This is really unfair to the consumer and the consumer should insist that when this happens that the builder, whether the small or large, because the small man always says he is small and therefore he can get away with it. This is a fact. All Honourable Members know this. The big man must pay but the small contractor who comes and does a roof... I got a letter from a lady quite recently who said to me to be aware of all of these small contractors who are disguising as contractors but some of them cannot build. Some of these fellows cannot handle a shovel, hammer or saw but they are contracting work. 12.00 noon

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: We have to be aware of these small contractors because we also understand that business guarantees some form of independence but the consumer has to be aware of these things. She said to me in the letter that this contractor who came to put on a roof for her could not get the boards joined and that the house is there flooding each time there is a slight drizzle. She wrote me a letter and I told her to send me the name of the contractor but she would not do that.

The point that I am making is that business is attractive but we have to train our small men and women to provide quality work. I am not saying that all small men and all small businesses are giving inferior products. We know that

this is not the case but you want to encourage those businesses who want to progress to provide a quality product because in this climate there is room for even more small business people in the system. Therefore, I believe that the Department of Consumer Affairs should insist on quality. It should insist also on manufacturers to provide the consumer with enough information. I think there is need for more public relation exercises so that the consumer knows the product.

It is also important for a Fair Trading Commission. The Minister has explained what it will be and I hope that when this Fair Trading Commission comes that it will guarantee all the consumers in Barbados a fair product at a reasonable price and good return for their money.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: It is also important, Mr. Chairman, to have FUND ACCESS. We talked about FUND-ACCESS last time. I believe FUND ACCESS should also be providing more opportunities for the small man. It has given out a number of loans in the last year but it has to do more. The Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission are also institutions that provide this mechanism. I think they also have to look at who they are giving loans to and the reason why they are giving loans. It is also important, Mr. Chairman, for the incentives to small men.

One of the things I have never been able to understand is what really is the difference between small and medium size business. Years ago there used to be a criteria. How do you determine a small business from a large business? I hope the Minister can explain this. I know that a small business used to employ 25 persons and has less than $1 million in capital. This is a problem because some men say that they are small but when you look at it, they are not really small at all. I hope that this could be explained as we go on.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank all Honourable Members on this Side and the Honourable Member for St. John who brought a certain level of maturity to this debate.

I know the comments made, Mr. Chairman, in relation to the size of the budget of the Ministry but the size of the budget of the Ministry does not determine...

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I have never been a big spender, I have never had a lot of money to spend. The Ministry basically is an ideas and policy Ministry. I suppose having got this far in life, it shows that I am capable of having some good ideas to sustain myself. I want to give the assurance to the House in my winding up, Mr. Chairman, that this Government is committed to facilitating the sustained development of the small business sector. The Government has come square on with the fact that the commercial banks for example have always failed to display any sort of social conscience in relation to the small business sector and has never seen it as their role to facilitate the development of the small business sector. Why, for example, a commercial bank multinational in nature with huge profits has never seen it possible to set aside a small percentage of the net profit to perhaps some form of risk to lending to assist small people is simply beyond me but no bank has ever seen it as its role to engage in that sort of conduct to assist small people in society.

This Government in recognition of that sort of approach has put in place a number of facilities and agencies to ensure /that adequate funding is provided for small business people. The Enterprise Growth Fund, the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Enterprise Loan Scheme, Social Investment Fund and FUND ACCESS even the Poverty Alleviation Fund, all these areas and agencies have assisted the small man with loans. In fact, between the Rural Development Commission, Urban Enterprise Loan Scheme and FUND ACCESS, last year alone some 370 loans were disbursed. Government has accepted its role in the facilitation of the development of the small business sector.

There is also going to be this year the enactment of a Small Business Development Act which is already in draft stage and comments have been received and are being evaluated by the Ministry with a view to forwarding to Cabinet to finalise that Small Business Development Act which will, for the first time, set out a clear definition of what is a small business and will also offer a package of fiscal incentives to the small business sector.

In addition to those immediate and perhaps short-term approaches and to the development of the sector, it is also intended to look at the long-term development of the small business sector. To that end, a census will shortly be done to gather and collate certain important statistical information in relation to the small business sector. How many small businesses currently exist? I could not stand here now and give you a figure in relation to that. That has never been studied or done.

How many small businesses exist by sectoral distribution in the small business sector? In other words, small business by type, the different types of small business, the number of employees male and female. What problems the small business sector is encountering. What small

businesses if given the proper assistance can become vast or significant earners of foreign exchange. All this is information that we now have to gather to ensure we have an adequate data base of knowledge in relation to the small business sector.

In addition to that census, we are also on the course of preparing a White Paper on small business development to set out proposals on policies that will be planned for the proper and sustainable development of the small business sector. The Ministry has a proper programme in place in relation to ensuring the sustained development of the small business sector.

With respect to the Fair Trading Commission, it is obvious that once it comes into existence, and of course, it will come into existence in the form of a statutory board set up under the Fair Trading Commission Act, it will, of course, transform the way business is done across Barbados. It is a system, a Commission that will really assure that there is a bit of something for everybody. There is no intention to wipe out big business, there is no intention to wipe out small business or consumer. What it is intended to ensure, putting it in a nutshell, is that big business does not behave in such a way as to disadvantage small business and to ensure that no business behaves in such a way as to disadvantage the consumer. 12.10p.m.

There will be no discrimination in it targeting any particular type of organisation, or level of organisation, or the size of organisation, but ensuring that businesses flourish in circumstances where big business does not destroy small business and business does not operate in such a way as to disadvantage, or prejudice or harm the consumer.

A lot of work has already been done in this area. I am grateful to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. Already there is a Draft Fair Trading Commission Act that has been prepared by the Attorney General's Chambers - that is how far advanced the process is. The Ministry has already received the Draft Fair Trading Commission Act, which it is now in the process of evaluating to take to Cabinet. Once Cabinet signs off on that, it is intended to further and in a far more detailed way, to consult and to involve participation by the stakeholders and the interest groups who will be affected by the formation of a Fair Trading Commission.

There is going to be interfaces between the technical officers in the Ministry and the individual interest groups it might be Bartel or the National Petroleum Corporation, to get information for input to the final formulation of the Act. In addition to that interaction between technical officer and individual, there is also going to be the establishment of a working group, a broad-based working group with persons not only from interest groups and Government, but also persons knowledgeable in the areas that will fall under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission to ensure we have the broadest possible input in the finalisation of the Fair Trading legislation and the constitution and functioning of the Fair Trading Commission itself. So there is going to be much broad-based participation in that.

I recognise that as a new Ministry, much is expected of the Ministry and me. I do not intend to let anyone down. It is our intention to work toward the originally stipulated deadline of January 1, 2000 and short of any extraordinary intervening event, we are certainly on target to meet that date. It encompasses, of course, a lot of legislative reform.

The act of reforming legislation does not lie in the ambit of this Ministry. We can send drafting instructions out, but we do not draft the legislation. There is another agency in the Attorney General's department that is involved in doing that work and we will have to therefore wait on them to some extent. But certainly, we intend to do everything in our power to ensure that we make the deadline.

Mr. Chairman, before I finish, I just want to revert to one point in relation to small business development. As I said, we intend to indulge in a lot of policy to ensure that the small businessman is assisted, but I want to add my voice to those who said, or perhaps say differently, that once you go all out to assist the small businessman, he must be prepared to at least meet you halfway. He must be prepared to do that. There is a lot of talk, but quite valid, about the programme to guarantee a certain number of contracts to small businesses, but I have had some experience in this area.

I had one bad experience in relation to the award of a tender to a small businessman and the Honourable Member for the City would be aware of this. A contract within the ambit of the Ministry of International Transport was awarded to a small business who had submitted the lowest tender. The bid was not absurdly low, but it was low enough, below the others who had tendered, so that those who evaluated the tenders felt constrained to award the tender to that particular businessman. I therefore had no basis for rejecting the technical advice suggested to me to award the tender. However, it turned out that that businessman could not do the job and perhaps left halfway through it. He ran into financial problems and oddly enough, had to seek the assistance of a big businessman, who bailed him out for a while but within two-twos, as we would say, he was back in the same position and the whole contract had to be abandoned and, someone else was brought in to complete it. The point I am making is that there needs to be integrity in the bidding process for contracts by the small businessman because you are saying that you intend to assist with X percentage and Y percentage to ensure he gets a fair deal as it were, in the award of contracts and he must not abuse that intention that you have.

Many people will bid and submit unrealistic bids just to get a contract and where the technical evaluation is made you are inclined, once you have a conscience and want to ensure that the Ministry can save money and get the job done, the inclination normally is to award the bid to the lowest bidder. There are some who will be mindful of that process and will therefore submit bids, not outrageously low, but too low in fact to get the job done. I have little doubt that in that case I cited, the company who tendered for that work in fact, perhaps, did so knowingly because the person did have substantial experience in the area as the file showed, but for some reason they felt that they could have done it for a bid that was significantly below the other bidders to have the contract awarded to that company.

In the absence of integrity in the bidding process, we are going to be in a dilemma, in light of past experiences, as to what to do and how to behave in the awarding of tenders. I just wanted to make that point, because we are committed to the development of the small businessman and to assist him wherever possible, but we do expect that having committed ourselves to that approach, the small businessman will recognise that he too, has a duty to perform in terms of meeting us halfway, in terms of the quality work and also in terms of integrity.

Mr. Chairman, I am indebted to you.

With those closing remarks, I beg to move that Head 20, as amended, stand part.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.20p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE ($218,608226)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this Head which is before the Honourable Committee of Supply and to address the programme of expenditure which is behind the figures in the Estimates as laid out as Head 34.

Sir, I am going to deal first with Education and then I propose to come back and deal with Youth Affairs and Culture because there are a number of critical issues which have been occupying the attention of this Ministry and which I believe deserve to be debated in this Honourable Chamber today.

In the context of the Ministry of Education, we have tried, Sir, over the course of the last few years to work from a programme of activities that was reflected initially and essentially in the white paper on education reform which was prepared in 1995 and came to this Honourable Chamber in 1996.

Indeed, Sir, this programme sought to put at the centre of our practices within the Ministry of Education the concept of child-centered learning. We believe, Sir, that each child within the system has a right to be educated to the maximum of his or her ability and to that extent to simply accept that while we have a good educational system and while we have been able to produce persons who have been capable of achieving among the best in the world and certainly in this hemisphere that the numbers of persons achieving need to increase substantially and we therefore formulated the White Paper on Education Reform as a blueprint to inform the activities of the Ministry of Education to its reform process.

For many years, Mr. Chairman, the concept of projects within education was simply that, that you would pick a discrete area and that you would develop a project to address a particular concern.

The whole thinking in the development of education, Sir, hasxhanged substantially within the last five years. Particularly among the developmental financial institutions where they have finally been a recognition that the only way you can have sustainable improvement within your educational systems and the only way in fact you can make an assault issues such as poverty is by ensuring that your reform effort in education goes to the core of all aspects to the delivery of education in terms of the teaching which takes place to the individual child.

Sir, from the Education White Paper we moved to a position where we sought to develop a comprehensive programme of reform coming on the initiatives which we implemented in the early years of the last parliamentary term. Initiatives such as flexible transfer, simply put, that would allow children to move from primary to secondary education at any stage once they were ready between the ages of eight and 12 years old. Rather than simply assuming that all children would reach the same educational ability at age ten and should transfer to a secondary school at that age.

We believe, Sir, that that programme has already started to show success within our system and we implemented it not assuming that that policy of itself would work magic but we put systematic structures in place to complement the policy. Therefore, those children for example, who deferred the sitting of the exam were given the benefit of increase and additional tuition not only in the context of their schools but in the context of a specially prepared summer programme to which all children who have been deferring the common entrance exam in Barbados have been attending and that programme has been put on by the Ministry of Education.

We have seen, Sir, a reduction in the numbers scoring under 30% and we have seen, Sir, determination by those who have received assistance to be able to perform better largely because we have been able to deal with some of the fundamental problems that have affected them from learning well.

One of the things that we maintain, Sir, is that in every child there is the potential to learn and where that child is not learning there must be a reason for that child not learning and those reasons are finite. There may be physical reasons, as I indicated yesterday. There may be social reasons. There may be psychological reasons. Reasons pertaining to a particular learning disability and the expertise that is available to us today is far greater than that which was available to us twenty and thirty years ago. To that extent that that expertise is available then the government has a responsibility to ensure that children are capable of accessing that type of assistance to be able to improve the quality and rate of their learning.

The reality is, Sir, that we implemented a programme for physical justice that now is cited as one of the models within the hemisphere where we attempted to test each child within the primary school system both at the ages of five and at the ages of seven for hearing, speech and sight problems. That has led, Sir, to a realization that some 6-8% on average of the children within our primary school system do in fact have some form of impediment that affects the hearing, speech or sight.

We have entered a partnership, Sir, with the University of Nova in Florida that we are now seeking to write up the details of that project because there has been no other country in the hemisphere that has sought to deal with the problem of physical impairment as assiduously as this country here.

The reality is, Sir, that once you identified the problem then you must put in place measures and mechanisms to deal with that difficulty. We have worked closely with the Ministry of Health and indeed the referrals have been taking place and persons have already received treatment over the course of the last three years to ensure that those physical impairments are minimized and that their capacity to learn would increase and that their eventual education outcomes can also be improved.

The problem pertaining to specific learning outcomes, Sir, is one that the Ministry is fully going to be addressing during the course of this year.

There are myriad types of learning disabilities, but the ones that are perhaps more commonly known to people are dyslexia and dysgraphia. Dyslexia of course dealing with letters, dysgraphia of course dealing with recognition of numbers.

The Ministry is in the process, Sir, of putting together a project during the course of this year that would see to our training teachers to be able to recognise the initial signs of a child who is suffering from dyslexia or dysgraphia and be able to refer them to the expert training that is necessary to deal with this problem that can fundamentally affect whether or not a child performs in a school or during the course of his school career.

Indeed, Sir, many children have been cast aside in our system for problems that could easily be solved had they been identified at an early stage.

When you think of it, Mr. Chairman, Sir, a child that has difficulty in recognising letters and in reading goes through a virtual mad experience during the course of his or her school life because they do not receive the assistance that would allow them to open the window to the process of

learning, and you as a teacher continue to put books before that child and give that child work and write things on a chalk board and the child simply is not responding. But if you put measures and strategies in place that deals with the fundamental problem relating to the child that of dyslexia, then the whole process of learning can all of a sudden become exciting for that child. A child who was hitherto not performing, disenchanted by the learning process can all of a sudden start to respond in a very positive way. Equally so with dysgraphia. So that we hope, Sir, that we can complement our programmes that seek to go to the heart of removing the impediments to learning that children experience within this country.

The other major thing of course, Sir, as I indicated are the social reasons that may prevent a child from learning. Reasons pertaining to poverty. Reasons pertaining to substance abuse. Reasons pertaining to all kinds of abuse within the household.

As I have indicated in another debate in this Honourable Committee of Supply yesterday, we have put in place, Sir, a programme that would see us increasing the number of social workers in our system. We worked a model experiment at St. George's Secondary School where we introduced social workers to be able to assist in the many problems that children came to school experiencing that were rightly speaking not within the focus of a guidance counsellor but moreso applicable to the work of a social worker who could then interact with the various social service agencies to be able to assist and to remove that child from the environment within which he or she was failing to blossom, or to deal with the actual social problems that were being experienced in that environment. 1.40p.m.

The reality is, Sir, that we spend too much money in this country on the delivery of social services for a lack of coordination to constitute a problem in respect of ensuring that that child has access to proper social services whether it is through their family, welfare or the Child Care Board, The National Council on Substance Abuse or in some instances even the National Assistance Board where you have a grandparent who is raising one or two children and simply do not have the means or the wherewithal to support the children.

The incidence of alcoholism is far more prevalent in this society than we care to admit or are willing to admit and the impact of that kind of substance abuse on the rearing of a child is substantial. In the context now, Sir, of this society today the incidence of drug use among parents, particularly where you have younger and younger parents, is a significant reason why a lot of our children who live in households where the parents tend to be young and have no support structures, especially within urban areas, the children do not receive the benefits of proper parenting and proper support in those circumstances.

I believe, Sir, that we have a moral duty as a Government, therefore, to ensure that the delivery of the social services are properly coordinated to meet those most in need. To that extent, that committee which has been set up in the Ministry chaired by Senator Forde is critical and is as critical as any work undertaken in the area of pedagogical support within the Ministry.

Equally, Sir, we feel that the presence of the social workers must be extended to other schools, not all of the secondary schools at this point, but we would want to introduce them in four other secondary schools during the course of this year and to monitor how best we can deliver these services.

The reality once again, Sir, is that once you start to add expenditure and education in one or two schools it then becomes a question of debate because everyone feels that they are entitled to the same staff without recognition as to whether they have the same problems. I am saying to you that not all of our secondary schools face the same social problems in terms of the population of their students and to that extent we must be skewed in our delivery of personnel to meet the problems of the existing school population and not just simply assume that all must be entitled to it because one has had it.

Sir, our programme, therefore, as it relates to the removal of learning impediments is one that is central to what we are doing within the course of what has been commonly referred to as EduTech 2000.1 want to say, Sir, that EduTech 2000 is not a programme within the Ministry. It is the central work of the Ministry of Education. The reform effort as I indicated at the beginning of my speech is such now that reform, for it to be successful in education must be long-term and sustainable. You cannot simply come with a project and forget about it in two or three years' time after you implement it, if not you do not build on the gains which are capable of being built upon within it.

At the end of the day all we are seeking to do is to make life more tolerable for persons by ensuring that they receive a strong and sound basic education. The day that we continue to allow people in this country to rely on the State or their other family structures we prevent ourselves from making them independent as I indicated yesterday and the process of moving from dependence to independence to interdependence must be the goal not only of the Ministry of Social Transformation but that of the Ministry of Education, seeing education as the primary tool.

Sir, these Estimates reflect therefore a determination to reach those overall objectives. Indeed, Sir, the programme of expenditure reflects that while we continue to provide for the normal matters such as salary, while we continue to provide for the normal matters such as the development of materials and all of that, that central to the work of the Ministry, as I indicated, is the delivery of the programme of EduTech which, over the course of the next seven years we hope to be able to deliver to all schools in this country.

This year the Estimates reflect a provision of $35 million initially here for EduTech and, as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter indicated in his opening speech on the second reading, we would have liked to have been able to carry even more, in other words, apply the year 1 schools and the year 2 schools all in one this year but in the context of the course of events over this year starting with other matters that kept us occupied in January and other things have slightly delayed us. After consultation with the Ministry of Finance, we have determined that rather than seeking to spend $70 million this year that we will spend $35 million and just deal with the first year alone which was always envisaged to be the first 15 schools.

In fact, Sir, the programme has already started because three persons from each of those 15 schools would have received nine months leave from classroom teaching during the course of last year to allow them to prepare programmes and plans so that their school may assimulate introduction of the EduTech programme into those schools.

We are now at a stage with those 15 schools where we already have the detailed drawings and the designs. We are in the process of trying to select contractors so that the work may start during the course of the next few months so that once the nature of the rehabilitation of the schools is done we can then introduce the technology into the classrooms and allow for the integration of the introduction and technology with the teacher training that we have been doing.

We also, Sir, trained over 80 persons, education officers, tutors from Erdiston and those 45 or so teachers from those 15 pilot schools in phase 1 of the training during the course of August last year. There will be shortly undergoing phase 2 of the training which will deal with more pedagogical issues, curriculum planning and integration. They will also be going through training thereafter in the management of change in the engendering of confidence because we believe that the creation of confidence among our children is as critical as teaching them how to learn and how to apply the knowledge which they have learnt and that if we are to be bold in terms of moving out as a country into interacting with the rest of the globe that confidence must be there among our young people. It can only happen, Sir, if the confidence is also reflected among our teachers.

We have taken a determination, Sir, that Erdiston Teachers' College is to coordinate all of the training in the EduTech programme. Indeed, Sir, that has been happening and will intensify considerably.

The training for the teachers is not only in information technology but it is also in the special needs education. It is also in the integration of IT into the curriculum. Technology is not new to our educational system. There was Rediffusion. There was ETV. There was disparate use of visual and TVevery now and again but one fundamental thing never occurred when we sought to use technology in education before and that is that there was not substantial teacher training to show teachers and to guide teachers how to properly integrate technology into education so that they may use it on a day-to-day basis. 1.50p.m.

Fundamental therefore to the EduTech programme, Sir, is the question of teacher training and retraining. It has started already, Sir, and will continue to ensure that every teacher in the system over the course of the next seven years is exposed to substantial teacher training and retraining in order for this project to be able to succeed.

We also believe, Sir, that we must give opportunities to teachers to be able to find an economic return from the development of the curriculum materials which they may participate in during the course of this project. To that extent, Sir, we have established with the assistance of Shell, a software review centre which is intended to bring together teachers with programmers and seek to develop indigenous teaching materials that are relevant to our curriculum and that initially will be used in Barbados but which will have an export potential, particularly to the other islands within the Caribbean and thereafter to some other countries within the Commonwealth which may have similar curricula to the ones that we have in Barbados.

The software review centre will also be engaged in a systematic review of all software that teachers will recommend for usage in the classrooms because we need to establish minimum standards but it should not be a process totally controlled by the Ministry but one in fact, that also reflects the considerable participation of the teachers who at the end of the day are the ones responsible for teaching those materials within the classrooms.

Sir, we also will see during the course of this year the blossoming of the plans for the establishment of a regional education evaluation centre which I spoke about two days ago. We felt very strongly at the time of the establishment of this project that there was a need for independent evaluation of policies within the Ministry of Education. We have implemented many policies in education since Independence but there has never been a mechanism to

address systematically the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of a policy once it is implemented. To that extent, Sir, we have never been quick to respond in terms of the outcome or lack of outcome that has resulted from a particular policy.

I believe, Sir, that this should improve the capacity of the Ministry considerably in being flexible and responsive to the difficulties, building on the gains that may be found within the educational system.

