

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 08, 2000.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11:20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker) His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker) Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.(Cantab.) Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc.(Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service) Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)(Leader of the House) Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.(Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition) Hon. Sir Harold ST. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B. Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.(Oxon.) Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc.(Econ.) Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) 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) Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, (Minister of Public Works and Transport) 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 Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture) Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A. Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., (Parliamentary Secretary, the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs) Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc. Mr. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, February 01, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, The Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, February 01, 2000 have been circulated.

I need some assistance on page 2 of the Minutes under the rubric Minutes it is recorded that the Minutes of January 25 were taken as read and confirmed with amendment on the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE. The Minute however does to state the nature of the amendment and it was an amendment to include among those who were present at the previous sitting the name of Miss H. E. Thompson. I am not sure if this is parliamentary practice that you just give the barest information.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have been assured by the Deputy Clerk that the appropriate corrections have been made.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am obliged to you. Subject to that observation and those of any other Honourable Members I beg to move that the Minutes of February 1, 2000 be confirmed.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: 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 report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the accounts and statements for the month of May, 1999 from the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarter ending September 30, 1999.

OBITUARIES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks we have lost two parliamentarians and the father of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is not here and I would not wish to proceed on an obituary speech to his father in his absence.

Mr. Jack Odle was buried on the Wednesday before Christmas Eve. Mr. Jack Odle had been a former representative for the constituency of St. George North for 10 years. He first won a seat in Parliament in the House of Assembly in the 1976 General Elections and during his period of office in this House he

served with distinction as Chairman of Committees in the period between 1976 and 1981 and I recall being in here with him in those years.

Mr. Odle brought to the discharge of his functions an assuredness of the Rules and Procedure of this House buttressed however by a personality that was conciliatory in its nature and that spoke well for a person discharging the duties of Chairman of Committee, duties which require attributes of even-handedness, impartiality, fairness and frankness when it was necessary.

Mr. Odle, of course, came from distinguished Barbadian stock. His father was a particularly outstanding parishioner of St. George. He was one of the early black postmasters and his contribution as a postmaster is legendary in the geography of St. George.

In the eulogy to Mr. Jack Odle we were reminded of his father's willingness to deliver and distribute personally mail for parishioners in the absence of postmen. That was the kind of approach to service that he brought. I believe some of that rubbed off on Mr. Jack Odle because as a constituency representative he was a person very dedicated to the cause of his constituents.

He had an easy manner that allowed him to mix easily with all kinds of constituents, the youth, the middle-aged and the aged. He was equally at home with all groups of constituents so that when they re-christened him Uncle Jack it was I think as a mark of endearment and a show of love and respect that they had for him and I think he wore that sobriquet well. He was paternalistic and to some of us, of course younger than he, it was necessary for that paternalism to shine through from time to time to keep some of us who were perhaps more rambunctious and aggressive and radical along the straight and narrow. What I am saying is that in the councils of the Party he was, if I can put it this way, himself a counsel of prudence and restraint.

I wish to think of Jack Odle, Sir, as one who was very unselfish in his approach to politics. In another few days in another 19 days I would have been in this Parliament 24 years and I have seen politicians on both sides of all kinds. I have seen those who have been particularly selfish in their approach to politics and the discharge of their duties. I have seen others on the other hand who have been most generous. I would characterise Jack Odle in the latter set, Sir.

11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

One saw this unselfishness particularly during Elections. It was never a matter of any difficulty for Jack Odle to respond to an invitation to speak at a meeting, but he went further. Jack Odle sometimes, at the neglect of his own constituency would find himself in your constituency or in another person's constituency and actually canvass.

I remember in the 1985 By-elections that followed Tom Adams's death, that Jack Odle took on Bridgefield for me in the campaign. That was understood because it was a by-election. In a by-election all the forces of the Party are concentrated on and targetted at the particular constituency so you would expect the vast majority of parliamentarians to descend from time to time in the constituency which was subject to a by-election.