We could have taken an approach where this centre was established purely for the purpose of Barbados but we recognise once again that many of the issues that will confront this centre in terms of evaluation and in terms of its other focus on research and planning are issues that concern every single Ministry of Education within the region. When we go for example to develop criteria reference tests which the Government introduced some three years ago for seven and nine year olds to be able to assess their skill levels so that we can remediate the problems identified, we did not want to import texts from America or from Britain and just give them to our children because they were not necessarily culturally relevant and were skewed against our children in some ways and we therefore found it necessary to develop our own tests.

When we develop our own tests, these tests can quite easily be applicable to children in Dominica, to children in St. Lucia and St. Vincent and Jamaica and Trinidad, all of the other countries of the English speaking CARICOM region. If they at some point in the reform of their educational system have also to develop tests we will see individual Ministries in Education throughout the region spending money on the same technical staff that if there had been coordination we could be able to remove some of these costs that confront Ministries of Education throughout the region.

To that extent, Sir, the Government of Barbados and this Ministry of Education took the decision that the centre which is to be established at Cave Hill on the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies should not be nationally focussed but should indeed be regional in focus. I had the honour of meeting with the other Ministers of Education from within the CARICOM region after the Summit of the Americas took place in Chile last year where the focus was on educational reform. We agreed as a grouping of CARICOM Ministers that there would be support for the establishment of this regional centre and that while it was coming about essentially and initially to respond to the needs of having an independent evaluation mechanism for EduTech that its focus being broader than that it could accommodate the needs of other CARICOM countries.

We hope, Sir, within the course of the next decade to see a reduction in the cost for development of curricula, for the development of resource materials, for the development of tests whether criteria reference tests or other forms of examination because we all at the end of the day must do it.

If Trinidad has developed one already there is no need for us to start from scratch provided that one meets the needs identified within our system. So we look forward, Sir, to the successful operation of that centre which will start its work during the course of this year. The terms of reference in fact have already been done. The base line tests, I understand, for the measurement of the children before the introduction of the EduTech into the classroom has already been completed and that will allow us also to be able to measure the effectiveness of the reform within EduTech in the performance of our children.

Many people may already be aware, Sir, that while we were preparing this project we introduced a small programme at the St. Mary's School in Bridgetown and 96 children were exposed to the use of technology as an instrument of instruction in the classroom and the preliminary results, because they would not have been as extensive as that which we would now be employing within the formal programme of EduTech, showed that more than 60% of those 96 children made gains of more than the gains of a whole academic year in less than one term. The result was so phenomenal that we really and truly are expecting to see some considerable gains in the application of the use of technology and the shift in teaching methodology that is the substance of EduTech.

I believe, Sir, that we must understand that the reform in education is not a battle to be fought by parents and teachers alone and students or the Ministry alone but it must be the battle of the entire country to ensure that the improvement in learning becomes essential to the ethos of each and every child and human being in this country. We have been fortunate as a country that education has always been central and dear to us. Indeed when one remarks on the fact that at the turn of the century an island that was but only 166 square miles had over 200 primary schools delivering education intentionally to the children of slaves and delivering it in the context where that education though a primary education was really what we would call a junior secondary education today because it took them up to seventh standard which I am told was on or about 14 years old and therefore delivered the essence and the basis for further learning.

We therefore have inherited a system that has always kept education dear to us. Education in the context of today's world must mean for us that it is not only important for a child to be able to read and write but it must also be

important for that child to be able to analyse, to think, to be able to put itself over in a manner that is confident, to be able to build on that knowledge in a more complete way and to become a critical solver of problems whether in its individual life or at the level of the community or the level of the country.

To that extent, Sir, the shift *in* what we expect from our educational system must of necessity take place if we are to remain dominant in terms of our reputation in education in the hemisphere. What do I mean by this shift, Sir?

We have traditionally taught children to learn by rote and to take instructions well, but it is our responsibility, particularly in a world that places a premium on the creation of knowledge and the enhancement of creativity and in a country that its primary resource is its people. It is our responsibility, Sir, to make the shift to allow these people now to become original thinkers and creative persons that are capable of generating knowledge.

The reality also is that the international economy places a premium on the generation of intellectual property rights which perhaps are the only rights in the world that provide you with revenue and after you die and to that extent there is a level of sustainability attaching itself to the kind of revenue that comes from the generation of creativity and knowledge in Barbados.

The shift that was necessary for us at this point is one that will guarantee that we can meet the demands of a new century, of a new international economy, of a new global order and that also allows us to meet the social demand because social demands are as critical as the economic imperatives. What do I mean by that, Sir? Our children must be capable of being responsible for their lives and must recognise that their responsibility to themselves go also to their communities and their country, and to the extent that we can introduce children who understand that instead of having only rights that they have these responsibilities for themselves, the communities and their country then we will reduce the level of medium and long-term spending that a Government must take in the area of social services and in such areas as the fighting of crime and social deviance.

It is essential for the preservation of the social fabric of this country as well that we allow that shift in teaching methodologies and in the expectation of education to take place within our system at this juncture so as to engender in our children not only that greater level of confidence, not only that greater capacity to respond to the economic needs of the country but in understanding of the social responsibilities that will ultimately strengthen the social fabric of this country and equally reduce the long-term expenditure that will be incurred by a Government in the provision for its citizens.

Sir, there are a lot of other things that I would wish to speak about but at this stage I will give other persons an opportunity to speak and as I said I will come back and address the issue of Youth Affairs and Culture and one or two other issues in Education. Thank you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I want to commend the Minister of Education for her masterful presentation, the way in which she actually handled the new shift in teaching methodology, but I want to remind this House that I speak from the vantage point of being the person in this Assembly with the longest teaching experience. I think that I would have taught well over twenty years and am in a position to deal with a particular issue this afternoon, namely, the issue of discipline in our schools.

I want to begin by saying that there is a general lack of discipline in our society and this is reflected in our schools. The point I am making is that we should not think that it begins and ends with the schools when we talk about the children at school and how they behave.

Children are actually evaluating what the adults are doing and the children are doing it as well. Unless we have a return to a more disciplined environment, I believe that some of our children will be lost. It is the culture. Even children who have relatively comfortable, safe and what we would call stable homes are picking up what is happening in their districts.

A few mornings ago I was walking and I had actually reached the door step of a good friend of mine and I could hear the mother telling him pull up your socks. He pulled them up at home and he walked with me until he got to the bus stop which is right beside my house and back down they went because the others who were there had theirs down. That is the way in which they operate.

Speaking of bus stops, Mr. Chairman, things are so bad in our society now that a bus stop does not mean anything any longer to school children. School children no longer think that they have to catch a bus by a bus stop because the culture now is that you can stop a bus or stop a minibus anywhere and that is the way they operate.

A sizeable portion of our school children have no respect whatsoever for authority and in particular they have no respect for the police. Believe it or not, they have no respect for the police. The only section of the £orce that seems to scare them is the Task Force.

Take a situation Sir, where a minibus driver is stopped by a policeman. The policeman is trying to tell hini how he is overloading or speeding. The way in which thajt minibus driver carries on the policeman nowadays and the way in

which he talks to them, the children believe that that is the way you have to talk to policemen. They have no respect whatsoever for the police.

When I was at school, I knew the fellows at primary school were all frightened of policemen. That does not obtain today. I think that the Resident Beat Officer and community policing are good ideas but I am also of the view, Sir, that they have their drawbacks. The policemen play dominoes with the fellows. They take the children to parties. They dance with them and children virtually have come to accept the policeman now as one of them. That respect that we had and that fear that we had for policemen is not there any longer. They talk to the policemen and treat the policemen as though they are one of them. That is the truth.

Do not talk about disrespect for teachers, Mr. Chairman. As I said, I was a tearher for more than twenty years and I know that it still happen? today. There is glaring disrespect for teachers by our school children and this is compounded by the fact now that everybody nowadays know their rights. Children in primary schools and secondary schools, they know their rights. They know that only the headteacher and the senior teacher can flog unless they delegate it to some other teacher, that only the headteacher can inflict corporal punishment on them. 2.10p.m.

About two months ago, a friend of mine, a young teacher told me that he passed by this group of primary school children, the other teacher apparently was not in the class and they were around the teacher's desk. He said, "if I pass back here and I see you here, I am going to give you some lashes". One of the fellows looked at him and said, Mr. so-and-so, you can beat? Because the perception is nowadays that only the headteacher can touch them and can tell them what to do.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: It is in the whole region. I am not saying that this is a Barbadian thing. You know that today in Trinidad I do not think they had any school at all. I think that they are actually protesting violence against teachers by children and the school was shut down. That is actually happening in Trinidad now. The other thing too is that the teachers fear litigation and because students know their rights the teachers are not touching them. There is this fear of litigation in the law courts by teachers and they are not going to take any chance and hit anybody's child. All of that is paralysing the teacher to the point where the teacher feels very very helpless.

When I was at school, Mr. Chairman, and a teacher asked me to do something, that was an order - that was a command. But not now. There is a downright refusal by children to participate in sports. At a lot of these schools you cannot tell the children you have to run. Who are you talking to? You cannot tell them that way. The teacher is helpless. I can tell you now that the victrix ludorum of a leading school in this country did not participate in inter-school sports.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: That is a fact. She ran at the school but did not participate in inter-school sports. She said, you cannot force me to do anything.

You give children, Mr. Chairman, brand new text books at the beginning of the school year and by week three some children are sharing books. Some of them are actually saying, I do not have mine. I cannot find mine. Some are borrowing books. In three weeks' time, all the books are gone. That is the attitude of children. They do not care.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that what we have to do is to monitor this perception. Whether it is a real perception or an imaginary one that teachers are losing control. The teachers feel that way, that they are losing control. It can be very, very dangerous and it can have very, very serious consequences. I have seen in my experience, Sir, a teacher rushed into the staff room, put down his books and burst out in tears saying, "Oh, Lord, I cannot do any better with these children, Lord have mercy". This is a teacher that was trained, an experienced teacher coming into the staff room and down with the books and a stream of tears. There seems to be a different type of child now from when you and I, Mr. Chairman, were at school.

A lot of teachers are allowing that stress and strain, Mr. Chairman, to wear them down. They feel that they are losing the battle. I think, Sir, that we have to do whatever is possible to re-empower the teachers and make them feel that they are in control again.

The whole question of what does a teacher do when the children refuse to do homework. Do not think about lashes because as I have said before, the children know that you cannot touch them. The whole question of detention too. A bus goes into the yard and the bus is to leave at three o'clock and I only have one school ticket and I have to go straight home so you cannot keep me in. It is a kind of very powerless situation out there. A lot of my friends, close friends are still teachers. We still chat and I ask them how things are going at this school and the next school. All of these stories are coming back time after time.

I know, Mr. Chairman, when I was teaching we always felt that as teachers we never used to get the support from the

Ministry of Education. I can see some of the officials from the Ministry of Education here. We never used to get the support from the Ministry of Education that we should. We always thought that way as teachers.

Let me give you a classic example, Sir. We had a chap, we used to call him 'Bare Trouble'. If you give a school child a nickname 'Bare Trouble' you know how much trouble he gives. That was his nickname.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: He took a bottle one day and actually smashed another child in the head. He was told that he was going to be suspended and to wait there until the headmaster finished speaking because the headmaster, I think, was speaking to someone else. The child decided that he would not wait for the headmaster and went along about his own business. The headmaster comes in and saw the child going and said, "come back here son, come back here". The child said, "I am not coming back nowhere". That was his attitude. The headmaster said, "do not come back unless you bring back your parents". Those are the exact words that the headmaster said.

Do you know the child and his mother went to the Ministry of Education and gave their story that the child was suspended from school just so. The attitude was that the headmaster should not have done that. He was wrong to have done that. The parent heard it and the child heard it, that the headteacher was wrong. Of course, when you get the full story it is something else.

The attitude there was that we preferred to give the benefit of the doubt to the child rather than try to find out exactly what happened at the school. There was always this perception by us as teachers that we never got the support from the Ministry of Education that we should get. I would hope that things have changed, that it works differently now. I hope that when these matters go in we do not get this kind of pro-active thing against the teacher that we used to get in my day.

Mr. Chairman, as I wind up I want to say that there is indeed a lot of indiscipline in the society. The way in which children behave at school is just the mirror of a wider society. The problems are societal and you have to deal with them at that level so that we can have a better child for tomorrow.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I was attracted to the comments of my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and his comments on the general indiscipline in the society and the extent to which it is permeating the school.

I also want to speak to another problem that is very much evident in the school and is part of the social climate in which we are living today. If I may, when he was giving some of the stories and instances of indiscipline in schools, I could not help but recall a story given to me by a teacher about a parent who would come to the school to meet with the headteacher to discuss problems that the child was having and to speak about general discipline. The parent, the headteacher and the child was in the headteacher's office and a discussion ensued. The student who was female, Sir, became highly angry at the comments being made by both her parent and the headteacher in their attempt to discipline and to guide. They were not using physical means to discipline. They were simply giving verbal guidance and speaking to her in a way that many of her parents and grandparents and elderly people in the village had spoken to us. And this child became angry and incensed to the point, where she got up and laminated the mother in blows in the Principal's office and could not be restrained by the security guard. 2.20 p.m.

Now, if her mother is powerless to control her in a situation where the headteacher and security guard are present and they cannot intervene to save the mother from being beaten, at what point you really wonder who is in control. I believe though that we cannot allow children to think- if I may use the language of currently- that we rule things. Some degree of discipline has to be brought back to the whole process of leadership and guidance. Whatever the social problems, the seminal causes of the social problems that we are seeing manifested in this way, we really have to, not only identify them in the way researchers like Richard Carter who is the Director of the Youth Affairs Programme has done but really seek to remedy whatever those seminal causes are.

The specific issue to which I want to speak, is the fact that it seems that many men in our society are being marginalised and that women are having tremendous success. I have no difficulty with the success of women being perhaps very much of modern society and myself a female achiever, I imagine some might say but I really think we have to be concerned about the extent to which our men are being marginalised.

I was making the point two days ago that in the year I was admitted to practise at the Bar, my class was, I think 10 and of that number there were only two men, all of the others were women. Last year I went to the graduation ceremony of the University of the West Indies and I was amazed at the large number of female graduates. Invariably they were

young and the male graduates who were substantially fewer in number, were to a large extent older people who have clearly been working for sometime and have come back to do a degree in their later years, perhaps for upper social mobility, their job promotion or whatever. I therefore asked the principal, what kinds of percentages in the graduating classes constituted men and women and I was given a number of 67% female graduates to 33% male graduates. Now that is a very, very significant number, because it reflects part of what we are seeing in society and it is going to have implications for the jobs that are out there, the kinds of jobs, who does these jobs and what remuneration rates they are given. It is going to have implications even in relationships, because we still live in a society where a lot of our men have difficulty dealing with women who are more qualified or women who are doing better in their jobs.

In my constituency, if you go into developments like West Terrace and Husbands Gardens, a majority of the homes, it would appear from casual observation and I say casual observation because I have no empirical data to substantiate the comment I am making, but it would appear that a large number of the homes are owned by single women who show no inclination to have permanent male residents.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: No. They have visitors from time to time but they do not seem to have an inclination to have permanent male residents. And when one talks to a lot of young professional women, they tell you all the time that the men are not saying anything. The men are not doing anything. The men do not have any conversation. Our men are too shallow. They do not have wide interests. These are the kinds of comments that one hears. It does not relate to any Honourable Member here present or a private sector member here present.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It really is a very serious problem in relation to how we are going to organise social relations in the future. What is to happen with our men? Wherever you go, you see the fellows liming on the block. When you go into the district, into the villages, into the housing areas, you do not see our women liming on the block in the same way. Why? Because invariably their time is taken up in some worthwhile activity, whether it is in the home, whether they are at work, even in relation to job placements we offer through our constituency offices, the vast majority of people we see are women. It is significant that unemployment is still higher amongst women and that women still continue to work for lower salaries. However, the evidence is that a lot of these women are forced to come and seek jobs, because invariably they are the ones who are maintaining the home. They are the ones who are maintaining and schooling the children. They are the ones who are sometimes taking the jobs that they are not all together happy with, simply because they have that responsibility of the management of the house and the care and nurture of the children.

We have tended in recent times to speak to the fact that all of this is now the fault of co-education. I am not going to join with those who hold co-education responsible for all or most of the social breakdowns that we see today. What I would urge however, I would wish to enquire of my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, whether in fact research is being done to determine what has been the success or failure of co-education? What are the real consequences of impacts of co-education? Whether in fact it should be started at a particular age? Whether it should exist throughout the entire school career? That is the wrong word, but I think the Chamber understands the point that I am making. We need to have clear data which tells us what we need to do to affect more equilibrium in the system and to ensure that the same way our girls are achieving success and they have every right to and I am not going to encourage now any kind of reverse discrimination against girls, because, when there was discrimination against girls there were no complaints, but now that boys do not seem to be doing well, men are heard to be complaining very loudly.

I believe that both our sexes are entitled to have a place in this society where they can contribute and where they can feel comfortable, but they cannot do so, unless each has access to an education that gives them the confidence to function at every level and in the future.

Part of it will be helped, I am of the view, if there were more male role models in the teaching system. But, of course, there must be of necessity very few male teachers, if so many of the graduates of the University of the West Indies are female and so few are male. So really you are almost in a catch-22 situation. For those who want to say that co-education is not so bad, but you need more male teachers, where are you going to find them, because they are still not reaching the stage where they graduate and we have to understand that we are to remedy that and to change that in the future. Because I do not think that Barbados wants to be classified as a society where men are not doing well or our men are under-classed. We need to find out why our women are achieving and you only have to go into the primary schools or walk the streets to see it. Our girls are confident. They are articulate. They come up and ask questions. They are not at all retiring or shy, whereas the fellows are the ones who are far more subdued. They do not seem to be as enquiring and they do not seem to have the same degree of interest.

I am amazed at the number of males in their late teenage years who say to me quite frankly, "I am looking for a woman to support me. Look at you. You drive a BMW. You do not feel I should get a woman to drive me about in a BMW." And they do not seem to feel that they too should be achieving, that they should want to be the owners of cars or that they should want to be the ones to take you out. This really is a very interesting phenomenon because it almost represents a reversal of the traditional values as we have come to perceive them and to perceive what is normal and what is not. 2.30 p.m.

I would not wish to form or to articulate any value judgement on whether it should be so or not.

What I do want for us to focus our minds on is how we can use the educational system to ensure that our men are not ostracized or alienated and that there is a continuing role for them. This whole question of self-esteem, I always hear men say, I am a man or I am a real man or a big man, I never quite know what it means because I never heard a woman say that she is a woman or a real woman or a big woman to persuade anybody that she is female but this is part of how men identify themselves.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Part of how we define and see ourselves is learnt in the school system and therefore the social cultural values that we are transferring within the school system are also of importance.

If a child comes from a community where his parents or parent have such frustrations that day after day he or she hears things like "man don't ask me no questions, I tired" or "don't interfere with that, you idiot," then clearly he comes to school with an attitude that he is less than worthy and unless the school system can somehow instill in him a perception of himself as having worth and give that child some degree of self-esteem then he is starting from a minus position because he does not believe in himself that he will go anywhere and what is worst that he cannot go anywhere.

While we would not wish for schools to take on the role of the parents, the fact is that the school system is a very powerful transferor of values and insofar as that is so, we have to be careful about the values that are being passed on to our children.

I applaud my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who in her opening remarks has indicated that the teaching method from the instructionist method to the constructionist method has now been employed.

I have often wondered why it is that in some school systems we have sought to make our children learn by rote rather than to teach them to love learning by helping them to explore. To make contact with the methodology of reason and apply it to other things. To understand what logic is, not because they read it in a book but because they are taught to walk through it by a process of analysis, by a process of growth. Really that is what learning should be and if our school system can somehow cause our children to inculcate that while they are at school, then it is a skill that they will carry with them all through life.

Sometimes, we see people who have got very good exam results by just being able to learn by rote, until they reach a level where you wonder why is this child not performing well. Some do very well up to the 11-plus level and then they fade totally because they have been taught to learn by rote and when the time came for them to reason, when the time came for them by process of logic to work through a problem whether it was in English, in Maths or in anything, they just could not do it and that process of reasoning really is what we need to be conveying to children.

I think the children love to learn, even though they do not recognise it. Because if you have a baby, all the time you can hear them saying things, "the mans were outside", really when a child says "the mans were outside", this is brilliant, it may be very bad grammar but it means that that child has reasoned that you must pluralize things and if it's more than one man, then it must be pluralized and if it is not one man, it must be mans. So really the child should be congratulated, because what you can see emerging is this child's ability to reason. Often in the school system because of the very rigid methods that we use for teaching, because we are into instructionism, then the love of learning is stymied and killed.

Somebody was giving me a story that I found amazing and it was that there was this little child who was not particularly well-off and needed to earn extra lunch money and so he was picking golden apples from his tree at home and the neighbour's tree, peeling the golden apples, carrying a container with salt and putting some unpeeled into a bag and he was selling these golden apples at school. Of course the peeled ones with the salt were a little more expensive than the ones that were not peeled.

I thought that this young fellow was clearly an entrepreneur in the making but the teachers said no, that what he was doing was wrong and they stopped him from doing it. So that he was not encouraged to learn and to develop and what was clearly an innate instinct that could and should have been developed, even if you said to him, well you cannot sell the golden apples during class, sell them

during lunch time. So that very often teachers sometimes with the best intentions just to follow the rules as they perceive them can destroy a child's willingness to learn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:-The Honourable Member has got one minute to wind up.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you. There are other points which I would wish to make and so I would come back and make them particularly as they relate to the use of technology and globalization. I really want to speak to that point but I myself would wish to demonstrate a willingness to learn and my colleagues have been pointing out to me that I should not say constructionism but constructivism.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much. I want to make the first intervention to this debate on Head 34, Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, against the background, Sir, not just to discharge my responsibility as a Member of this Parliament but against the background of someone who has had the privilege, I consider it to have been a privilege, Sir, to have not only had the opportunity to impact on the lives of a few students years ago when I was a member of the teaching profession but also, Mr. Chairman, Sir, as one who has also had the privilege, of spending two years in full-time training to be a professional teacher.

I believe, Sir, that when I speak on matters of education I know what I am speaking about. If teaching became one of those professions to be licensed, I would be a fit and proper person to be certified, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I want first of all to salute the Minister of Education, not only on her presentation this afternoon, Sir, but also on the work which the Ministry of Education has done within this Administration, recognising, Sir, that education must of necessity and our approach to education must of necessity reflect the fact that we are operating in a *dynamic* situation.

I think perhaps whilst we were very good to say over the years that we have a good education system, perhaps that continuous statement put us into a position where we remained too static for too long. What was good in the context of the 60's is not necessarily in the context of the 90's and certainly might be dysfunctional in thf context of the 21st century. 2.40 p.m.

Sir, I would want at the start of my contribution to this debate to salute those brave men and women. There is nothing deliberate about the order in which those words are chosen, I want to assure my colleague from St. James South. I want to salute the teachers of this country, the educators in general as well as those persons who have worked in the Ministry of Education to administer the affairs of our land.

Sir, I want to throw my full weight behind the reforms which are taking place in education but to say that you could probably go further and faster as well, to say that I too share the Minister's view that the greatest challenge which we face in educational reform in Barbados is not the challenge of the past in terms of providing access. It is not a quantitative issue at this stage. It is a qualitative issue and to the Minister's credit she has not allowed herself to be lulled into a state of satisfaction based on the fact that she has conquered the access for it. But access to what, Sir?

What would have constituted a sound basic education 30 years ago might qualify one only for functional illiteracy today because at the end of the day if at the end of a period of education in our school system one is not able to function within the context of today, whether that today is 1999 as I speak to you or 25 years from now as someone else speak in this Parliament, then we are wasting time.

Therefore, Sir, the move toward a change in teaching methods to reflect the needs of today, the use of different materials, different aids such as in future technology, these are all matters to be lauded. I would want within that overall context of educational reform taking more child centred approaches to the teaching/learning situation, and using technology which is widely available as a means of allowing us to get further and faster in moving along that road, is a step which must be supported. The educational programme, therefore, deserves all of our support.

I will not go into either the technical or the pedagogical aspects of the EduTech programme because they have been articulated but I want to recognise the fact that the EduTech programme also includes a very important part which is still lacking in Barbados, that is, the matter of infrastructural development in the school system particularly at the primary school level.

All of us who are close to our communities would have to admit that while we were taking care of the need to create new secondary schools over the past 20 years that a number of our primary schools have slipped. There are still one or two primary schools which operate in situations which are less than satisfactory. Also, it did not help that during the period of economic austerity in the early 1990's that even for the newer school plants including, for example, the ones which the Honourable Member for the City would have helped to build when she was Minister of Education no maintenance nor repairs were done. Therefore we at present

are faced with the situation where there is a dire need for refurbishment or enhancement of the old plant and maintenance of the not so old. The bottom line is that at the primary level facilities have left much to be desired.

I would want to thank the Ministry of Education for the spanking new St. Christopher School in the constituency of Christ Church East, it is a most wonderful facility. It is a prime example of what going to school should be all about. It is a wonderful and blessed place and I want to thank the Minister and thank the officials of the Ministry of Education for that. I would invite Members of Parliament from other constituencies who want to see what a school should look like or who need education at a primary school to come and see St. Christopher School.

Sir, in the same constituency of Christ Church East, there is also the St. Bartholomew School. It was in two places as the schools were, the Boys' School here and the Girls' School there. The Girls' School was over on Pilgrim Road and that has major structural flaws. It has virtually collapsed. Everyone is now over into the Boys' School. That obviously puts some pressure on a plant that was not designed to hold those numbers, a plant which itself is not new. There is a need for either expanded facilities at the St. Bartholomew's School or for a new facility.

The playing field area is inadequate to allow children to exercise and to do what children normally do. The fencing, Sir, is virtually non-existent in places. The electrical system is faulty. I use that school for holding my branch meetings. My branch meetings rotate between three schools and the electrical system is very unreliable. One minute you are in light and the next minute you are in darkness. I would not be surprised if something more drastic were to occur at some point in time, not to mention the other facilities.

What EduTech will do for us is that recognising that one cannot put new wine into old vessels, a major part of the programme for the introduction of the technology in the school, a major part of the reform of education is a planned programme for the refurbishment of schools around Barbados including, the Minister has assured me, the St. Bartholomew School. I therefore want to support her in that and just hope that the programme for the implementation is so structured as would see St. Bartholomew School very high on the list of those particular establishments.

I want to make one other observation, Sir, in the time that is available to me. We have conceived of an excellent programme for educational reform which, if we were to draw the analogy in terms of either a business or the economy, we have come up with a good strategic plan, but the strategic vision for a business or a Government or for education still has to be implemented at the level of the individual enterprise or the individual department. Where I have the greatest concern is the extent to which we can place our complete faith in the quality of management at the enterprise level. If there are any weaknesses in management at the operational level in education, at the level of the Principal and the Board of Management in our individual schools that will be our undoing in education.

We have to ask ourselves if we are running a business, could we have a department or an individual score among the change where year after year there are problems, where year after year targets are not met, where year after year the bottom line ends up in the red, where the enterprise terms are lost without asking ourselves about the quality of management? Who is responsible, who has to be held accountable? 2.50 p.m.

We have to take a closer look at what happens at the level of the individual schools. I do not share the view that all of the problems at these schools are merely as a result of societal trends and that we are in a situation where we cannot turn this around.

To use an anecdotal approach to support my thesis which has been supported by empirical research already, that the quality of management at the level of an individual school which management obviously is responsible for setting the tone and the discipline in the schools, ensuring that the objectives are met, making recommendations for curriculum reform, might be required to be sent to the Ministry of Education and the like, is of fundamental importance.

I have had the privilege, Sir, of seeing a school which was started in 1978 with persons who would have been left back in primary school in class 5 or 6 and that was at a time when there would have been almost universal access so you would understand that these were not based on the scores of the common entrance exam, the top educational achievers to be placed in a secondary school. I was able to note, however, that on the basis largely of the quality of management of that enterprise that first and foremost there was a tone, an atmosphere, that said that this is a place for education. The results were not spectacular initially in terms of the standard measure of four "O" levels and 5 "O" levels. Many of the persons there were not in that stream. However, Sir, by way of being able to create the right atmosphere for learning, the school was able to so draw attention to itself and raise its profile that it was able over those years to have persons choosing to send their children with much higher scores to the school.

I have seen the reverse as well, Sir, where schools which traditionally had attracted children with higher scoring

because of weaknesses in management which allowed for a slippage in the discipline, which allowed for a slippage in the performance of teachers and students, found itself on the less preferred list.

Sir, I want to ask the Minister to ensure that these well laid plans do not fall by the wayside because of any weakness which there might be at any of the individual schools. I want that the management of these schools be held accountable just like management of any enterprise anywhere for the performance for the results. Those that do well to be rewarded and those that do not do well will be held accountable in whatever fashion.

The problem is management at the level of the schools. It is of fundamental importance in determining educational success. Mr. Chairman, I will be back to comment on other aspects of the Head.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief. I do not have any comments to make about the larger issue of education because I think this House in a previous incarnation, a previous session, has debated education almost every year and those larger issues have already been canvassed and those are the issues that I myself did not get into then. The shortage of personnel on this Side now means that I have to do that and this is not a debate for that.

There are a lot of concerns that I do have, some very parochial and I am sorry to use a scatter-shot approach but I just want the Minister to deal with these short issues. The first is the condition of the newest school in St. John. I find that the older schools even though they do tend to deteriorate, I am alarmed at the amount of deterioration that has taken place in the Mt. Tabor school already. A lot of the doors are eaten off by I assume termites or maybe water-logged. They tell me there is a computer room but the computer in there is so old that I suspect they might be afraid to plug it in but there are no computers and there are very often people who would like to assist with those kinds of things in the United States and elsewhere who have offered to assist but one is reluctant to put them into a situation where the resources may be available but may not be used.

I want to find out if Mount Tabor is one of the newer schools and since there were some new programmes which as I understand it would accompany these new amalgamated schools, I want to get an idea as to what is happening there whether some repairs are scheduled and whether there is the likelihood of a major technology programme at Mount Tabor.

I want to enquire from the Minister whether the Ministry of Education already does or has in consideration the payment of stipends to teachers who are involved in extra-curricular programmes. It seems to me that there is a disparity around the secondary schools some which have very active extra-curricular programmes and others which have very limited extra-curricular programmes.

Teachers do complain to me that there are some who do nothing and as soon as the bell rings they are through the gate while there are others who take on very significant responsibility. I think that a teacher who works around the clock and a teacher who commits his or herself to the development of the institution should be given special consideration if not direct monetary supplements, the consideration in terms of promotion or some other perks and benefits that may apply.

I think in the context of what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North was saying about discipline and young people that many of the programmes which are still offered and were offered in my time would be very helpful in instilling discipline within the educational process and I think a lot more should be done to encourage those kinds of programmes. I know what it is like myself being married to a Physical Education teacher. Work starts at eight-thirty and when seven and eight o'clock at night they are still on the premises working with children and they suffer from lack of resources and assistance in coordinating sports programmes and that kind of thing. It takes its toll on those teachers and I think a lot more could be done in this area.

I do not want to pre-empt a speech by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West but I want to find out about the Church's involvement in school programmes because there was some discussion at the beginning of these Estimates about Church property. Beyond that, I want to know what is the involvement of the Church generally in the programmes of the schools whether extra-curricular. What is the level of religious and moral instruction in the schools today, whether all of the schools are involved in daily prayer and other spiritual activities?

I am asking some of these basic questions because I still need to get a feel based on issues which other people have raised with me about what is happening within the educational system.

There are many old school buildings throughout Barbados some of which have fallen into disrepair, some of which have become available as a result of new schools being built or amalgamated and I want to find out whether the Ministry in fact has a programme for all of these school buildings because some of them have become health hazards. There are many in communities where people want to use them but they again do not have the resources and once they look at other community centres and see community development officers then they expect the same level of

attention paid to newly established community centres, which may be refurbished old school buildings. I want to find out what is happening about that.

I can think again of the school buildings at Mount Tabor, at Hothersal Primary. I think that a part of the Old Cherry Grove is being used but I think that we need to have a proper maintenance programme and a schedule for maybe all of these old buildings as community centres before further rot and dilapidation sets in.

I was not sure if the Minister spoke about the children at the Risk Programme in the opening presentation. I did not hear and I apologise but I would like to hear what is happening with that and the extent to which it is meeting the objectives of the Ministry because this is a new programme. I think it could not be more than two years old by my recollection and the Budget has already gone to about just over half a million dollars as far as I remember so I would like an idea of...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So it is at $525 000 this year and I would like some information on what is happening with that programme and I also want to urge the Minister to keep her pledge made in the last Estimates that she would require her youth commissioners to meet with the parliamentary representatives, including those whom they may not support politically and may have canvassed against which is their constitutional right. It is my view that having gone past elections it is the job of the youth commissioners to work with the Members of Parliament. There is only one Member of Parliament in a constituency. There are not five and therefore my view is that they have to acknowledge that and just as the CERO people work and community development officers work I think a culture needs to develop among the youth commissioners where they work.

I have an experience where my youth commissioner far from working anything I get involved in he instructs the people that he will no longer be involved, so he has withdrawn from coaching a basketball team simply because we offered some sponsorship. He has withdrawn himself from all of those activities because his attitude is and I do not even know him, as long as I am involved he is not going to be involved. That cannot be the way. Certainly he can coach a team. I cannot coach it but we can work together and I do not like that attitude. We have spoken about it in here and I think other parliamentarians on both Sides have mentioned their dissatisfaction with the way the youth commissioners are functioning. I saw heads of those departments in there when that debate was taking place and still there has been no cooperation. Far from cooperation there seems to be an ethos in that department that they are to work against certain developments.

I do not think that is correct and I want the Minister's assurance that she will clamp down on that kind of nonsense because it will end up breeding greater polarisation. If we are all interested in safe and secure communities, if we are all interested in the development of our young people and their progress, I think there has to be a partnership between members of Parliament, youth commissioners, community development workers, the Church, the police department, sports coordinators and persons of goodwill in communities to ensure the safety and the unity of those communities. I expect more and if better cannot be done I will have to make a formal complaint because I do not think that it is fair. As I said, the young people complained to me about it that from the time it was recognised that there was some involvement the person indicated that he was finished with that on no provocation whatsoever. That cannot be the way forward and I think something needs to be done about it.

This is not my first experience with that. When I was Minister of Community Development, I went to a house fire and found a welfare officer there and approached her to ask her a question and she told me that she did not need a politician. This is St. John. Many years ago in 1991 or 1992. So this is not an unusual phenomenon but it has to stop, this idea that politicians are only involved to exploit. If there are instances of exploitation a community worker is entitled to say, "Look I am not going to get involved in that activity because I think that is politically motivated." Not weeks after an election, not before, that cannot be a basis for non-participation.

Beyond that, I do not think that on either Side an accusation could be levelled that in my constituency activities are only politically motivated. The groups usually go to both parties and get balls, jerseys; whatever and expect the participation of both political parties. This idea of sponsorship for them is a business. They do not see it in partisan lines because they would get jerseys from you and the football boots from your opponent and you would not even know when you are smiling and handing over the jerseys, the next evening they are down at the shop with your opponent getting the boots.

I think that is what they should do. I see absolutely no reason why they should not. What I am saying is that there must be an ethos in the Youth Affairs Department which inculcates certain values in community workers, the youth commissioners, and that they approach the work in the community as all inclusive and not on the basis of any form of exclusivity.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not wrapping up but I think it is important that I respond to some of the concerns raised by Members because a large part of the reason for Estimates is also to be able to proffer more information once requested.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke generally about the lack of discipline being experienced among our children across the system. 3.10p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I can only say to him, Sir, that this is a collective problem that the society is facing and one that we must deal with collectively. I do not believe that teachers alone can carry the load in seeking to redress behaviour when a child is only in a school five days a week, eight hours a day. Very often, the family, the community, the church, the police, youth commissioners as the last Member just said, and the community development workers, all have to be able to come to the task of seeking to create an environment in which children understand what behaviour is expected from them and in which they are censored or reprimanded when they breach those standards of behaviour. We as a society have to commit to it rather than just believing that it will happen only by reason of a teacher giving somebody guidance.

I would also like to say, however, that we believe that there should be stronger participation by children in service club organisations such as the scouts, cadets, brownies, *et cetera*. To that extent we have been supporting the broadening of that base not only through the Ministry of Education but through the Ministry of Youth Affairs as well which sometimes may have more flexibility in developing those programmes. It is also the reason for example why we have had the first structured programme over the course of this academic year in tuk band, stilt walking and landship because we want to see some clutch emerge out of the primary and secondary schools representing a practice in this idiom not only to preserve Barbados as a culture but also as a form of structured supervised activity with its own values attached to it that hopefully will inculcate in children a greater sense and understanding as to the levels of behaviour that is expected from them.

The Honourable Member for St. James South addressed the issue of co-education in our system and generally the performance of boys. I would only say that there is yet to be undertaken a systematic and scientific survey as to the impact of co-education in our system. We hope during the course of this term of office that we would be able to commission such a study especially with the presence of the establishment of the Regional Education Evaluation Centre. It is the same point that we have made that we have implemented policies year after year but we have never had independent mechanisms to access the viability or lack of viability of those policies. We have our own views and we believe that while nothing is wrong inherently with co-education, the manner in which it is implemented can sometimes cause it to have detrimental effects.

I believe for example that Combermere where it started has had a really good run with co-education and does not suffer from a lot of the same problems that you hear coming from other schools. A lot of it has to do with the manner in which the management and staff of the school implement the policies as well as respond to the needs of the various children whether they be boys or girls and recognise that boys may have peculiar needs and girls may have peculiar needs and that you need, even in a co-educational system, to respond to those particular and peculiar needs.

We do have a problem that is in fact mirrored in the experience of almost all developed countries, that boys generally are under-performing. Indeed, Sir, this is the most widely kept secret in Barbados but we have had a system of affirmative action for boys in our school system now for some time. If we did not have that affirmative action programme for boys from primary to secondary school you would probably not find more than 25% of the intake at most of your leading schools in this country being boys. What we do is to divide the places of all schools with the exception of St. Leonard's Boys' and Springer Memorial which, of course, are not unisex, we have divided the places equally rather than on the basis of performance and competition which is normally the measurement for placement from primary to secondary. We, in fact, are mirroring a lot of the attributes of a developed country and these are things that concern us. The University of the West Indies Council, Sir, has accepted an offer from the Caribbean Development Bank to study into the implication of the under-performance of boys generally in our educational system particularly as it relates to them entering the tertiary system and we eagerly look forward to the results of that programme because none of us would wish to have a system in which anybody for any reason is suffering from a disadvantage that we can solve by reason of policy intervention. We sincerely hope that we could address those issues.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East spoke among other things to the issue of the weakness in management of individual schools and that this sometimes leads to poor decision making and poor results. I would only want to say at this point, Mr. Chairman, that that is the very reason why teacher appraisal must be implemented as a matter of urgency. It hurts me, Sir, that we have reached with the unions an agreement on a form of appraisal in terms of the actual forms to be used but that we cannot get the Ministry of the Civil Service to move beyond that point for the last year. Sir, I hope that over the course of this year it can be settled because it is our intention during the course of this financial year to start the training so that we will be able to implement teacher appraisal in the course of the financial year that follows this one.

It is absolutely essential to the successful running of our schools because you cannot continue to have a system -

it goes to a point that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made in respect of teachers who do extra-curricular activities - where you have a system and you cannot take effective decisions about promotions because believe you me, Sir, more people will benefit from promotion under an independent appraisal system than would have suffered from discipline. In the absence of that appraisal system then people do not feel that the work that they are putting into the system is properly and effectively being assessed. I, Sir, hope and pray that we could get some action on this because where it is at, now requires discussions between the Ministry of the Civil Service and the unions in order to settle any consequential terms and conditions that may be affected because of the introduction of appraisals. It is expected for example that where persons now have to deal with items of appraisals that you may have to give them one or two periods periodically away from the classroom in order to be able to effectively do their task.

In respect of other issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition, the point I was making about the extra-curricular activities where a person is putting far more not only in the classroom but outside the classroom, the appraisal instrument must reflect the fact that the total performance of that person merits the person's promotion or reward in some way. It is not the intention of the Ministry to create a stipend for extra-curricular activities *per se*, because we believe that the concept of volunteerism in the community must be one that should generally still obtain but having said that in the spirit of the overall approach to the job and in the additional efforts being put in, we feel that an appraisal instrument should cause that person's career path to be enhanced.

As to the condition of the newest school, as he termed it in St. John, the Mount Tabor School, we have had a problem, Sir, with a lot of the schools built under the World Bank and IDE projects over the last 20 years. Some of it is as a result of a matter discussed by the Right Honourable Prime Minister this morning - simply bad workmanship. It is a shame that we have contractors in this country who believe that because the Government of Barbados is paying for something that they can deliver shoddy work.

In fact, Sir, one of the decisions that we have taken within the Ministry is that we have every intention of holding people to the contracts between us and in fact, at Clifton Hill when we first had problems when we were the Government that came in, and there was defective work done, we insisted that the contractor came back and repaired the work that was done, at his expense. I believe that a lot more of that will start to cure the problem.

Part of the problem with those World Bank and IDB schools was that there seemed to have been a difficulty in the design of the roof and in the partitions that they had between classrooms. Almost every single partition in every school across this country does not function properly, does not roll properly, does not work properly. I think that there were design problems and lack of access to proper maintenance which have made the situation worse. 3.20 p.m.

We have tried through the last IADB Programme to develop a systematic programme for maintenance and therefore, when you see in these Heads domestic primary maintenance, while we are granted $2 million, about one-third of that money goes just to the IADB and the World Bank schools. But it is a mounting effort and because the designs also did not take into consideration the physical environment within which the schools were being built, some schools in fact last longer than others. And certainly, I am sure the ones on the east coast of Barbados will be the ones that require more intensive maintenance. But I, Sir, give him the undertaking that we will look into that problem.

In terms of donations from overseas, the computers that they would have had, they would have been in when the school was built, which is some six or seven years ago so you are probably talking about 286 or 386 machines. That is why we are seeking and have designed within EduTech, a programme for replacement, so that kind of experience will never happen to us again. Part of the $350 million in fact, has an inbuilt replacement cost in it.

In terms of donations, we are more than happy to receive donations, but with the one caveat that you liaise with the Ministry of Environment. But simply to put a computer there without us supplying the additional training for the teachers to use it effectively as a tool of instruction, will be to waste it. So that if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has people who are willing to donate a lab for him at Mount Tabor, we will be more than willing to facilitate its introduction. In fact, design programmes whether it is for the infants class or for the ones in Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 that will suit whatever resources are there. But I assure once again that those schools will be dealt with comprehensively, but in the interim we can accept 2,4, 6 or 8 computers.

In respect of the churches' involvement in schools, Sir, religious and moral education takes place in most of our schools, but part of our comprehensive curriculum reform effort will see it being compulsory in all. And not just from the point of view of learning the Bible alone, but also the engendering of religious tolerance. We live in a society that is pluralistic today, that has persons from many different backgrounds and we cannot assume that all follow Christian beliefs, to that extent, Sir, we also want to be able to engender a sense of religious tolerance. We will be therefore in our citizenship module, including a specific module that

deals with education in terms of the broad base of religions as opposed to just values education.

We also have a programme that we have been working on with a non-governmental agency on values education. Lalu Vaswami, I believe is the person who is chairing that Committee. Indeed, Sir, there is a programme during the Easter vacation where there is a workshop for teachers to be further instilled in those types of values.

In respect, Sir, of the Church properties, Sir, the reality is that not all of the former school properties belong to the Ministry of Education, some of them belong to the churches. And yes, there is a debt that the Government of Barbados still has, particularly to the Anglican Church and the Right Honourable Prime Minister indicated that he will be addressing that issue during the course of this financial year. There are two schools I know that the Ministry of Labour is anxious to use, they are the old Ebenezer School and Shrewsbury School, as skills training centres and we will seek to facilitate that. But we first always have to determine whether it is a Government property or a church property.

For example, Mount Tabor, I believe is a church property, but Hothersal is a Government property and I extended then, and I extend again that the residents of Hothersal should feel free to be able to utilise and mount a community project to refurbish as well as to use those buildings. Part of the projects that come before the very same Ministry of Youth Affairs has been also to assist in efforts like that and I perhaps, want to use this opportunity to address Youth Affairs very quickly.

We have had a number of attacks on the Division of Youth Affairs but I want to strongly defend them, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to defend the behaviour of those youth commissioners who feel that they cannot talk to people who are Members of Parliament and I will say it from the Floor of this House that that is not to be accepted and cannot be tolerated. But having said that, the Division, Sir, has done extensive work in the last three and one-half years to four years since it was created. We have been responsible for forming over 62 youth groups in the four divisions across this country and over 39 sporting teams. We have also seen to it that over 45 people have been trained in sports and cultural activity.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member seeing that you have gone to a new topic, you have got one minute to go. I think it would be better to leave that for the next time around.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I just wanted to introduce it, because I know some people plan to speak on it now, so I am only laying the framework for it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Over some 300 people have their training in the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme. We have also had in the very same parish of St. John and while that youth commissioner's behaviour may cause us to have to question him, that youth commissioner was responsible for bringing two groups that were fighting and we managed to bring them down to the Ministry of Education and over a period of weeks, bring about a level of conflict resolution between the two groups, so as to have them, Sir, interact in a way that did not lead to loss of life or limb.

I also want to make the point that part of the success of our Youth Programme has been the fact that it has been researched driven. We did a National Youth Survey in 1995, and another one will be done in this year 1999, which will seek to interview the majority of young people under the age of 30 years old in this country, so that that information helps us to mold the policies that are to be implemented, Sir.

We have a number of youth projects in almost every area and we can go though, and I can make these documents available, but it is necessary that we understand that unless we are capable of putting young people in structured supervised activity that they will always be in trouble.

I, Sir, will come back on these issues.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate to speak on Head 34. I would like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and the officials in the Ministry of Education to understand that we are going into an age where we need now to make sure that we separate primary schools from secondary schools.

I feel, Sir, that the type of behaviour that is tolerated around the secondary schools that that type of behaviour should not be allowed, especially when you have a primary school so near. I do not know if this particular problem might be widespread but wherever this particular problem is seen, I believe it should be solved. That is because of the age factor certain school children believe that there are certain things that are right and they are allowed to do these things in the eyes of children who are five, six, seven and eight years old. I believe there should be some way that we could protect our young primary school children from some of the children at the secondary schools because the culture of the ones at the secondary schools cannot be the culture for those at the primary schools.

I would also like the Ministry of Education to recognise that Half Moon Fort Primary School is a primary school too

and it is in need of repairs. Also at the St Lucy Primary School, I notice that some work has started there, but I would like to see more extensive work being done on that particular school.

I am happy to hear my comrade speak on the youth cohimissioners and I would like to endorse some of the things that he has stated about the Youth Commissioners. They must understand that the parliamentary representative for the particular constituency must be able to approach them, Sir, and must be able to get their guidance in certain programmes that are formulated to develop the particular constituency.

I have no problem, Sir, who they support, whether they work at election time for your opponent is not important but the important thing, Sir, is that after the elections, they must recognise that their role in the community is to develop that community, especially to develop the youths within the community. 3.30p.m.

If they feel within themselves that their job is to behave like politicians, well, they must continue. But they must also understand that politicians are people who can react also, Sir, and I hope, Sir, that if politicians were to react that nobody would go around saying that politicians are vindictive and that they do not treat people fairly or anything like that, Sir, because people must recognize that when they are given a particular job they must do that job in a fair way, Sir.

I would also like to say, Sir, that the youth commissioners must recognise that they are the ones who also must develop programmes to uplift the youngsters in the particular area and I would like to tell my youth commissioner and the Minister of Education also that the playing field at Checker Hall would like some lights and I would like the Minister to understand that Checker Hall playing field happens to be a playing field that is part of Barbados. I know it is beyond the Judge Gap or Kellman Road but the same way that other communities can have lights, I feel the people in the north of Barbados deserve to have some lights too.

I cannot understand where in one constituency you can have three and four sets of lights and in others you cannot even find one set. I want to know, Sir, if this is the type of example we are teaching our young children in this country. Sir, I believe that the best example we can teach the youngsters in this country is how to share and I feel if we have to share by sharing lights too, we will like some in the constituency of St. Lucy.

Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to spend too much time on this particular Head, Sir, I believe there is a more *important* Head to come sometime this evening so if I spend too much time on this particular Head, I might not get the opportunity to deal with the relationship between a small farmer and a small businessman.

I thank you.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I would like also to place my feelings or at least the feelings of the people of St. Michael North West in relation to the debate dealing with Youth Affairs and also dealing with a bit of the Education Head in relation to what is extremely important to me as the representative for that constituency. I would like also to deal with it from the point of view as what I would consider to be a father and one who in truth and in fact has been able to see a community and to see children of the community develop over the years. But still there have been some handicaps, there have been some setbacks and there have been some situations even though we can pat the Ministry of Education on its back and we can also pat the Ministry as far as Youth Affairs is concerned.

I am also concerned that we are creating what we consider to be an unbalanced society and a society where we seem to be in a position as adults to try to dictate for the young people not realizing that the young people themselves are closely watching the behavioural patterns of the adults and as a result of some of the things that the adults do and some of the actions and behaviour of some of the adults, then it leaves the younger person to start to wonder what is really going on in the society since there seems to be what we consider to be a split situation.

Now, my concern about the development of education in this country is that a lot may be spent on education but we are seeing a situation where we have got what we consider to be a very serious cultural penetration. This serious cultural penetration regardless of what we talk... I may not have walked the halls of certain universities but I can tell you that I have walked the area of experience and that is extremely important based on the fact that you do not need to as long as you have the experience.

I am concerned that this country of ours Barbados, regardless of how much you are prepared to spend on education and certain check points are not made, certain situations are not dealt with seriously, then I think in another couple of years, Sir, that we would not have won the fight which we set out to win. When you look at the cultural penetration carefully which is also affecting sports in this country. The majority of youngsters in this country, young ladies who are going to school, if you watch the deportment you would see that it is a deportment that is clearly played out of what we consider to be the cultural penetration, the television screen.

If you notice the games that are played in Barbados. The game of basketball, Sir. The game of basketball seems to be dominating the game of cricket. What is happening is that there is a situation that our television stations and I am saying this so that the Minister responsible for Education would also understand that broadcasting also plays an important role and I would like to see that the Ministry of Education also has a strong hand or be able to have something to do with broadcasting so that a proper direction will be made for the betterment of the children of this country. When you look at the fact that there is a separation of broadcasting in this country and you have a Ministry of Youth Affairs and Culture and then you have a situation of information or broadcasting which works in a completely opposite situation of what the Ministry is trying to portray, can I say to you, Sir, that as far as this is concerned that some direction has got to be sought. Daily I am confronted with the behavioural patterns of the young people of this country.

As a senior person and one who can fit in, it gives you the right to listen to a lot of the things that these young people talk to you about. Some of the problems that are facing the young folks in this country have not been problems that they developed among themselves, Sir. These are some problems that are created in the very home environment where the parent inside of the home does not set an example.

You have homes in Barbados, Sir, where you have children going to school and you have a situation where we have been in here this morning listening to the plea of men. We have been listening to the plea that men are supposed to do this and men are supposed to do that. I say to you, Sir, that there are some homes in this country that there are mothers who I will say on the Floor of Parliament, you have to ask yourself the question, "Are they truly mothers?" It must be a balanced society, it cannot be an unbalanced society.

We have created what we consider to be an unbalanced society based on the fact, that the Minister of Education is working hard towards making a better Barbados for the youth but then you have a home where the stepfather of that home has an attitude to a child that is not his and as a result of this, that child suffers. The child comes out onto the street and then it is people like ourselves who have got to try to get that child on the right stream. So, let us make sure that if we are going to pattern an education plan in this country that the education plan in this country can be one that will rope in every single area for better direction of the young people of Barbados.

If I should deal with the area, Sir, of Youth Affairs. I am perhaps very critical of Youth Affairs in the sense that I am still to find out who is the youth commissioner for St. Michael North West. I am yet to find out, Sir, who is the youth commissioner for St. Michael North West. I am concerned, Sir, because there is a situation in my constituency where there are a lot of talented young people who need direction. I am appealing to the Ministry of Youth Affairs if possible that St. Michael North West can have some type of connection with the youth commissioner for that area so that the programmes that the young people would like to implement would gain the assistance of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. That is my appeal as far as the Ministry of Youth Affairs is concerned. 3.40 p.m.

I am also concerned with some of the infant schools in my constituency. I have got some very serious problems in my constituency and if these problems develop at this stage it is obvious that the young people of St. Michael North West like many of the young people across Barbados if they are not guided right then you will have a problem with them.

Let me give you an example of what I am saying. If you take the Eagle Hall Infants' School which falls under the Ministry of Education, there are no playing facilities there. You have a situation where there is an area of land that is owned by the National Housing Corporation. It is as far from the school as from here to the main gate of this Parliament. You have a situation where the children of Eagle Hall Infants' School have to cross over to Belfield to have physical training. You have a situation where those children have to cross over to the corner of Passage Road to have training.

I am asking in this Chamber that that land which is owned by National Housing Corporation be vested in the Ministry of Education so that something will be done to prevent those little children from having to cross the highway of Black Rock and having to cross the road of Barbarees Hill to have their physical training. So that is one of the concerns that I am asking that something be done urgently so that we will have that problem rectified.

If I should look at what is happening around the schools in Barbados this is something that we have in an unbalanced society. If you look at the lads who today hang around the various schools, I am wondering what is happening if nobody is seeing these things, if nobody is going to do anything about it. If you look outside of the Springer School a group of young men standing up on afternoons making the young ladies miserable as far as that is concerned, it is going unnoticed. If you look at the various schools across Barbados you see this.

I am appealing to the Ministry of Education. That is also an area to be looked at, where you have a situation in this country where young students coming out of schools

daily happen to be harassed by young men standing around the schools. I am wondering how long are we going to allow this to happen. Are we going to allow something to happen and then come and say it should not be happening? I think the time is right now with a plan like what I am seeing coining from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs. I would like to see that everything is roped in.

I would like to repeat myself. Yes, the Ministry of Education means well in terms of their programme but all the money we are going to spend, the direction that we are going there are some little housekeeping things that need to be done. These housekeeping things are extremely important.

When I was a youngster at school it was my duty to attend prayers regardless of religion. I notice that this is what we can call a permissive society. This is a society that has a right to make decisions and you have children on the roads of this country on mornings bypassing prayers at school. I think the time ha come that as parents we have a responsibility not *nly to ourselves but to Barbados, each one of us.

I think that what is happening is that a lot of our grown people have thrown up the white flag and have surrendered to the young people of this country, which I think should not happen. We have given up. We seem to think that the young people of this country have a right to dictate for us. Until we can get ourselves back in control, until the parents of this country can get themselves back in control, not only to your child - because we are also becoming a very selfish society that you could see what somebody's child is doing but as far as you are concerned you are nothing to do with somebody's child, your child is perfect.

I think we need to be honest with ourselves. We need to be fair. It is time that the parents in this country dictate to other people's children once they make sure that what they are doing is in the interest of that child.

I go on to address this Chamber, Sir, based on some other problems that face the education of youth in this country. I have a youngster at home and I do not know how he does it, he is a head boy at one of the senior schools in Barbados and I will tell you that I have watched him doing his homework and I wonder how possible it is. The TV must be blaring, the radio must be playing and he is doing his homework. I cannot believe it. It does not seem as if it is affecting him but it affects me because I am a senior person and perhaps that is their lifestyle.

I am also concerned with another institution in this country. I put this under the Ministry of Education, through the right channels of the PTA, the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Too many of these young people in this country are allowed to walk into video shops in this island and rent any tape, take it home and sit in the house with the very parents. I am saying the parent has the right to observe what is going on in the home as well as the video shops in this country.

There should be some sort of policing, some sort of concern where young ladies and young gentlemen cannot be able to walk into video shops and rent the tapes. I would say this. If you watch some of the crime that is taking place in this country between some of the young people, and you watch some of those video tapes you will see that they are patterned from some of those gangster crimes that are done across the world that are shown on video tapes.

I am appealing, Sir. Yes we have lost almost a decade of young people and I am extremely proud to say that I can see a change. I can see the Ministry of Education and the Youth Affairs officers working but I can also say there is a lot more that has to be done. It does not make sense that the Ministry of Education is working and the Youth Affairs is working and parents in this country are neglecting their role. I think the Ministry of Education has also got a role to play in addressing the senior people of this island in relation to the betterment of Barbados.

In my opinion, schools are learning institutions. Not only must the Polytechnic and the various evening schools across Barbados be considered as learning places. I am saying in this Chamber that I would like to see the day when retired teachers who have gone out of the system would have a right to go back to school within certain districts and carry on evening classes for the benefit of the parents. You might not have all the parents but if you can get out of a district two, three, four, five or whatever that is still a step in the right direction.

In Barbados, we have a lot of retired teachers and retired people in this country who would still like to play a role or be part in improving and making a better Barbados. I am appealing for that through the Ministry of Education that these people can be roped in. The very schools that close at four o'clock on afternoons and the teachers who during the day pick up their bags and move out of the school as soon as the school bell rings that you will have a situation where you will have a couple of retired teachers coming in during the afternoons to spend a couple of hours with some parents in that district.

I hope the Minister of Education is listening clearly because it would give Barbados a better lead in terms of other countries where you have the control of crime.

I am wrapping up but I am going to appeal once again to the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Just like all the other districts, I have got a district that is very talented. Perhaps

you have heafd about Deacon's Football Team. Deacon's Football Team is one of the best football teams. We are suffering. There are lights in Eden Lodge. There are lights over by the Stadium. There are lights all across Barbados. I am putting in a plea now, Sir, that I would like lights in the Farm too.

I would like to see the youngsters playing under floodlights because if I can get lights in the Farm, I can rope in almost about 1000 youngsters and channel them into another direction. So being here giyes me the privilege to bring the voice of the people of St. Michael North West and the people of the Farm to this Chamber and I hope that this Chamber would listen clearly because it is the voice of the people, not mainly my voice. Thank you, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 4.15 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. D. A. CARTER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

REV. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, during the recent general election season, I offered on a few instances the view that the electorate of Barbados would contrive to bring about a result which would give to the Barbados Labour Party some significant degree of comfort with respect to its majority but, more than that, would give to the new Government the opportunity to transform totally life in Barbados as we know it.

I think the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture is critically and pivotally positioned to facilitate much of that transformation of the character and quality of life in Barbados. I think this Ministry is pivotally positioned to make a decisive difference.

Now, Sir, I am easily a member of the fan club of the current Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture. I hope that history would record that that was a thoroughly intelligent position to take. I would like to suggest to the Honourable Minister that laid upon her able shoulders is the tremendous responsibility for shaping very much the destiny of this country and really changing life as we now know it.

I see potentially a danger that history might recall a feeling that while we might be able to produce large numbers of well informed young people in this country at the same time we produced large numbers of ill-disciplined, not sufficiently disciplined young people. I would want to warn against that danger and I would like basically to speak to two matters. One of which has to do with the philosophical planks which underpin the programme of the Ministry of Education as now conceived and as conceived over the past four and a half to five years.

I believe it is important that we try to ensure that your education is geared towards the development of a new business class in this country. In the past perhaps too often we have prepared people for entry into the professions and to some extent for entry into the world of business. I talk here moreso of the development of a business class, not workers in commerce and in business in Barbados.

I see this as a critical component of the new wave of social evolution which is taking place and will continue to take place in this country and if Barbados is to evolve socially further it cannot do so unless there is a new business class, unless the colour of business in this country is enhanced. Some, in my view ill-advised, call for the removal of white from businesses in Barbados. I seek no such thing. I seek rather for the enhancement of colour, not less white but more black.

The development of a business class to me has serious implications for the political life of this country as now exists. It has serious implications for the proper development of democracy down the road in a tranquil and stable atmosphere. It has serious implication for the quality of family life as now evidenced in Barbados. It has serious implications for employment patterns as now obtain and has obtained traditionally in Barbados. We need to educate towards the creation of a new business class as part of the new way of social evolution in Barbados. We need to educate towards an objective for bringing people into the privilege of ownership. If we are to justifiably boast of pride and industry, such pride and industry must reflect itself not only in the acquisition of skills to be showcased but it must

reflect itself in the privilege of ownership on the part of our up and coming youthful citizenry.
4.20p.m.

If the expenses in education which traditionally have been large are to be justified, if we are to continue to justify such expenditure in the area of education in this country, we must seek to ensure that education produces the type of citizen who is not simply and singularly motivated out of a need to position himself or herself for profit and prosperity but produces the type of citizen who live with a purposeful sense of productivity towards the advancement of his or her community and by extension the entire country. I believe that these philosophical underpinnings must accompany constantly whatever programmes we formulate in the field of education. I believe that this truth is grasped by the Ministry and by the current Minister. I would go on to support in that context the provision of expenditure in these Estimates for the programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture.

I have a big point of disagreement with the Honourable Minister of Education. I would like secondly therefore to call for prominence to be given to biblical instruction in our schools and I do not think that we can accept tokenism in this regard. We need prominence and we need to see this prominence of biblical instruction emphasized throughout the school into the senior levels of the secondary school. I think that this must be pursued irrespective of the lost of certificate status to a subject like religious instructions. I think further that the bible in fact should be among the list of text sponsored and subsidised by the state. As I understand it, right now although the bible is used in many schools, it is not on the approved list of text books for state subsidy. If that is correct, I call for its inclusion on that list so that its cost to children might be subsidised.

I call for biblical instructions or instructions in biblical principles and any value education programme we have should be underpinned in my view by biblical principles as opposed to the offering of religious instruction. I pay due regard to the institutional separation of church and state. I think that is as it should be. Institutionally, church and state should be separated. I pay due respect to the principle of religious tolerance and religious freedom and to the liberalities of democracy. However, I cannot see how the teaching of religious instructions in school is essentially going to foster a spirit of religious tolerance. Conversely, I suggest that the offering of biblical instructions or instructions based on biblical principles will foster that spirit of tolerance.

I would like to make that clear for prominence to be given not so much to religious instructions and the desire to foster such tolerance but to biblical principles with an objective of fostering proper discipline and order among our young people.

I believe Government needs unashamedly and unapologetically to signal in very strong terms that it understands that Christianity is the religion of popular choice in Barbados. By far the majority of our people make recourse to the Christian church from cradle to the grave. We do not have to apologise to the fact that this Government itself comes out of a Christian heritage. I do not believe that we have to apologise that this Government would signal in very strong clear terms its understanding that Christianity is the religion of popular choice in Barbados. This in no way precludes a tolerance for other forms of religious expression. It in no way devalues people's alliance to other religious faith and their practice of these persuasions.

Contrary to popular belief, the bible does not promote a concept of the blessedness and virtue of poverty. That is one of the positions taken by those who promote the view that the bible has naplace of relevance or validity in today's society and certainly not in the school. It promotes the concept that poverty is a thing which of itself is blessed and virtuous. The bible does not promote that at all if one has a fuller understanding. The bible does not promote a concept of the desirability of some inferior quality of life. Quite the contrary, the bible promotes the concept of abundant life and abundant living. Conversely, it promotes the concept of self-development to one's fullest possible potential. I believe that is a concept which coincides with objectives of the Ministry of Education, development of oneself to ones fullest and most meaningful potential.

I believe that is one of the objectives that the programme EduTech is designed to facilitate - the development of one's fullest and most meaningful potential. What the bible promotes is such development. It is not just fullest development of one's potential to the fullest, but it promotes the concept of dignified and disciplined development in the context of a balanced life in the intellectual sphere, in the physical sphere, in the social sphere and in the spiritual sphere.

We are talking therefore of one's relationship to self, one relationship to one's environment, one's relationship to one's fellowman and one's relationship to one's God, however that God is perceived and experienced.

I believe that the Minister of Education largely enjoys the plaudits of Barbadians. I would like humbly to suggest that these plaudits would come in larger measure. I would like humbly to suggest and further to suggest that part of the counters of the problems of deterioration of discipline in the school system, insofar as the school system itself conduces to that, is to reinstate the bible to a place of

greater prominence in the life of the school. Whatever values education or formulation is arrived at, it should be premised upon the promotion of biblical principles.

I should have a bit more later to say on the matter of the cultural aspects of this Ministry. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity again to speak and particularly to speak on this Head, the Head of Education. Believe it or not and it might be difficult for some to comprehend but I also was a teacher at one time in my life.

Asides.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: A well trained teacher too with a Diploma in Education so I think I speak from a position of some information as well.

Sir, let me say again too that I have always been of the belief that a country that spends a lot on its education and upon educating its people obviously is one of the best countries poised to take its rightful place in this world and its development. Although Europeans might at sometimes think that the United States when it comes to education...

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: I have heard the reference to people from the United States being dumb. It is interesting to note that the United States spends more per capita on education than some of the other big countries including Japan and Germany or anywhere else. I noted very carefully that we have been spending somewhere up to 8% of our GDP this year on education. I think, Sir, that is an important point to ponder and an important point of departure. 4.30 p.m.

Now, some two years ago when I was in the Other Place, we debated the White Paper on Education. Since then, a lot has been said about that White Paper and about the whole concept of EduTech 2000. My assessment is that EduTech 2000 is nothing more than a direct translation of putting the White Paper into action.

A couple of years ago in one of the Prime Minister's Budget speeches, he talked about the concept of creating a human resource base that really grasp the opportunities of a world skilled intensive knowledge-based industry and he talked about the information-based concept for society. Sir, I am one who believes that the only way in which we are ever going to be able to take our rightful place is with a workforce of people who not only have free education, but education that is relevant to what is taking place in the global marketplace. Now, I also believe in treating people as individuals, trying to educate them, putting people at the centre of the educational process, not *en masse,* not trying to educate everyone *en masse,* but being able to deliver quality education rather than some form of education in quantity to everyone.

The Minister answered a lot of the questions that I know constantly pop up in people's minds. But, I believe, Sir, in education particularly, the goal keeps on moving, shifting all the time and that this process of reform for the educational system in Barbados has got to be constant, but it has also got to be very research driven. I, Sir, am one who could not understand why, for many years we continued to foster a system which was imposed upon us - a European class-biased educational system - that sought to impose a patriarchal system on what was necessarily a matriarchal society.

What we did in this society, we tried to impose a system that came. I think Derek Walcott was the one who expressed it best, when he talked about schizophrenia in education and he talked about another world being imposed upon our world. And for the longest time we walked around Barbados accepting the fact that 65%, I think the Minister said 60% or 65% of our people come out of school uncertified and that 65% of our people were failing.

One of the interesting things is that we, for the longest time, got up and lauded all of the Barbados scholars and those who went to the oldest secondary schools and we felt proud about them. But we embrace the system that did not suit our society and we went along with it.

There is a Brazilian writer that I read, "Pedagogue of the Oppressed," he was Pablo Frei and he talked about educating people for the process of freedom and then in the next step, what we did was to educate people to be clerks. We educated them first in a post emancipation society to look for freedom and then for the whole concept of being clerks and whatever and then the next step was to try to educate the people for working and then upwards to the middle class. What we in Barbados did, we took this European-based system, imposed it upon our people who did not have the same type of value system being set up and then we walked about feeling good about the Barbados Scholars. All the others that were left behind, we never paid much attention to.

Sir, I believe that for the first time in our history, we are looking at a society and at a Government which is putting people at the centre of what is happening within the system of education, looking at educating everyone as an individual, looking to deliver quality education, and I laud the Minister for all that has been done in that regard.

There are some aspects of it, Sir, that I really am in sync with and agree with. The whole concept of teacher empowerment as a fundamental plan to the new reform, the whole concept of a curriculum development and diagnostic testing for students, being able, because a lot of our students still go to school and we do not know who is blind, who is partially blind, who is deaf, those that have emotional problems, those parts of the system, I laud. The whole concept of flexible transfer and being able to deal with that. We no longer have a system in which people only come up at Eleven-Pius and take an exam to be sent to a school. But, those that are able to move on if you are of age and are able and we have constant assessment through primary and through all the other stages and you can actually go into secondary or move on, then I laud that as well.

I also laud the whole concept of national certification because, as I said before, 60% of our people are leaving school uncertified and then obviously too, the concept of children at risk. I think the Honourable Member for St. John spoke about that. I understand that the initial study said that ten students at almost each secondary school in Barbados, there are 22 secondary schools, then we are talking about 220 students who are seriously at risk in terms of deviant behaviour. Then, Sir, I also laud the whole concept of the committee for transferring students into the Sixth Form. I have not heard anything more about that and that is one of the things I would like to hear about - having equitable access to Sixth Form, to go on to tertiary education.

Sir, but there are some areas for me that continue to be areas that I call grey areas and areas that I am not necessarily totally satisfied with, in the way in which they work. I have looked at the whole concept of partial zoning and the way in which we seek to identify two schools and the other seven schools you can take within the vicinity from where you live and whatever. I am always one who believed when I was teaching that the only way to zone is to zone geographically. You go to the school nearest to where you live. I believe in the concept of schools of excellence.

I believe that schools in Barbados should be designated schools of excellence, whether one should be mathematics, one be in sports, one be in music or whatever. If the child shows some serious aptitude for a particular area that that child, yes can go to that school. Otherwise, you go to the school nearest to where you live. In my own teaching and in my own training, I have never heard the concept of a child being called, as they use now, low achievers and high achievers. I have never heard that when you get into a classroom that the high achievers come down to the low achievers level. I have always heard about having two sets and the low achievers aspire and reach upwards.

I have always been concerned, Sir, about the whole community base as well in terms of how you zone these children. The child in St. Lucy that you put in this aluminium canister and hurling him down to Bridgetown every morning, down to Harrison College, down town to Crumpton Street - you know, like the Duke of York, when you are up, you are up and when you are down, you are down. He has to return in the evening and what happens is that this particular child, perhaps the brightest in St. Lucy is not really operating or doing anything with the other people in St. Lucy. For one thing he goes to school during the morning, he spends a whole day there. He comes back, maybe too late to take part in any kind of activity in St. Lucy. He is also missing the extra-curricular activity too, at Harrison College and he is not even joining in sports and scouts *et cetera*, because he has so far to travel.

I have never, Sir, been one... and I think it needs ongoing study and research to be able to tell me yes that is what it is. It rips out the community base of that particular community as well, because the ones who are the best in those communities are being creamed off and taken somewhere else. He or she comes down to town, spends his time in town, marries somebody in town, ends up getting a job in town and ends up living in town and all of a sudden that one person that could have contributed substantially to the level of community building in that community is gone. 4.40 p.m.

Sir, the Minister spoke about the whole concept of co-education. When I was teaching at the Lodge School, they introduced the concept called co-education. I agree with the Minister on the point that the way in which it was introduced is also important.

For example, at that time I was form-master over a form with 12, 13 and 14-year old girls. When their bodies started to change and so on, how do you expect me to respond and deal with that at any level. There were not even facilities available at the school to deal with those kinds of biological changes in those students. Having girls in those classrooms completely destroyed the morality of many of the boys particularly those who were doing well.

I have not studied it scientifically to come up with all the methodologies and all the changes but I can tell you this. If a fellow did not bat at school on evenings, he could not bat on Saturdays for no long time. The fellows no longer play any sports because they have to get down to town. There was an incident when a student who was a good athlete told me that he was not staying after school to run anymore because he now had a girlfriend and if he did not go to town with her in the bus he might lose her by the time he got to town and that there was no way that he was going to let his girlfriend go down to town with those other boys in the bus so he had to go to town on the bus too. He never stayed after

school to play cricket or any sports and never competed in athletics since then.

I have never studied it but I am telling you, Sir, that it had a serious impact upon the whole concept of discipline, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North said, because the areas in which the boys learned discipline have now been totally taken away from diem. They are not responding well to them at all and that is why we now have this case about our men being in crisis. But they must be in crisis because all the avenues that were available to them in the past particularly through the school system seemed to have been swept away, this whole system of co-education.

There were some areas of excellence that were talked about in the White Paper on Education such as vocational education, horticulture and music. I am one who was worried that the area of sports was not included under the area of excellence which I did not see in the White Paper. Why can we not have something like the Barbados scholarship for a sporting discipline because that is one area that teaches boys and girls to be disciplined and to work together. This is an area that we need to look at seriously.

One of the reasons why the American society is so strong and so developed in the area of continuing education is because their society encourages people to go back to school and one can get a high school diploma at 100 years. If they want to get it at 100 years, that is their business but they can go back to school and get it. In Barbados we also need to encourage our people to go back to school and I know we are taking steps in that regard but I think we need to be able to put more into it.

The whole concept of continuing education in terms of parenting, teaches people to be good parents. I am one who believes that the one-parent family has helped to destroy a lot of the moral base of our society. One of the reasons we are having a lot of the problems that we are having is because we are telling people that a family can be of a one-parent nature particularly if that parent is a female. That is one of the problems, because rather than teaching - and I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West - people the whole concept of self-respect and morals, we allow it to slip through the system.

I think what we are seeing now, is a generation of people basically men and boys who are being raised by only females at almost every level, and they see that person in the house as the real person to learn from. They go to school and the first person they see is a female. Also, all the other areas which were male-dominated in the past have also been eroded by this concept of co-education and in terms of how we deal with sports and the prominence that we give sports within the educational system.

Sir, there should be an assessment of those organizations which play an important role in education and who are given grants from the money voted for education because the Minister of Education has been very generous and very accommodating in this area.

Sir, all of those amateur sporting bodies, such as the Amateur Athletic Association and the Barbados Football Association all of which play a very integral role in the whole process of education should all come under one umbrella body so that they can be able to establish a sports desk or a sports department within the Ministry of Education.

Sir, I lose too many of my athletes each year. Some people may be good athletically but they cannot meet the grade in terms of being able to get a tertiary education because we in Barbados believe that brain and beauty cannot mesh. That is a very strange thing. We also believe that if someone is good at sports or in some other discipline that the person cannot be bright and will not do well academically.

Sir, I want to see the establishment of a sports desk or a sports department within the Ministry of Education because in that way we will be able to channel many of these people in the right direction by being able to create programmes distinctively for them until we are able to create what Barbados really needs which is a sports academy.

We should be able to designate one of our schools as a sports academy. I will not spend a lot of time.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Now you are taking breath, I will like to ask you to wind up.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, there is a lot more I want to say but let me say this, I want to put in a plug for the people of South Michael South and the schools in that area.

Bay Composite School is not in the best condition. I hold branch meetings there and it is not at all in good shape. The toilet facilities and everything there are not what people would really want for themselves or for their children and I would really like the Ministry of Education to have a serious look at it.

Also, the Garrison School has no real recreational facilities and this in unfortunate in this day and age and I would really like the Ministry of Education to have a serious look at this school as well.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Sir, I make my intervention here, Sir, in support of these Estimates for this Head.

Sir, I am going to be rather brief and there are two areas of main concern and these are the achievements in mathematics and general science by our students taking the CXC 'O' levels.

Sir, from my vantage point, I discern almost a fear in our small children for mathematics and problem solving which moves through the society later on. Sir, quite a sum of money is spent in private tuition by parents on students right through the system from primary to secondary school on mathematics and it continues to boggle me as to why this is so.

I know, Sir, that the Common Entrance is really a pumping process, sort of a stuffing process. It is virtually by rote, constant repetition of problems and past papers and maybe, Sir, it is not as visible at that level as at the piDst primary level. Having left primary school and gone into the secondary setting there is more than a noticeable fall-off in performance in mathematics by quite a number of those children who appeared to have done well at Common Entrance. 4.50 p.m.

Sir, I do not have the global figures at hand but I will run the risk to say that less than 50% of those children who enter secondary school actually go on to sit the CXC General Proficiency Mathematics. At the same time, Sir, I would like to know what percentage of that remainder actually goes on to do the Basic Proficiency.

Sir, I have a great appreciation for the course load of the Basic Mathematics curriculum. It is a course load which can compare more than favourably with the SAT programme which is required by students going into the American colleges. Therefore, if a child is good enough to gain a Grade I or a Grade II in Basic Mathematics, then that child, in my opinion, is good enough to hold his or her own mathematically in any North American College.

I would foster the idea that those students who are preparing or who are desirous of going to America to pursue sports programmes, the athletics scholarships that from quite early they be trained and they be prepared for the Basic Mathematics programme.

I am of the opinion that the proficiency Mathematics Syllabus should be more or less reserved for those who are going on to do more of an Applied Science Programme. Therefore, these children who are exposed to the Basic level can hold their own in Basic Commerce. If they go on to do the vocation subjects they have done more than enough to handle themselves quite favourably.

I know, Sir, of a school, and I may run the risk to say it could be representative of most of the newer secondary schools where some 20 children out of a huge roll went up to do CXC Proficiency and out of that 20 less than five would have gained a pass. I am saying, Sir, that is a waste of teacher time and resources of all kinds.

I think what can happen in that instance and in all the other similar instances for the children to actually take the basic at the Fourth form and having gained a Grade I or a Grade El, I would relax it to a Grade II, and use it then as a screening process, you go on to study the Proficiency and write the Exam in the Fifth Form. What that does is to help encourage the child. Rather than pushing it to the Fifth, you do the Proficiency, failing it miserably and being turned off. A Grade I or a Grade II would help to encourage and stimulate that child in the fifth year. What can also happen, Sir, is if a child is young enough to repeat the Fifth Form then the Basic can be done the first time in the Fifth and then the second time around that child could write the General Proficiency.

Sir, it is also absolutely necessary to impress upon the students that whatever they feel, whether they go on to do Humanities - I know of some students who went to Cave Hill and dodged every course that would possibly involve Mathematics so you have to impress upon them from an early age that all the disciplines, be they Sports, Humanities, Vocational that there must be some form of Applied Mathematics necessary.

The other area, Sir, which I mentioned at the opening was the teaching of the Applied Sciences. I know over the years you have had attempts at the environmental, integrated, I do not recall the third one, but all of them seem to have fallen into one problem and that was the problem of finding a teacher capable of teaching two related areas rather than just being sharp in one discrete science. That is to say, you could find a teacher who was as comfortable with Chemistry as he or she was with Biology or with the Atmospheric Sciences as he or she would be with Physics. That, I think, was the underlying problem and in most instances the case where lots of the schools then dropped it from the Fifth.

I am one who favours that no child who is capable of reading, comprehending and reproducing should go on to the Fifth Form without writing a Certificate. He or she does not have to get a Grade I. You are not looking for an Einstein but you should be able to appreciate how climates function, cloud formation, coastal rises, sea levels. You should

understand how the body works, how the trees and the plants around you work. No child should leave school having that basic modicum of intelligence without being able to understand the world in which he lives and how it functions. Sir, I am one in favour of an all-inclusive Science programme once you have reached the Fourth and Fifth Forms.

Sir, I know that there were some problems when they tried to involve the Astrological Science in these integrated programmes because not most of us are exposed to that branch of science unless he or she takes a special keen interest, separate and distinct from the regular curriculum. But, Sir, if this programme is followed, what would happen is children should not see a machine or an engine or even a cellular phone as being magic. They should know how the basic radiation around them is harnessed for them to use. They should know how satellites work.

I am not asking that they be able to solve problems but that they be able to discuss with students of their age when they travel or when they go to study abroad because there is a very, as far as I am made to understand, good programme at the primary level and they are even tested in comprehension and composition at primary. I am not mixing that up with the General Paper. I am made to understand that the comprehension is of such as to search the children*s minds in the basic sciences. Sir, as I alluded to, once man has an appreciation of the sciences then man would not become a slave to the sciences and to technology but rather man would have an appreciation and be able to understand and be able to subject technology to be his or her slave. 5.00 p.m.

Sir, it is just that area. We heard from all of the other areas. We heard some very interesting interventions from other speakers as to why they think the boys are under achievers, of morality and things of that nature, and I think they were very well covered. So, Sir, there are these two areas in the curriculum which I would like to see being fostered and maybe in an attempt to enhance them and foster them even further special prizes at all levels should be given to encourage these children to know and appreciate why maths and the related sciences are a necessary part of our curriculum and our lives. Sir, in closing I would like to ask - she is not in here but I think she is within earshot - the Minister of Education to get on-board with the programme which the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation has gotten on-board at Valery and let us have a good computer section set up there at Valery for the folks in the area. That is all I am asking her for in addition. I know she already has earmarked St. Paul's School and Carrington's Primary as part of the new EduTech programme. Once she lives up to those commitments and the ones which I have identified I am well pleased. Thank you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I would want to make a few remarks on this Head. First I would like to compliment the Minister of Education and the entire staff of Education for performing over the last four years in particular, but one must say and I have made the point over and over again that Barbados can boast of having a sound education system that really dates back to the fifties and even before.

The Minister of Education surely has continued the process to make us proud and one can say that a lot has happened in education over the last four years in particular and I think the Minister of Education has now made herself into an expert in education having not been trained in that field but she has done an excellent job and I must commend her for what she has achieved so far in education.

When you look at what she has achieved one can say that surely the EcluTech programme is by far the one that stands out, a programme that is going to cost over $360 million, a programme that will enhance education, that will bring new technology into education, one that will help teacher training and so on. We would want to see this entire education package come to fruition.

One of the things that I believe that I am happy about is the establishment of a diagnostic and remedial unit in the Ministry of Education. This unit will be able to diagnose problems in learning disabilities among young children. As a teacher I know the problems that young children face and it is very important to detect these problems at an early age.

I believe that we should not only try to detect the problems. The problems must be corrected. I hope that the Ministry of Education having detected the problem would be working towards solving some of these problems. It is a very difficult task, but I visited Cuba two years ago and I saw a diagnostic unit, a regional set up, where the children are tested and they go through a series of training. Eventually the children, most of the time, come back and they do a lot of things for themselves both with mental retardation and physical problems which children usually have from time to time.

I would hope that this unit having detected problems would try to correct some of these problems in children at a very early age. I notice that the primary population is now over 26 000 children in Barbados and from the report they have conducted over 28 000 tests which is commendable. I am looking forward to better results out of this unit because as a teacher I am in contact with many teachers myself and I know the difficulties they have. I am hoping that quick response would be coming forward from the Ministry of Education for these children with disabilities.

I am also happy, Sir, that in the field of tertiary education more students are being taken on at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, more children are now into Community College and more disciplines are now being taught and this is a good thing for education in the wider Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the entire educational system one cannot divorce the society at large because the school is really a product of the society. Sometimes we blame the schools and the children but what about the society? What about the homes? What about the parents? Of course, I understand that the Ministry of Education is now having a programme to help not only teach a programme to parents but also bring parents into schools at some intervals to help with the children. I believe it is good.

We need to do more than save the children at the schools. The teachers and society must be able to do some of the things that the Member for St. Michael West spoke of today. It must respond to some of the teachings of the Bible. They must respond to some of these things that have been discussed by the Honourable Member. The society and the schools must work together because they are not separate at all.

The other question of why men are marginalised. It is my feeling that men are not being marginalised. I think men need to be given more opportunities within the school system. I see a Ministry of Education where the majority of the officers are now females, the majority of the heads in the system are females. I understand that many males have been applying to schools but sometimes I do not know why they do not get the jobs. I would hope that men are given opportunities. Some people believe that it is the pay. I have heard of cases where men prefer going to more lucrative professions other than teaching but surely men should be made to feel more comfortable within the educational system.

I would want to see the Ministry of Education attracting more men into the profession. They have to do so as a matter of urgency because too many young men are now not performing in the school system, sometimes behaving like sissies, sometimes they are not behaving the way we used to do in the school system. Too many guys are not playing cricket. They are not playing football. It is because they seem to believe that they have to face a female teacher, that they have to sit next to a young girl and this can cause some problems. After twelve o'clock if a guy goes to play cricket and he has to sweat and it is hot he is not going to do it because he has to come in and sit next to a young lady and is very conscious of his appearance. I believe we need to attract more men.

If there is going to be a co-educational system I feel that we should have all guys in a class and all girls in a class. I think it can still be co-ed but I understand that some schools are trying that model where we have all boys in one class and all the girls in another class. I understand that is working very beautifully. I am informed that the Ministry of Education will at least do more of that in the school system.

I do not know what the final result of the testing is but I am looking carefully at that position and I hope that the Ministry of Education can do more of that kind of co-education that I have spoken of.

I am also worried, Mr. Chairman, about other changes in education which I would like to see. I believe that the Ministry of Education has held on to a lot of traditional things. For example, schools still start at eight forty-five on mornings and close, I think, at three o'clock now. I think in a system where you have EduTech, where children learn faster, there is no need for children to go from eight-thirty in the morning to three o'clock in the afternoon. Is it not possible to have a shorter school where children are exposed to technology and allow them to be involved in more sporting activities.

I also believe that all primary schools should have proper playing facilities. I speak of my constituency, St. Judes School, where they are without adequate playing facilities.

I would also want to stay in the field of culture and I hope the Minister would come back and let us know what is happening in culture in the schools. There is a lot of talent coming out of Workman's Primary School, culture, dancing and a lot of drama. I know that the Ministry of Education was giving schools $24 and $30 for art and craft and I hope that is not the situation now. I hope that more could be done to promote culture and drama within the schools to allow young people to get more involved in these sort of things. I believe that between 8.45 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. could be used for teaching and after 1.00 p.m. could be used for cultural activities, drama and so on. The Minister has promoted a lot of activities like African studies and culture - she is very well versed in culture - arid! think that these are the things that can help them in the Ministry of Education. 5.15p.m.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that at some of the schools, the school plant needs to be upgraded. There is need for better facilities, better lighting and better seating at the schools. I think that all schools should have staff rooms and teacher points. I know that the secondary schools have some of these and I think the primary schools should have them as well. I think that the primary schools' accommodation needs to be upgraded and I hope that EduTech 2000 would do more

of this. I alsQ believe that the days of chalkboard and teacher should be changed and I hope that with the new dispensation and with this new technology that we can have the Ministry of Education beaming their new computer software into the school system. I hope this would be possible. I know that as we go into a new century the days of chalk and talk will be a thing not necessarily of the past but it will take a secondary stage.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute left.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: There is a need for a lot of change in education. I know that the Minister has made a lot of changes and I know she has done her best and there is a lot more to be done. I am very confident that the Minister will do more in this period. I have not talked at all about the Youth Development Programme but I know that is doing a good job. In my constituency for example, five youth groups have sprung up and they are performing a good job within the area and helping young people to get involved. I am comfortable that the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs has really tried to do a good job.

Thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, one of the features which attracts me to EduTech 2000 is its attempt to answer fundamental questions. What are we educating people for? Not why are we giving people education, but what are we educating people for? In order to answer that question it seems to me that the Ministry of Education went to the trouble of trying to determine the human resource needs and requirements of the 21st century, that they have regard to the kinds of skills which would be needed in the marketplace, that they would be cognisant of the fact that this really has become a technologically based world where even the simplest instruction, the simplest task can now be performed by use of technology or with the assistance of technology.

I remembered in 1991, being on holiday in New Orleans and I was completely amazed at the fact that the waiter came to our table, asked what we wanted and went back to a computer. Certainly in 1991, we are talking now eight years ago and computers were not as widely used in Barbados then as they are now and I was completely amazed that this waiter went back to the computer, keyed information in and came back to our table and informed us how many people there were in the restaurant at that time, how many orders, of the specific orders we had placed and how soon he would be able to bring our order back.

Immediately, I said to myself, if this is happening in the United States of America, it really is only going to be a matter of time before everybody who wants to work as a waiter or waitress, in jobs where we thought apart from courtesy and the ability to serve, minimal academic skills were required, are going to have to be technologically aware. They cannot be computer illiterate. They will have to come to these jobs having been sensitised and exposed to computers, to how they work and being familiar with the technology.

In Barbados now it is happening. You go into certain restaurants in Barbados, some of them in the GEMS Project even and the keyboards are there in the dining room and the information is being keyed in and they are receiving and reading information from it. The whole job market is being transformed by the use of technology in the marketplace. As the labour market is further transformed, we have seen in the last decade and in the last five years in particular a shift away from the notion of security of tenure in the international labour market where you go into a job and you are able to stay in that job until retirement or death or until you leave to go into another job and where minimal upgrading of skills are needed.

The labour market is changing rapidly and this notion of security of tenure is disappearing into a rapidly dynamic environment where the employee skills have to be constantly upgraded and where you have to keep making sure that you are relevant and not obsolete in the new marketplace. Technology has been able to effect that transformation.

More and more we are getting into notions of flexi-time. People working from home because of the use of technology you can stay at home and key your information into your computer and by use of modem, transfer it to another machine that is in your own office where a Secretary or work mate may pick it up or you can send it out to your customers and consumers whoever they are. As the Honourable Member for St. Thomas keeps saying, people are not using the Post Office as they used to in the past because there is no need to.

I was actually amazed last year when I decided as part of my constituency effort to establish a website and an e-mail address, my constituency was the first to do so, I think we set up probably in November or so, I was amazed during the course of the election campaign because I had no idea how many people were logging on and reading. In the first week that the website came on stream and our e-mail address was published, there was a slew of e-mail from people in the constituency, outside of the constituency and to my amazement from Barbadians living outside of Barbados. During the elections campaign something like 200 messages were received from constituents.

Now, that says something about the number of people who are computer literate, who are using the technology to communicate with one another and even to date one another.

People are telling you now that they are meeting partners and prospective partners by way of computer. Really, it is transforming our social interaction and our social relations with one another because the child who previously ran about and played cricket and pulled up the stumps and went home when he got vexed, can now remain vex forever because he can play cricket on his computer and he does not have to interact with you. He can be a Brian Lara on his good day or on any day of the week by reference to his computer.

It is important that we have at this time a programme like EduTech 2000 which is going to prepare Barbadians for what is happening in this rapidly changing marketplace and what is happening at the level of technological development. If Barbados is to remain recognised as being in the forefront with its literacy rate and its quality of education then its competence and familiarity and sensitisation with the technology are going to be important. 5.25 p.m.

It is clear that as the new world order continues to emerge more and more we will be thinking in terms of a 'boundary-less' world-in terms of geographical boundaries where space and distance do not have the same implications for communication, where access to individuals is rapid, where the vendor can get his product to the marketplace and out to a potential market, not just simply by use of the technology, but rapidly. We thought that the fax was quick, but now the capability of going on the Internet and having literally at ones finger tips a wealth of information on which one can draw, really presents the modern children an opportunity for learning which should not be escaped. And that we are carrying that opportunity literally to their laps, to their finger tips, to their homes, to their schools, is something to which my colleague, the Honourable Minister should be commended.

There must be linkages in my view, not just with schools and homes and civil society but there must be some linkage between the Ministry of Education. I imagine that we will hear of those linkages and the Ministry of the Civil Service in its Public Sector Reform effort, because we really have to ask questions about public sector reform. What are we reforming for? Sometimes I hear that we are reforming for efficiency but I do not believe that efficiency should be a goal of a reformation process. It should be part of the output, but it should not be the goal.

If in fact the public sector is going to be reformed, what size public sector are we going to have in the future? What are going to be the skills that persons who work in the public sector are going to need? If in fact we are going to have a Government Service, a Civil Service that continues to deliver services, that is, Sir, are we going to be selling chicken wings at the B AMC as we do now? Are we going to be collecting refuse as we do now? Are we going to be directly concerned in goods delivery in a way that we are now or, is the Public Sector going to become a largely regulatory agency rather than being directly involved in service and goods delivery?

If in fact the public sector is going to be largely a regulatory agency, then the kinds of skills and training that the public sector will need in the future are perhaps radically different from the kinds of training that is now being delivered.

Therefore, EduTech has to be asking if it is going to remain relevant, wonderful though the concept and objective currently are. If it is to move at the same dynamic pace and respond to its market, then it is going to have to be perpetually asking the questions, what are we training people for? What kind of a public sector are we trying to achieve? What is the labour market of five years from now and ten years from now going to be like? Are we going to be training people to work from home? Is it that we want to create, a new generation of citizens who are so technologically aware that they will then in turn be a powerful lobby group or influence group for their parents? What kinds of futures and what kinds of skills is the labour market of the future going to be calling for? It is these questions that the EduTech project must be answering and the answers cannot satisfy for an indefinite period when given, because the answers will change and will continue to change as the labour market changes, as public sector reform continues to evolve, to emerge, to improve, to go to different planes.

I am curious to see, how in fact, EduTech 2000 will continue to go beyond this period of initial conceptualisation and implementation. It imposes, in my view, on other Government departments and agencies to really answer the question, what are we doing in our own department and what form, what shape, what mode do we expect our departments to be in five, ten, fifteen years from now? Unless that question is answered, then the Ministry of Education cannot answer the questions, what are we educating our people for? What are you educating them to do? What skills do you want to invest in them? What kinds of citizens do we want to see in the future?

It is clear that Barbados has moved beyond being a mono-crop economy, sugar, to a more diversified economy and now to a more service oriented economy. It is a fascinating thing. I found out only recently, Sir, that Barbados is the second largest maker of sails in the world. Very few people know that. That a little country like Barbados, up there, I think in St. Philip where the factory is, is the second largest manufacturer of sails anywhere in the world. I heard the Minister deliver a speech in which I was most impressed, when she spoke to the issue of excellence.

It was at the last graduation of the Barbados Community College. She made a point which was very relevant that irrespective of size, irrespective of origin, irrespective of ethnicity, we must in ourselves develop a mind set and culture of excellence for which we must constantly strive.

My own view is that now there is an opportunity presented to us, if we get the answers to the questions right, and we cannot do plain multiple choice with the questions, it really cannot be a guessing game. We have to get the answers right, which means that we are under a duty to go through a serious cerebration process to merge at the end of that process with what are the paths on which we want Barbados to walk, what are the steps on the ladder on which we must rise to excellence and to future development. We have to get that process right.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think at this time the Honourable Member should wind up. The guillotine is coming down at 6.00 p.m. and we want the Honourable Minister to have sufficient time to wind up.

Hon. Miss H. B. THOMPSON: It is not my intention to rob her of that time, Sir.

Let me congratulate the Minister and Ministry on an excellent project and I urge them to continue to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of Barbados as we go into the 21st Century and beyond.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by thanking all Honourable Members on both Sides who spoke in this debate and to assure them that I certainly have taken note of their many and varied concerns and where it is possible for us to respond to those which have not yet been responded to, it would certainly be the intention of this Ministry to look into that during the course of this year.

May I say, Mr. Chairman, that many questions have been asked. I have dealt with some of them already and I will address some of them before I sit, as well as to address some issues pertaining to culture which, unfortunately, the guillotine will rob us from reaching fully today. But, I do believe that we do need a full scale debate on culture in this Honourable Chamber before the end of this year and it is my intention to seek to bring that about.

Sir, we in Barbados - and I want to underscore this point - have provided for in the Estimates of Expenditure of this year, a provision for the Ministry of Education - and I am not talking about Youth Affairs and Culture now, Education, that is approximately equivalent to 8% of our GDP. I do not think that many people understand the significance of that.

Throughout the entire hemisphere, developmental institutions are requesting that countries seek to target 6% as an ideal investment that is capable of bringing about sustainable growth to their economy and improvements in the quality of lives of the people of those countries. We have been able to achieve and believe enough in the future of this country to place our investment in education in these Estimates of Expenditure on or about 8% of GDP.

I want to first, therefore start off by thanking the Right Honourable Prime Minister as Leader of this Government and this country of having the vision and the confidence to believe that our medium and long-term economic programme has as an essential equation, the human resource development within our shores. 5.35 p.m.

That the/future of our people will essentially deliver us into a period of prosperity that can be sustained where we can eradicate poverty. Where we can deal with issues pertaining to the productivity of our economic sectors and where generally, as those persons charged with the responsibility of ordering the affairs of this country, we can ensure that there would be an outcome of the improvement of the quality of life for our people.

I want also, Sir, to use this opportunity to thank the staff of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture. Sir, the staff in that Ministry has worked beyond the call of duty over the course of the last four and a half years and continues to do so. I may not always be the easiest person, in that being of this generation I have instant expectations having been aculturized in a generation that believes in instant food, instant money, instant everything and perhaps, Sir, I have therefore impressed upon them my determination for instant results very often. May I say that they have more than met the challenges and the requirements and it has been a pleasure, Sir, to continue to work with them and I hope, Sir, that we would continue to achieve more in the interest of Barbados and in particular Barbados' children.

I want to thank also the schools, the leadership and teachers of the schools because the longer you stay in this Ministry the more you recognise that really and truly you are but the smallest part of th& equation and that truly it is that teacher, in that classroom, with that child, that is going to make the difference. All that we discuss here and all that we provide for here can only result in something if we have that level of commitment and dedication on the part of that teacher, that child, that parent and that community. Because learning at the end of the day, Mr. Chairman, Sir, learning is a partnership. A partnership of various groups of people who

come together to bring about a specific outcome and a specific ability within a child to be able to build upon that knowledge and skills base.

In terms of the specific questions that were asked, may I say that the Children At Risk Programme which the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Michael South asked about - that programme which we called the out of school programme at the Edna Nicholls Centre will in fact actually start on the 19th of April. Part of the reason for this has been our difficulty in obtaining furniture from the Central Purchasing Department who has been responsible under Government's financial rules for the ordering of that furniture, plus a delay late last year in the civil works programme.

Equally, Sir, I want to address the question of the plea from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who requested that we look at the whole concept of biblical instruction *per se* as opposed to religious education. Can I give him an undertaking, Sir, that that matter would certainly be put before the technical section in particular the curriculum section. The Senior Education Officer of curriculum is here and I trust that that matter would be addressed from a policy perspective within the Ministry in respect of the whole question, Sir, of religious freedom and the other question raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Part of the difficulty we face is that in a society that becomes increasingly democratic and independent, one has to constitutionally provide for religious freedom of expression and to that extent we cannot ignore the religions that are of the various children in the schools. And while Christianity may be the dominant one, we still cannot force a child who is not a Christian to undergo that form of instruction and we would have to make alternative provision for those children which may require broader training of our teachers to accommodate those factors but it is not insurmountable.

I agree, Sir, that discipline in a way is probably the largest problem facing this society and to the extent that it faces the society, it faces the schools and we have, Sir, to construct a partnership between the church, the parents, the communities, all of Barbados in seeking to fight the battle against indiscipline. It cannot be done by one sector alone. The influences which continues to lie before our children whether in the form of television or other music, or whatever else, will always be there unless you want to shut out their interaction with the rest of the world which is not possible.

To that extent what we need to do is to produce children who are capable of thinking for themselves. In my introduction I made the point that for as many economic reasons there are for doing EduTech, there are as many social reasons as well, because we must be successful in producing a child who can think for his or herself, who can reason and who in spite of temptation has the capacity to reason and the values to know that this is not the route for me to follow.

I am interested, Sir, in hearing all the talk particularly as it relates to boys and girls about the need for more male teachers. I do not deny that there may be a need for more male teachers but it is interesting that at no stage in the debate or at no stage when we hear this matter being discussed, did we hear the same men making this call, issuing also a call to the fathers who are the strongest possible role models any boy child can have to assume responsibility for helping to carry that child through the rights of passage, Sir. I believe, Sir, that this society will be fooling itself if it want to put all of the blame on issues such as co-education rather than accepting that there are other social problems that have become endemic including the extent to which men have reneged from their responsibilities as responsible fathers in this society. It is not that there is any higher percentage of single parenting today. I truly believe that before at least men accepted where there was an instance of them having children outside of the context of a marriage tl\at they still accepted responsibility for the rearing of that child.

I only have this to say, Sir, that I do not know yet of anybody other than Jesus who was born without the help of a man. Every child has a father and we must therefore seek to ensure that when we make all those other calls that we also issue a call for men to accept their responsibilities as fathers in this society.

I do not know, Sir, whether it is that persons would wish us to reduce the achievement of girls for that of boys. I do not have any special favour for girls or for boys. I believe that we should seek to ensure that each child can be educated to the maximum of his or her ability. But where we have to put special policies in place we have done so, as with the affirmative action programme for boys.

I will not be one of those who are saying that the only reason the West Indies Cricket Team continues to fail today is because it is the last bastion of male exclusivity and domination. Perhaps if it wishes to come back on track it should follow every other institution in the Caribbean and finally allow women equally to have a right to play on that team just as men do. Perhaps we would see a difference in outcome in the fortunes of West Indian cricket. They would do a better job than these now. It is only a matter of time, Sir. We may be laughing but I truly envisage before I die that the issue of joint sports teams will become a thing throughout the world. I expect this to be a very controversial

debate but I truly expect that it will happen. Nobody expected a century ago that women would be voting far less being in this Honourable Chamber. 5.45 p.m.

Sir, we have continued therefore to implement a number of programmes that we are seeking to improve the quality of education. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke about a need for life-long education. Sir, we are trying in the delivery and design of a national certificate which would be separate from the CXC General Proficiency, that will be modular in nature so that people can go back and access that certificate at any day and that in a way will help us to deal with the thousands of people who have left school without proper certification. In fact, Sir, we should be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the CXC for the design of that national high school certificate for them to implement for us and we should be signing that Memorandum of Understanding within the next six weeks. I look forward that it should be implemented within the course of the next eighteen months but it will allow anybody at any age to be able to go back and access what is the equivalent of a national high school certificate.

In terms of cricket - let me go back. I forgot to say that in all seriousness we do have a vested interest however in the production of excellent cricketers as has been possible in our history. To that extent, the Ministry of Education will be seeking to engage and have had discussions in principle and will be concluding shortly an agreement with both Desmond Haynes and Gordon Greenidge to assist in the coaching of cricket generally and throughout our school system. We believe that the interaction and the coaching that will come from them will not only deliver to the children the skills but they will also provide a source of inspiration for the youngsters in the belief that they too can be a Greenidge or a Haynes and play for the West Indies cricket team.

In respect of EduTech, I would not want to finish this debate without making a document of this Honourable Chamber both the loan contracts, the Caribbean Development Bank loan contract and the Inter-American Development Bank loan contract and I would ask, Sir, that both of these loan contracts which govern the terms of the loan, US$87 million from IDB and US$33 million from CDB that both of these loan contracts in fact govern the terms of those loans. I believe that they are such sizeable loans that for me to fail to make them documents of the House and I give the Honourable Chamber t ie undertaking that I will actually lay them, the next time that this Honourable Chamber meets.

Sir, I just want to spend a few minutes on culture. I know that the guillotine will come at six and there really is not much more time for anybody to speak. This Government has a view of culture and what we must do in culture in this juncture on a number of levels. We see culture truly as a developmental tool, the way we eat, the way we talk, the way we move, all of that is impacted upon by our culture.

Our productivity in terms of our capacity to make gains and be competitive all have a symbiotic relationship with our culture and therefore to the extent that we do those things that will preserve aspects of our heritage, aspects of our values we must do them. That is why, Sir, I introduced into the school system that programme in relation to stilt walking, tuk band and Landship because the Landship is the oldest indigenous service organisation in this country.

There is no other service organisation, not the Rotary, not the Kiwanis, not one of them that is as old or has provided as distinguished service as the Landship throughout the course of the last century and a half. We believe that we have a fundamental duty to protect aspects of our heritage as well as to engender the continuation; and the best way of doing that is by ensuring that the children in our schools are exposed to it from early, that where there is need for allocation and modification to reflect the different times that we do that while not troubling the core value of that organisation and the purpose for which it was formed.

We also recognise that within the area of culture there is the ambit of the cultural industry. This Government over the last four and a half years has done more for the facilitation of the cultural industry than perhaps any other government. In the area of music, Sir, not only have we given duty free access to all input and equipment for recording studios but we have also allowed for the importation of local CDs free of duty. We have also put a regime in place for duty free access to professional photographic equipment and we have also added to this the regime for small businesses to which all artists are entitled as well.

Many artists in fact have and run small businesses and they therefore can benefit from the incentives the Prime Minister announced in his Budget last year, the separate corporation tax of 25%, the access to technical assistance through the Ministry of Industry and the IDC, the access to the innovation fund, the access to equity. We, therefore, have sought to put a regime of incentives. This goes on top of the fact that the Income Tax Act only requires people to pay taxes on fifty per cent of your royalties and this goes on top of the fact, Sir, that under the export tax allowances any foreign exchange earned outside the country you can get an export credit in the computation of your tax liability. This goes on top of the last measure which was put in place before the election which was the amendment to the International Business Companies Act allowing Barbadians to own IBCs

and therefore be able to trade in their cultural services outside of the region and to be subject to a tax liability of two percent and declining. All of this has been put in place for the facilitation and fostering of the growth of the cultural industry music, and to a lesser extent art and crafts.

Sir, we have also recognised however that in addition to the development of these institutions and those measures that we must seek to develop institutions that can truly govern the ordering of business within that particular discipline. It is for this reason, Sir, that these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure reflect a line item of the first amount of money that will be spent in the establishment of a national gallery of arts.

This will be done over a phased period and we expect that over the course of the next four years this is the length of time we believe it will take for the full establishment of the national gallery of arts that the first set of funds will be spent during the course of this financial year.

Equally, Sir, we will be establishing this year a national school of dance and that national school of dance will not only be seeking to train trainers but will also be having a number of centres to expose all Barbadian children to dance with the ultimate desire that within three to four years we should be in a position to form a national company of the performing arts of which dance will be an integral part.

We will also this year be advertising for persons interested in entering a joint venture for the redevelopment of the Empire Theatre because we believe that we can no longer leave it without any further action. We believe that it should be pursued as a joint public/private sector project with the National Cultural Foundation holding Government's interest in the property and seeking to have a joint partner. Those advertisements should be going out before the end of April for expressions of interest.

We will also be establishing within the National Cultural Foundation and these Estimates speak to it, a book publishing company that would speak not only in the area of arts but would speak also to the publishing of educational books. It also would be an opportunity not just for literature writers but for teachers who want to publish their books to have a vehicle within this country that is capable of working as a joint project with them, to publish materials for domestic use within our school system but also for export. I believe it is critical because we spend too much money buying other people's materials rather than having the outlet to create our own. I therefore look forward, Sir, to the establishment of that book publishing company within the National Cultural Foundation.

Sir, the Film Censorship Board. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West served with distinction as Chairman and in fact has laid the foundation for us to be able to move into full censorship of videos and during the course of this term we will also be censoring videos comprehensively and I hope that that would meet the interests of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. We will require the cooperation of the Royal Barbados Police Force because there is no sense having a programme of censure unless you have the capacity to enforce the breaches of the law and the regulation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I want to come to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. In a large way, Sir, that has been the most successful heritage institution within our domain and it continues to be the most successful and the most pro-active. They have expanded tremendously their educational programme for the schools and will continue to do so helping us in the production of materials not only using the site at the Garrison but using the one at Holetown which was just opened. It will also be responsible for the interaction with the slave group project which is being undertaken by UNESCO and the committee on which this Government has representation.

We continue to provide funds for the Museum and we do so because we see it as critical. They have however major problems facing them in terms of their plans and we will have to find a way of helping them to refurbish their rooms which are in need of major repair. We also believe that the publications the Museum has been doing in respect of their Journal is one that should be in the house of every Barbadian and I believe that we should be encouraging them. Certainly within the school system at the level of fifth and sixth forms, it should be required of all of our students to read and participate in some form of subscription to those.

I want to thank the Director of the Museum who has done not us alone but this country proud and who in fact was elected as the Chairman of the International Council of Museums last year and who was also elected as our Director on UNESCO and who since her election to that body has done much to bring more benefits to us as a country largely because of her presence there at the board meetings in Paris twice a year.

Sir, we have tried therefore in these Estimates to place an ambitious programme that has been designed to further Government's overall economic programme as well as a programme in the social sectors to improve the quality of life of people in this country. We believe that the mandate given to us January 20th justifies our continuation along this line

with policies previously started before the elections. Sir, it can only happen with greater cooperation between Ministries, between sectors within the country and generally with the mobilisation that all of us in this country are working towards a single goal with the hope of a single outcome to the improvement of the quality of life in each and every Barbadian. I thank you Mr. Chairman.

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

Heads 15 and 16 were called and passed.
6.00 p.m.

HEAD 17- OMBUDSMAN- $185 169

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 17 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 18 - AUDIT- $935 057 (as amended)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 18, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (as amended) - $65 537 929

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 19, (as amended), stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 21 - MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (as amended) - $15 961 692

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to move that Head 21, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH (as amended) - $194 568 789

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 23, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 24 - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION (recommitted) (as amended) - $59 905 460

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: I beg to move that Head 24, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (as amended) - $40 228 238

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to move that Head 25, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES (as amended) - $35 827 554

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 26 stand part, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 27 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT (as amended) - $86 779 381

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to move that Head 27 as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
- $21 413 825

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 28 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 29 - OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS - $253 121

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 29 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL
(as amended) - $41 214 350

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 30, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE (recommitted)
(as amended) - $27 860 206

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that Head 32, as amended stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 33 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SPORTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM
(as amended) - $27 850 508

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to move that Head 33, as amended, stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORT- $79917851

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 37 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LANDS (as amended) - $27 222 226

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to move that Head 38, as amended, stand part, Sir.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 50- POST OFFICE- $11 491 234

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 50 stand part, Sir.

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

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

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2, as amended, was called and passed.

Clauses 3-4, were called and passed.

The Schedule, as amended, was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee, with amendments, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 1999. 6.10p.m.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $4,260,387.00 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 1998/99 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 7 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION AND THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 10 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION

HEAD 12- PARLIAMENT- $449,988.00

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the supplementary provision in this account is required to meet the additional cost of constituency allowance following the regrading exercise that was done in respect to Constituency Assistants last April and also to pay gratuities to the staff of former parliamentarians.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This one could not have been foreseen.

I therefore beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture who had to attend a funeral which he could not get out of, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part. In so doing I wish to advise Honourable Members that the components of this sum of $884,537.00 is made of $160 000 in respect of Personal Emoluments to cover the payment of temporary and un-established staff, other allowances and to substitute for overtime to the end of the financial year. Travel Charges for staff- $22 000; Rental of Property - $9 660 is in respect of Sanitact equipment. Maintenance of Property $178,128. Those funds are required to settle outstanding debt to contractors and to reimburse Cabinet Office in respect of funds which were used from the contingency vote of Cabinet to do repairs to the cold storage unit at the Bridgetown Public Market. There is also the sum of $465,090 in respect of Operating Expenses. That includes disposal of offals, cleaning and pumping wells at markets and so on.

I beg to move therefore that Head 25 stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, under Head 25 under the Ministry of Agriculture one observes that under the Head of Market Facilities that a large sum of money has been asked for. When one looks at the plight of the people who operate within the market, one will recognise that even though we are spending this supplementary along with other sums of money that would have been voted before, we are still getting a lot of problems in the particular markets and the people who should be making a living from the markets are confronted with a lot of problems. I would ask the appropriate Ministry - it is true that there is a new Minister and we cannot be too hard on him and that we must give him an opportunity to operate but when one considers who are the one operating from these facilities one must be concerned, Mr. Chairman, whether you are speaking about the fish markets or whether you are speaking...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not have to speak to the Press. This is a matter on behalf of the people of Barbados so do not tell me anything about the Press.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that one has to be concerned that these people who depend on these facilities as a livelihood are confronted every day with one problem or the other whether it is space to utilise or whether there is an ice problem. I cannot understand why every year the fishermen of Barbados must be complaining about ice in this country. Why every year when they come ashore it takes them between one month to two months before they can leave their shores again to go and make a livelihood.

Those people who operate especially in rural Barbados, they will understand the plight of the fishermen who are always complaining that whenever they are ready to go back for a catch, they cannot get a supply of ice. I am calling on the Right Honourable Prime Minister to make sure that these matters be brought to the attention of the appropriate Ministers and the Government Officials to make sure that the plight of the under-privileged in this country is not frustrated.

Mr. Chairman, as I have been saying in the Parliament, it is regrettable that whenever you have to speak in this House, it has to be a matter relating to poor people and it seems sometimes that the particular problems are not addressed with the speed that you expect them to be addressed.

I am hoping this will be a new period of time where people will recognise that these small people have a contribution to make to the economy of Barbados. Whenever there is a shortage of fish in this country, it means that we have to substitute by using something else. Sometimes it has to be something imported. I am saying that if we want to reduce our food bill we have to make sure that the fishermen in this country have an adequate supply of ice whether it be at Oistins or down at the other market because every year we are getting the same complaint over and over. I sometimes wonder if there are people within the Government sector who feel that these people must come crying to them. I sometimes get the impression that there are people who are happy to hear people begging them as if they feel that the only way they can operate is when they come to beg them. This begging mentality must stop in this country. That is why I am asking the appropriate Minister and the Ministry of Finance to make sure that these problems are rectified. It is regrettable that the small man in this country has to operate, even though he does not want to, as a beggar. He has to be begging even though he wants to work.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, I would expect your support in this particular matter.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: In the absence of'the substantive Minister, I give the Honourable Member every assurance that the Government has heard the concerns raised by the Honourable Member. In respect of ice, those have been repeated in here almost *ad nauseam* by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South long in advance of the Honourable Member's comments this afternoon.

I think there is a problem and it may have to do with the lot of lime in the water but the plants do not seem to stand up very well. To the best of my knowledge, there is a company that is presently seeking to manufacture ice making machines in Barbados specifically for the fishing markets and for export. I believe they are from America. 6.20 p.m.

In addition to that, Sir, I wish to assure the Honourable Member that it is part of the Government's planning to upgrade market facilities, not only fish market facilities, but also other vending facilities. It was unfortunate that the Palmetto Square Market was designed with such a lack of appreciation for adequate ventilation. I remember going to the opening and as soon as I got there the morning, I said I cannot stay because the place is going to be too hot and so it turned out. I walked back out after the Honourable Member for the City spoke. I left. I could not stay and it is something that people are not paying enough attention to, in the design of buildings in Barbados. We need proper sized windows and let in the fresh air instead of all this airconditioning and killing us in here. But that problem at the market across the road in Palmetto Square is being addressed.

The Honourable Member knows that in these Estimates just passed in the Appropriation Bill, provision is made to start the construction of a new market at Cheapside, next to the Post Office. Something is going to adorn that area, Sir, in this coming financial year. In addition to that, the Government is committed to the construction of proper fish vending facilities at Skeete's Bay and at Consett Bay in this financial year.

But, I agree with the Honourable Member and share his concern. We have been hearing about this ice problem for too long and it should be capable of solution and I hope that in the coming year, we will find a solution and put that as a problem behind us. I am obliged to the Honourable Member for raising the point, though, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, but I want to draw to the attention of the House that I have written to the Ministry of Agriculture, Sir, requesting that the facilities at Half Moon Fort be upgraded. Because, when one considers the number of day boats operating from the Half Moon Fort Fish Market and when one sees the location and the facilities that they have to operate in, one must ask himself whether we are going into the 21st Century in that condition, or whether there is a plan by the Ministry of Agriculture to close down the Half Moon Fort Fish Market.

I am saying that it needs upgrading and we should approach that, Sir, as a serious matter and I would also like to see a situation where the request for a road to be built down to Shroud Bay with a turn table and a new market

being built down there will be taken seriously, Sir. As I said already, I am aware that the Minister is not here, but these things must be said, because I do not want any Minister coming into my constituency and telling anybody that I have not requested these things, to get cheap political votes. This is a serious matter and I will make sure that whenever I get the opportunity, I will put it in Hansard, so that I will have something to refer to and I thank you very much.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

HEAD 30 - THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that Head 30 stand part, but in doing so I have an explanation to give to the House. Honourable Members will recall that in the Estimates of last year 1998-1999, funds were allocated to the Ministry under the items 'Structures', in the sum of $5 million. It was our intention then, to start the work on the new supreme court - the new judicial centre. We have not decided what we are going to call it whether it is a judicial centre or supreme court.

Honourable Members will also recall that the Government took a deliberate decision, mid term, to contract its capital programme and that project was put on hold. There is no provision in the Estimates 1999-2000 for the start of that court. But, we have every intention of pursuing off budget, the financing of the court in such a way as to allow the start of construction of the new judicial centre in this new financial year - 1999-2000.

Funds will not appear in the Budget, because we are seeking to fund it differently. We are proposing to meet with a consortium of local finance institutions in early April, the week immediately after Easter to see if we can pursue an offer that was made by that consortium last year, to provide the financing for this Court. The Consortium includes:

The National Insurance Scheme

The Barbados Mutual The CIBC

The Barbados National Bank And, there might

be one other that I cannot recall.

We would seek to have the consortium provide the funding to acquire the property. We are close to agreeing with the owners of the property, the acquisition price and not only provide the funding for that, but also to construct the property and then if we can arrange it with them, Sir, we would like to lease the property from them, with an option to purchase. That is the first type of financing package that we are going to discuss with the financiers, on or about the 8th of April, Sir.

So that the purpose of this supplementary is to allow us to pay all those consultants to whom we are indebted. The project is ready to go. We only need to go to Tender to agree to acquire the land - just go to Tender and it can start. We have no more drawings to do. The drawings are finished, Sir. The model has been displayed since January. We have done the soil testing last year and all the electrical drawings have been completed.

We owe a variety of consultants $1 485 217.40. What we are trying to do in this supplementary is to appropriate from Item 263 - Structures to Item 626 - Professional Services, these funds, from the existing funds in the current year's Estimates. It is just a transfer of a part of the provision from one object number to another, but I thought the House deserved that explanation, Sir.

I am obliged to you, Sir. I beg to move that the Head stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, under this Head, I would like to draw to the Attorney General's attention who happens to be the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that the Crab Hill Police Station in St. Lucy still needs upgrading and there is a need for additional staff.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I just watched this new session very carefully, made two interventions between Monday and today. We are in Committee, and we are only dealing with a Head called Head 30. We are dealing specifically with Supreme Court Subprogramme 248, Supreme Court. 6.30 p.m.

My friend is limited to a discussion about the Courts. If it was general police services he could speak because we are in Committee, Sir. We are not on second reading.

Mr. D. St.. E. KELLMAN: I will be guided by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas on this particular matter. I would say to him, Sir, that we do not need a supreme court in St. Lucy, Sir, but what we need to do, Sir, is to have a situation, Sir, where there is no need for a supreme court and what we just need is additional staffing at the Crab Hill Police Station.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I hope the whole world has heard that we do not need a supreme court in Barbados. He needs something in St. Lucy.

I beg to move that Head 30 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE - $28 368.00

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, this provision is simply to allow us to meet payments for Other Personal Emoluments in the Estimates of Expenditure for 1998-999.

We had a number of persons acting and some others were sick for a while. This provision will allow us to meet the shortfall.

I beg to move that this Head now stand part.

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

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The sum required for the supplementary, Sir, really comes as two Heads. Twenty-five thousand dollars to complete payment on the insurance of property relating to the South Coast Sewerage Project and $ 1.3 million to an outstanding payment to the engineers on the South Coast Sewerage Project.

When the relationship with Fomento y Cubiertas was terminated and the arrangement came to an end, we had to develop a new relationship with the contracting engineers on the project and an account has been in arrears because it had come before the House that we enter into smaller subcontracts for the completion of the South Coast Sewerage Project. In fact work is very much under way and so we have had to pay the contracting engineers for work that they are doing under the new contract arrangement and $1.3 million is outstanding to them up to the end of this financial year. So, we are essentially seeking that sum.

On another note, it was raised very early in the week during the course of the Estimates and I will just like to inform the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that in this years' Estimates sums have been provided to effect repairs to the St. Lucy District Hospital.

I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, we want to change the Explanatory Note to Object 625, Plant, Equipment and Furniture under Head 10 - Governor-General.

The terms of the amendment have been circulated, Sir, and I beg to move that the Explanatory Note as amended be the Explanatory Note.

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

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

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 9 - THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is necessary for us urgently to tidy up a number of matters pertaining to the functioning of the Customs Department.

What is before the House is a set of three amendments or three actions in relation to the Customs Act. One involving a proclamation of a previous amendment, one involving an amendment to the Customs Act Regulations and the third representing an amendment to the Customs Act itself.

In 1992 it was proposed that the Customs Act be amended in order to give effect to the World Trade Organization general agreement on tariffs and trade evaluation code.

Previous to 1992, Sir, a Brussels definition of value of goods for the purposes of customs was used. Under that valuation system, Sir, the notional concept of value was the price payable for goods in the open market.

Many people who have had to import second-hand or used cars from Japan would know of course the difficulties ,that that has from time to time presented to people who wanted to represent that the value of cars was X when in fact on the open market the value was Y. The Comptroller of Customs always had the right to uplift the value if what was represented as the transaction value was different from the notional market value.

In 1992, however, Sir, it was proposed that they move away from the Brussels definition of value to the WTO definition where value refers to the actual price paid for the goods. That is the transaction value.

However, Sir, for fear of lost of revenue, this particular amendment was never proclaimed because in circumstances where the Comptroller of Customs could not uplift the transaction value to reflect open market value it would be the possibility of a lost of revenue accruing.

So although the amendment was moved in 1992, it has never been proclaimed and we are seeking now to have proclamation made so that the Act can be brought into existence. 6.40 p.m.

We are also seeking at the same time, Sir, while the Comptroller does not have the option now to use the notional market values, to confer on the Comptroller under law the ' powers now to take such appropriate action as to ensure that appropriate values have, in fact, been declared.

The House is also aware, Sir, of the persistent problem of under-invoicing of imports. The House is also aware that the penalties for the falsification of documents pertaining to imports are very modest in relation to the volume of imports this country brings in every year. As it presently stands, Sir, the penalty for falsifying documents now stands at $2 500.

The under-invoicing of imports and the falsification for the documents to support that most pernicious defrauding of the revenue is an offence, which we judge ought to be appropriately treated by a more severe penalty. As a result, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the Customs Act proposes to provide for the penalty payable by an importer who falsifies documents or who fails to produce documents required by the Comptroller of Customs should be increased from $2 500 to $150 000 or three times the value of the goods so that the penalty can really function as a serious deterrent. This is the intention. One is not seeing this as a major revenue item. I hope that it does not ever have to be utilised but the truth is that the persistent falsification of trade documents and the under-invoicing of imports by that methodology has been a plague which must now be dealt with.

The amendment to the Regulations to the Act purports to delete Regulation 41 which is going to be consequential upon our moving from the Brussels method of valuation to the WTO method of valuation. These constitute the matters in principle before the House by way of this piece of legislation.

The legislation also provides for an amendment to section 18 of the Customs Act to allow manufacturers to have the licence fee payable on the operation of a bonded warehouse waived for a period of five years as proposed in the 1998 Budget speech.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments I do believe will allow us to come within the line of now accepted international practice where valuation is concerned and while conferring upon the Comptroller of Customs the continuing right to make sure that persons importing commodities into this country do not suppress the value with a view to defraud the Treasury.

There are a number of particularly non-traditional importers who were shocked to realise that the Comptroller of Customs did not have to accept the value that they attached to commodities that were imported into this country. There are people who go abroad and purport to get discounts on cars, for example, import them to this country but the Comptroller under existing law has the right to uplift the value if what is being purported as the price of a commodity bears no relationship to the value of that commodity on the open market.

I remember, Sir, the new importers of cars, particularly, raised a great noise about this because they thought they were going abroad and getting bargains then to find that the Comptroller of Customs was saying that the car has a value and you have already benefitted from the discount from the dealer but you have to pay tax on the basis of the market value. The Comptroller will have the right to verify that the transaction value is a proper value and that capacity is necessary for us to retain in law.

I believe this will put the Customs Department in a better position to discharge its responsibilities to the public.

I beg to move, Sir, that these amendments to the Customs Act as represented in the amendments before the House be now read a second time.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have been making some observations over the years to my party, Sir, and speaking on this particular Bill, one recognises that even though you do not want people to under-invoice, one has to be very careful that most of the times when goods are imported into this country by a small importer the value that is used, and I would like the Honourable Member for St. Peter to listen to this one, is normally the value of the larger importer who sometimes has to protect his territory, and this is a very important point, Sir.

The large importer has to protect his territory and the Customs Department normally would use the invoice from the larger importer. Most of the times these large importers have buying centres overseas and the invoices most of the times are generated overseas from the buying centres which means sometimes when the goods land in Barbados they are inflated because of certain costs which means that the small importer who buys direct and he does not incur certain costs is asked to pay the cost that the larger importers are paying. I say to the Prime Minister to be very careful with this particular matter.

There is also another problem, Sir. We sometimes look at the amount of revenue we might be losing because of under-invoicing but we never recognise that we are losing millions of dollars in foreign exchange by over-invoicing. I think, Sir, that the Customs Department and the Ministry of Finance need to do a very careful study to find out whether over-invoicing is creating a bigger problem for us or under-invoicing.

I am saying, Sir, we need to look at it for the simple reason that whenever there is a crisis in this House, whenever there is a foreign exchange crisis in this country, we need not to look at under-invoicing but we need to look at over-invoicing, and a word to the wise is enough, Sir. Thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the amendment before the House, in fact, treats both issues because it provides a penalty where there is evidence of a falsification of documents. The practice of over-invoicing is a practice that is obviously also a problem as referenced by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy where people in collusion with their foreign suppliers purport to pay more for a good than the good it sells for on the open market on the understanding that the difference is put to a foreign account. That is the reason why Ministers of Finance have historically been so very stringent in not wanting to waive duties and tax payable on imports particularly a wide category of consumer goods imports because a very stiff rate of tax is a deterrent to people wanting to escalate the value of the imports for the purposes of carrying capital out of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in this day and age where there are so many electronic methods of moving funds around that you are going to find that falsification of Customs' documents are going to be registered less and less as a source of over-invoicing. The bigger problem is under-invoicing where persons artificially falsify documents so as to be able to avoid tax liability at the Ports. 6.50 p.m.

I have taken note of the points raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy but will say that the legislation as it is drafted is sufficiently broad and generic in character to be able to enable the Comptroller of Customs to deal with both under and over-invoicing.

In that context, I beg to move 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: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 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 Customs (Amendment) Act, 1999.

ORDER NO. 11 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF A SUM UP TO US$75 000 000 FROM CITIBANK (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO) LIMITED BY THE ISSUE OF SECURITIES ON THE REGIONAL MARKET FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE GOVERNMENT'S CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINKING FUND FOR THE REDEMPTION OF EACH ISSUE OF SECURITIES AND MONEYS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN AND SERVICE THAT FUND

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the context within which this particular Resolution for the raising of a bond up to US$75 million was laid in my second reading speech when I indicated among other things that within the context of the increased expenditure that the Government will have to face this year was an increase in its debt service. Our debt service is projected, as I have indicated, to rise to $483 million and the big increase will stem mainly from foreign amortization which is expected to rise to $58.3 million. I also indicated that 1999 is going to be an unusual year for the Barbados economy because it is going to be the year in which a fairly substantial part of our hotel capacity, Sandy Lane, Hilton and the Welcome Inn groups will be temporarily out of production. The Government therefore had served notice of its intention to raise a foreign loan to offset fully the cost of foreign amortisation as well as to provide some foreign exchange insurance given the climate in which we are operating.

The Resolution before Parliament seeks Parliament approval for us to raise up to US$75 million on the regional Capital market. There is a regional capital market that operates in foreign exchange that has resulted from the fact that certain Caribbean countries allow the holding of foreign exchange accounts. The issue of the securities will be arranged by Citibank of Trinidad and Tobago. We are speaking, Sir, of a floating rate bond issue in the amount of $75 million with a maturity of ten years and with a six-year grace period. Interest on the bond will be tied to the six-month London Inter-Bank Offer Rate (LIBOR) with a premium of 326 basic points which is the same basic points that the Trinidad Government which has the same rating in the market that we have when it recently went to the market for a similar purpose.

Sir, I just quickly want to set this into context of the debt management strategy of the Government, Sir. The House is aware that the second tranche of the Bankers Trust bond of $60 million which was raised in 1994 will be repaid in December. When that $60 million of the tranche of the Bankers Trust bond is repaid we will have a significant decline in fact, in our foreign amortisation. Based on the present structure of our debt, once that bond is repaid in December, our debt service which has declined in recent years is projected to decline substantially over the next five to seven years. The only year in which there is spike in our debt service is this year. The borrowing of this loan therefore will not, since it is a loan with a maturity of ten years, give rise to any debt service problem over the next five to seven years. I want to make that point clear, Sir. We have been very judicious since 1993/1994 in trying to bring down the foreign debt and we have done so. We have not gone to the market unnecessarily. There is a spike this year and we will go to the market but in the next five to seven years we will be faced with declining foreign commercial debt service because of our not having gone to the market since 1992. Therefore, this raising is affordable.

I want, Sir, to let the House know that I will not be splurging. This money is being raised to enable us to meet that $60 million bond repayment in December without any alarm to this economy. Also, because we have very lumpy capital investments that are already supported by international lending institutions such as EduTech 2000, the Airport Expansion and the Sewerage Projects - Government has fairly substantial counterpart facility requirements to support them. We will not be looking to use this financing for general balance support payments. I have given instructions to the Central Bank Governor to sterilise these funds. It certainly will be put into special accounts. There will not be an issue of domestic currency equivalence to bring this money into general circulation to support general consumption in the society. I want to stress that point, Sir. 7.00 p.m.

I do not want to create the impression that we are going to come into sudden possession of $150 million in cash which I am going to unleash on part of this economy. This is in part, Sir, funds to help us meet that debt repayment when it falls due, to allow us to support the capital programme, but to have in reserve, Sir, this contingency amount that would enable us to get through this year, where, as I said, these long-term investments are being made in the Barbados economy to our benefit in the future but to our immediate detriment in the form of reduced foreign exchange earnings capabilities.

So that the Central Bank will put in place, arrangements to have these funds, really in fact sterilised, that we will not release the domestic currency equivalent to the Ministry of Finance and we will draw down on them only for the most strategic purposes, Sir. So that the view must not go forward from this Chamber that we are going to lick out these funds at all, Mr. Chairman. I want the House to understand that. I want all Ministers who have to maintain cost-effective approaches to managing their Ministries to understand that. Too often loans are raised and people feel that because there is an addition to the revenue in the Consolidated Fund and tax revenue, that the time for splurging is upon us. This is not so, Sir.

I remembered in 1990 that Barclays loan should have been sterilised rather than be used to pay regradings and things of the kind. Because it was not sterilised, the domestic currency equivalent was issued that went into purchasing power immediately, that purchasing power and financial imports that meant that the money came in and went out as if nothing had happened. This is intended to be in fact, an insurance policy for this country at a time of very delicate sensitivity in our economic evolution, Sir. And I believe that my second reading speech, with the additional details that were presented here today, should be a sufficient basis on which the House can act to give approval for the raising of this loan, which will be judiciously applied for the purposes of national development.

I commend this Resolution to the House, Sir, and beg that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, just for the record, I think the House should know that the Opposition supports this capital market raising by the Government. The Governor of the Central Bank consulted with us, because I also passed on the relevant information to my colleagues which is, I think a good idea, assuming that things are going well, but that is an assumption I made.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If the Opposition supports the Estimates, it would be crazy at the end of the Estimates which accredited on Government raising sums to help finance this year's deficit, $105 million in commercial borrowing, it then would not make sense for us to come and not support it, unless we were saying that the level of borrowing was too high.

But, I take the Minister of Finance at his word and the evidence is there that this is manageable. I think it is wise, 'yes', to sterilise it and I think it is a good thing that, as Minister of Finance you are able to do that. That is credit to the confidence of Barbados as a whole. It is a credit to the people of Barbados that our country has been able to do this at this time. So that for the record we will say that we have no problem in supporting this Resolution.

At the beginning of a previous debate, Mr. Speaker, Sir, - I am not going to ask for much latitude, the Honourable Member for St. Peter asked - as he usually does, for the Opposition to spend more time coming into contact with the fiscal issues. I would assure him - this relates to this Resolution to the extent that they were talking about financing part of this year's programme of the Estimates - that in future when the Budget comes with the Estimates and the Minister of Finance lets us know what his policy mix is that that is a better platform on which to discuss fiscal issues.

I do not have any dispute if the economic fundamentals which the Government is pursuing are by and large in consonance with those which the previous administration put in place. There has not been a major change in the policy mix since 1992. The Structural Adjustment Programme of the previous Government, by and large in its intent, even though the outcomes may be different was constructed based on certain macroeconomic fundamentals and a policy mix which, to a large extent, has been followed. The Government has been very strongly assisted in its effort by foreign investment at levels which were much larger than had been anticipated even at the time of the Structural Adjustment Programme, and that really is part of the fact that the Government also had a longer lead-up time in the introduction of the Value Added Tax which gave it more strength to efficiently introduce a tax which could have been problematic, had it been introduced in a shorter period of time. And, perhaps one of these days, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, when he is writing his book will consult me on two chapters. I will know which two chapters they would be.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But as I say, the essence of the point is that in a sense the economy of Barbados is-* continuum and it is extremely fortunate that the Government of Barbados is able to say at this time that it can sterilise those funds and that it is able to forge ahead and borrow on the capital markets at a difficult time. It is also an extremely good thing that we have a reasonable market on which we can borrow like this. All of this, again, has come because of reforms other countries have put in place, which have not necessarily been as successful or stabilising as ours. But we are fortunate that the speed with which we stabilised and restructured has meant that we can now benefit from what has happened around us, even though we ourselves may not have liberalised to the extent that those others have fully liberalised.

So this is a good thing and I think that whenever the Government can find it possible, to go on the regional market that it should do so and hopefully as time goes on, other countries in the Caribbean other than Trinidad, because I doubt that you could get countries other than perhaps Belize or maybe St. Kitts going for very small issues, but other countries in the Caribbean would be in a position to be able to go on the market to support major investments, or for other specific purposes which form part of the economic programme.

So, we have no problem with this, and we will give it our support. 7.10p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak on this particular matter. I remember sometime last year, Sir, I told the Prime Minister that I feel that any person who has the dictate of looking after the economy of Barbados should start to look at the capital markets early and to make sure that they borrow when the interest rates are favourable to Barbados.

So, that is why I want to find out from the Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter, whether this is the right time or whether these rates are too high.

I also want to find out from the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter, why is it that in March he is preparing to repay a loan that is due in December. Because it tells me, Sir, that we still have a significant time lapse in our hands. We need to know, Sir, whether this loan is borrowed early because the Prime Minister can see a problem down the road. I would also like the Honourable Member for St. Peter to explain to the House what problems he sees down the road and that is all I would say on this particular matter at this time.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. John for the manner in which he spoke. I will refer to the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because they are very important.

I just want to say, Sir, that at the start of this term, I promised on behalf of the Government to extend every courtesy and civility and facility to the Opposition.

An aspect of that is I believe that the Opposition should see the information that the Government sees where crucial decisions have to be made.

Therefore I required the Governor of the Central Bank to fully brief the Leader of the Opposition on all aspects of this loan and that is how I believe that when the House is in this nature that we should proceed. That there might be a time, Sir, when this Side might be in a similar position again and I would want that, Sir, to be part of our politics. Because there is nothing that I feel we should hide in this country.

In any event there is nothing you can hide in Barbados because any information that is available to one side will invariably be available to the other.

The practice of the Leader of the Opposition getting regular briefs from the Central Bank Governor if he wishes it, Sir, or any informational officer is a practice that I would like to institutionalize. There is nothing to hide.

This is being raised on the regional market and the facts are, Sir, that all of Barbados' foreign exchange in recent times has been raised on the regional market. Our last Citibank loan was raised on the regional market. The loan raised to rehabilitate our sugar industry was raised on the regional foreign exchange market. The loan raised for the Transport Board was raised on the regional market, and I have said, Sir, that Barbados wants to contribute to a regional market for foreign exchange.

We have allowed the St. Lucian Government to raise a loan on our market and last year the House will recall that I indicated that the Government of Barbados will be prepared to allow OECS countries seeking to raise money for budgetary purposes to raise them on our market, Sir.

The truth, Mr. Speaker, is this, that if all of the Caribbean countries were to pool their foreign exchange reserves and to have arrangements for governments to borrow the foreign exchange reserves of each other, we would have enough foreign exchange in the region to develop the region.

Our foreign exchange reserves are in a large part held, I want to stress this point, Sir, the largest proportion of our foreign exchange reserves are held in the form of our holding a US government securities. So, we earn foreign exchange and then we hold them as foreign exchange reserves by lending them to the American Government to allow the American Government to run the affairs of the American Government.

As well, a large proportion running into the hundreds of million of our country's foreign exchange earnings are in fact being used by the American Government to help build the Americas.

I really feel that we have and the idea had been questioned, Sir, that the Caribbean, subject of course, Sir, to appropriate conditionalities, we have to look to having a larger proportion of the reserves of the respective governments in the region used to develop our region rather than to further develop the economy of the United States of America.

That is why after a certain while, Sir, you have to be careful of how you continue to invest in the US Treasuries rather than use some of your own foreign exchange reserves to help build up the economy.

Last year, therefore, we did not have a difficulty with drawing our reserves to build this economy, once you do not do it too drastically.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy asked, Sir, why we are borrowing at this time, Sir. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that as I mentioned, the international outlook is not getting better, it is getting in fact worse. The IMF/World Bank solutions to Brazil still have not yet stabilized the Brazilian economy.

The immediate outlook is that there are no windows of opportunity now for the issue, the placing of sovereign bond issues on international capital markets. The international market hardly would take a bond issue by a sovereign government in an emerging country at this stage. Our reading is that the market is not going to get better, Sir, it is going to get tighter.

The Member is right, Sir. We anticipate that interest rates are as low now as there will go for sometime and therefore if we are going to go to the market, the regional market which is open, the time to go is now.

This is a floating rate bond issue and we are exploring the opportunity of an interest rate swap or a call option that would allow us at some stage if appropriate to translate this from a floating rate bond issue to a fixed rate. But the fact is of course, Sir, that you have to pay a premium over par in order to be able to allow a financial institution to give you the luxury of making an interest rate swap arrangement, Sir.

So, that we are going to the market now, because now is the only time we may be able to go to the market, Sir, and we are going now as well because the interest rate regime internationally is right.

This loan, if it had to be paid today will be at a rate of about 8.6%. But of course, Sir, as I said we have a grace period on the repayment, a six-year grace period and since it is a floating bond, Sir, as it presently stands now, Sir, the loan is about 8% rate which is a reasonable rate at which to borrow.

I would not put the country to be in the prospect of deferring borrowing for further in the year because the international capital market may not get better, it may get worse. This is an insurance policy for the country which has to be secured now or put down.

I want to stress, Sir, of my Ministers, Sir, the Government will be putting down its money, I am not licking it out for foolish purposes, Sir. We have to continue to use fiscal prudence to pay our way.

I thank the Opposition, Sir, for its support in this matter, Sir, and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 12- RESOLUTION TO RESCIND RESOLUTION 15/1998, TO REGULARIZE THE POST OF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT AND TO ESTABLISH A POST OF PRESS SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I regret to having to bring back this matter to the House. It is an indulgence of the Office of the Prime Minister* s Office, Sir.

The House should remember that I tried to consolidate the post of Press Secretary and Personal Assistant into one in order to redress certain problems in the functioning of the Prime Minister's Office, Sir. It really is not a workable solution.

The function of Press Secretary to the Prime Minister and Personal Assistant really cannot be effectively be consolidated into one office.

The range of duties to the Prime Minister's Office are too exacting, Sir, and I propose to have a Press Secretary who relates properly to the Press but I do need a Personal Assistant, Sir, and this is to put that facility in place.

There are many respects in which all of us need better and more ample facilities. The Leader of the Opposition Office need research assistance that it can prepare its reports, Sir, but the truth of the matter, Sir, is that I spend a lot of my time% having to write my own speeches and do a lot of research and other things that really reflect a poor use of executive time.

This is a requirement, Sir, to allow the office to be able to function better, Sir, and I commend it to Parliament.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 7.20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to Tuesday, April 20,1999 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

Speaking, on the adjournment, Mr. Speaker, I would wish to take the opportunity at the conclusion of our annual debate on the Estimates of Expenditure, to offer words of thanks to the officers of the House, yourself, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees who has a giant's task every year at this time. It has been a long week for us. It has been the longest week in the life of the Parliament and Members wish to let it be known that they are deeply appreciative of everything that has been done to facilitate us during these past five days.

We are grateful to the Clerk and the Deputy Clerks, the reporters, all other staff, caterers, those who looked after our security, the technicians who manned the microphones and so on to make our life easier.

It has been a tough week. I would not use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, but I do have some very strongly held ideas about how in a new era we would want to reformat even this debate. Some excellent speeches were made by Honourable Members but to whom do we speak, ourselves and to our officials? We are speaking to the anointed. We are speaking to the converted.

There must be, and I know that there is, perhaps, a better way of doing business. Perhaps we need to be thinking in a new century, Mr. Speaker, that where, I hope, there will have been established standing committees in all of the major sectors of our economy that the Estimates would be much debated and looked at there, not only by Honourable Members and particularly back benchers, but that the private sector might have some access to that process so that when they come to the House they are coming with the recommendations and the criticisms and whatever of the standing committees and it is to those that Ministers would speak.

I would hope that by that time we would have a dedicated channel so that that debate which would be instructive for the public of Barbados so they get a better understanding would be a way to go.

I was very pleased to hear the Right Honourable Prime Minister make the point at the beginning of the debate on Monday that the way in which we structure this debate and the way in which we interface with his Budgetary and Financial Proposals is something that is going to be reviewed as well but in all of these matters...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, Your Honour has a very large role to play in that process. This is your House and I continually make the point. In this new Administration, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate all Members who have spoken. The Right Honourable Prime Minister has already thanked the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the critical support they have brought to the debate in this year of our Lord.

With those few words, Sir, I beg to move that the House be adjourned.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, just speaking briefly on the Adjournment, I do so with a sense of nostalgia as I heard the former Leader of the House acting in that position and reflected on, despite rough battles from time to time when I had more numbers on this Side, I am glad that in her new incarnation that she has a chance of respite from the pressure even of a small Opposition.

I join with her in saying that I thought by and large the debate was constructive. We felt on this Side that notwithstanding the role of an Opposition in an Estimates debate is to probe Ministers, we were also conscious of the fact that this is probably the first time that new Parliamentarians would have almost started their career with an Estimates debate after two sittings. Many of them did not get a chance to deliver their maiden presentations and that new Ministers would have been acclimatising to their promotions, demotions or static roles and therefore we should give them a chance but come next Estimates, it will not be business as usual. We will not be as sympathetic to those Ministers who cannot adequately defend their programmes.

I assume the back bench will join with us because many years ago when the Opposition only had three, I was on the back bench with some very rough back benchers and the back bench proved, in my view, except this may be a self-serving comment but in my view to be even more formidable than the front bench in those days and we helped the Opposition from time to time. On one occasion we voted against a land acquisition.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It did not last for long but the point is that is the role they should see themselves in because we are all here in defence of the people's interest and probably have realised that in politics sometimes the sharpness of the partisanship is only relevant to the public where matters of strong principles are involved and that knocking off the rough edges of partisanship is sometimes helpful in ensuring that the people's business is done. That is the approach that myself and my colleague have focussed on. We hope to bring to the debates over the next year until next Estimates that focus ensuring that the Government does

its job and that all of us as Parliamentarians cooperate, divide when necessary, take principled stances but ensure that the Government's task is done.

I thought the debate was an interesting one without the usual theatrics which Members on that Side generate. I believe that coming out of it that we have benefitted on this Side. I hope that Members of the Government would have benefitted from our comments and criticisms.

I also want to thank the staff who assisted in ensuring that the Estimates which is a very long and tiring debate for us but even sometimes we get a break from it, but for members of the staff they have to sit patiently and serve in very difficult conditions. I want to thank the Clerks at the Table, you, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees who performed the task very well, as well as the other members of the staff for the hard work which they did during the course of this debate.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak briefly as well on the motion for the Adjournment and to say that I entertain a secret empathy for the Leader and members of the Opposition in debates of this kind. I was once there myself having to be a member of a very small Opposition in a week of debates and to rail against a Government and its many advisors can be a very formidable undertaking.

I must say, Sir, on my Side I appreciate the constructive tone of the Opposition to this debate on this occasion and trust that it will be the hallmark of the debates for the next few years. 7.30p.m.

The House is going to thank the staff of Parliament and others. I have a responsibility on this unusual occasion to pay special thanks to the Budget section of the Ministry of Finance. I say unusual, Sir, because the real task of preparing these Estimates began after the election and a Government had been constituted. Ordinarily, the Estimates are prepared beginning December. This year the Estimates began in earnest in late January and early February. The staff of the Ministry of Finance had to work above and beyond to bring these Estimates to the House in this fashion. The task was made much more difficult because Ministers had to be named and there were realignment of Ministries which meant that the Estimates themselves were more complicated to prepare. I want, Sir, on this occasion to enter into the records of this Parliament my deepest gratitude for the work of my Ministry of Finance in bringing these Estimates of this quality at late notice but without any sacrifice of quality. I just want to say, Sir, that I really do hope that this is the last time that the Estimates, which are really the Budget but not seen by the country as the Budget, which it is, and it requires changes to the Standing Orders of this House.

I am not in a position to change the Standing Orders but next year I would like the Budget process to be one process. We give the country Estimates of Government's revenues, Estimates of Government's expenditures and any proposals to make adjustments to revenue and expenditure as one process rather than the two processes. I would really be glad, Sir, if at an early date we could have the changes to the rules of the House that would allow us to make that a reality. I think also, Sir, that the practice of other countries to enrich and deepen the role of Parliament itself in the review of the Estimates should be taken account of.

In other Caribbean countries, in Jamaica for example the Estimates of Expenditure goes to Select Committees of the House and Ministers have to appear before Select Committees of the House and defend their Estimates before they come to the House. I really like that system because this House has a responsibility to make sure that the expenditure is gone into with great exactness and we are not doing it right now. I do not think that the rules should just be changed but the format for dealing with the Budget and presenting it to the House as a Parliament and to the country as citizens ought to be reviewed with the intention of enriching the process and enshrining - I want to stress this point - enshrining the rights of Parliament as a place where taxation is raised and expenditure approved from a prior point of view.

It is not just changing the rules to facilitate a process of public involvement but the role of Parliament in the budgetary process has to be deepened. I say that, Sir, even as Minister of Finance who is jealous of the right and prerogatives of Ministers of Finance, but that Parliament has too limited a say in Budgetary matters and we have to remove from the public's notion and mind the notion of budgeting as a form of white magic or black magic and let the public understand that Parliament is treating the country's budget in the same way that any household would sit down and deal seriously with its own budget.

I commend this view, Sir, to the House.

The question that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, April 20, 1999 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 7.35 p.m.

CONTENTS

'MINUTES

Hon.D.A.C.SIMMONS .....

Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, March 9, 1999 were confirmed.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER 2

Message No. 1/99 from His Excellency the Governor-General.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C.SIMMONS 2

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 - A BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO GRANT A SUM OF MONEY OUT OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND APPROPRIATE THE SAME FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2000 .....

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 2, 5, 9, 12, 14, 17, 20, 83, 86, 90; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 21, 23, 27, 31, 35, 37, 43; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 46, 50; Hon. R. R. Farley, 51,54; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 54; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 57; Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 59; Hon. G. W. Payne, 63; Hon. A. P. Wood, 66, 68; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 70, 72; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 73, 75; Mr. N. A. Lynch, 77; Mr. D. T. Gill, 81.

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL 93

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 93.

HEAD 11 - JUDICIARY ---- 93

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 93.

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT 93

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 93, 100, 102, 112, 125; Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 94, 96, 110, 112, 118; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 97, 116; Hon. G. W. Payne, 99; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 102, 121; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 103; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 106; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 108; Mr. T. A. Prescod, 115; Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 116; Mr. M. Z. Williams, 123; Hon. R. R. Farley, 124.

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE 127

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 127,130,136; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 128; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 136; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 138, 141.

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS … 141

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 141, 144, 148, 164, 166; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 145, 147, 159; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 150; Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 151,153; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 154; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 156; Mr. D. T. Gill, 158; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 161.

HEAD 24 - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANSFOR MATION 168

Hon. H. F. Lashley, 168, 169, 179, 218; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 172,173,194; Hon. R. R. Farley, 174,212; Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, 176; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 178,205; Mr. M. Z. Williams, 181, 183; Mr. L. R. Tull, 183; Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 186; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 187, 203; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 189; Mr. T. A. Prescod, 191; Hon. A. P. Wood, 193; Mr. N. A. Lynch, 196; Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 198; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 201; Mr. R. D. Marshall, 207; Mr. D. T. Gill, 208; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 210; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 214; His Honour J.M.Edghill,217.

HEAD 20 - MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT..... 219

Hon. R. St. C. Toppin, 219, 228, 230, 255; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 224, 225, 247; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 226,233,236,240, 246; Hon. R. R. Farley, 231,234, 236, 237; Hon. A. P. Wood, 239; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 242, 249; Mr. D. T. Gill, 251; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 253.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (reopened)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS..... 238

1. Customs (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

2. Resolution to rescind Resolution 15/1998, to regularise the post of Executive Assistant and to establish a post of Press Secretary to the Prime Minister.

3. Resolution to approve the grant of the sum of four million, two hundred and sixty thousand, three hundred and eighty-seven dollars from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1998-99 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1998-99 No. 7 and to amend Explanatory Notes to Head 10.

4. Resolutions to approve:

   (a) the borrowing of the sum up to $75 000 000 from Citibank (Trinidad and Tobago) Limited by the issue of securities on the regional market for issue of securities on the regional market for the primary purpose of financing the Government's capital programme; and

   (b) the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of each issue of securities and monies necessary to maintain and service that fund.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 238

The Customs (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE.....257

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 257,270,287; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 262; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 264, 285; Hon. R. R. Farley, 267; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 269; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 273; Mr. M. Z. Williams, 274; Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, 277; Mr. N. A. Lynch, 279; Mr. D. T. Gill, 282; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 283.

HEAD 17 - OMBUDSMAN.....291

HEAD 18 - AUDIT (as amended).....291

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (as amended) 291

HEAD 21 - MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (as amended).. 291

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH (as amended) . 291

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (as amended).....291

HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES (as amended) 291

HEAD 27 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTER NATIONAL TRANSPORT (as amended).....291

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS 292

HEAD 29 - OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS 292

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY-GENERAL (as amended) . 292

HEAD 33 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SPORTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM (as amended) .. 292

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT.....292

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS (as amended).....292

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE 292

The following Heads were recommitted and passed:

HEAD 24 - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANS FORMATION (as amended).....291

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE (as amended) 292

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT - ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION FOR THE GRANT OF $4 260 387 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES, 1998-99 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLE MENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 7 293

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 293.

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT..... 293

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 293, 294; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 293, 294.

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY-GENERAL..... 295

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 295; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 295.

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS & CULTURE..... 296

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 296.

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT 296

Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 296.

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL - EXPLANATORY NOTE 296

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 296.

ORDER NO. 9 - BILL TO AMEND THE CUSTOMS ACT, CAP. 66 296

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 296, 298; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 298.

ORDER NO. 11 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF UP TO US$75 000 000 FROM CITIBANK (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO) LIMITED 299

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 299, 301; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 300; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 301.

ORDER NO. 12 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES OF SALARIES AND ALLOW ANCES FOR POST OF PRESS SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER 302

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 302.

SUSPENSIONS . . . 16, 59, 77, 118, 138, 163, 178,201, 216, 239,257,277.

ADJOURNMENT 302

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 302; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 303; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 304.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter) ATHERLEY, Rev. J. J. S. (St. Michael West) CHELTENHAM, Hon. Dr. R. L. (St. Joseph) CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North) EDGHILL, His Honour J. M. (Christ Church West Central) FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East) FORDE, Hon. Sir Henry (Christ Church West) GILL, Mr. D. T. (St. Michael South Central) GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North) KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy) LASHLEY, Hon. H. F. (St. Michael South East) LYNCH, Mr. N. A. (St. Michael South) MARSHALL, Mr. R. D. (St. Michael West Central) MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown) MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East) PAYNE, Hon. G. W. (St. Andrew) PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East) St. JOHN. Hon. Sir Harold (Christ Church South) SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas) TOPPIN, Hon. R. St. C. (St. Michael North) TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South) THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John) THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St. James South) WILLIAMS, Mr. M. Z. (St. Michael North West) WOOD, Hon. A. P. (St. Philip South)