In the January Elections which followed, on May 28, 1986, on that Elections, I shall never forget that Jack Odle gave me a morning, when he came back to Bridgefield, when he could have been in some part of St. George North, and canvassed Bridge Field with me again because he had friends, and my memory tells me that he also had relatives in Bridgefield. He came back in the General Elections to help me and that is something that is unusual because most people would help at the level of speaking at a meeting but coming back and giving time during the heat of the campaign in a canvassing schedule is something that is not often found. I feel very indebted to him for that show of support which he gave me. In fact, he gave me support from the February 26th Elections of 1976. Very personally, I therefore feel his loss.

Jack had his own style of doing things, his own style of campaigning. As I have said, it was rather quiet, almost unobtrusive but it was effective. I know, Sir, that he was very proud of the fact that the Labour Party won the Elections in 1994 and again last year and he always made it known that he was available to assist in whatever capacity the Government deemed suitable. I feel sure that if he had survived into this year in good health that some opportunity for service would have presented itself in terms of other things that are in the pipeline, and which would have provided a basis for him to make an additional contribution.

Sir, I have always personally known his family. One of his brothers went to school at Lodge with me. He was a senior boy to me when I was at school. The Odle family was very close to my family; my father was a close friend of his father. I wish to take this opportunity of offering sincerest condolences to the immediate family including Senator Jessica Odle, who is his niece. I offer those condolences on my own behalf, as well as those of my family, who I know would wish to be associated with the remarks which I have made so far.

Mr. Speaker, I lament the passing of Jack Odle. I commend his service and his approach to politics as worthy of emulation by those of us who remain in this House and worthy of emulation by those who will succeed us over the year. He was not a Minister. He did not have to be a Minister to render the outstanding service which he did render to this House as Chairman of Committees and he certainly did not need to be a Minister to be an effective constituency representative. I am pleased that I not only knew Jack Odle but that I had the good fortune and opportunity to serve with him in the Barbados Labour Party and in this House of Assembly.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words about the late Jack Odle as well. In my memory Jack Odle was a very gentle man as distinct from a gentleman, which he was as well, of course, but he was a gentleman, gentle but firm. Jack was jocular in his manner. Indeed, he could be described as everybody's uncle. He was a man, when he canvassed in St. George,

in fact, wherever he canvassed, he always had both side pockets of his pants full with sweeties. He was everybody's uncle. He was a man who never raised his voice. I have never heard him shout. I have never heard him call out. If he disapproved of something, he would frown and that is how you knew that he was not pleased with your or something you might have done or said.

He was an excellent Chairman of Committees in this House. He was a Member of this Parliament who had a proper respect for Parliament. He was a Chairman of Committees with whom very few would dare to argue back. When he ruled he was firm. He was fair and he was firm. On an occasion once or twice the odd person would try to argue with him and he would just look at you straight ahead and those persons would just quietly subside.

As we have heard from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, Jack Odle came from a family in St. George which, even in his time, could be described as well-to-do. It was a family willing always to give public service. It was a family with a very ripe sense of civic duty. Indeed, I regret that nowadays there are too many well-to-do black families in Barbados, professional people, who are not as willing, as their predecessors were, as their parents and grandparents generation were to give back to the communities which nurtured them. Indeed, I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that Jack Odle lived in a time when indeed, the village did help to raise and to nurture the child. Unhappily, that is not true today.

11:40 a.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

Too many parents of today - not all and I do not believe the majority but still too many, one or two or even 10 or 11 are too many - are willing to abdicate their responsibilities to their children to whomever they can find: the teacher, the school. Not many children go to Sunday School nowadays but they are willing to abdicate these responsibilities, except the responsibility to instill discipline. Jack Odle was very much I would say, a disciplinarian. You did not kid about in here when he was Chairman of Committees.

He was a man who wanted to give back to his community and as the Member of Parliament for St. George, he was known to be up and down the parish, both that part of the parish which became his constituency and that part of the parish which was the constituency of someone else but really you would have to say that Jack Odle epitomized St. George. He was again gentle but insistent in respect of what he wanted from the Government of the day, whether he was in Government or in Opposition, for

the people of his little community.

In the end that is really all of the contribution that the majority of us can make, to give back a little something to that little community from which we came. There needs to be more of that spirit abroad in Barbados today. There need to be less of the attitude that you have to be paid for everything you give. People forget that if you insist on selling everything you have, by the same token and you have to accept that you have to buy everything that you want. So that the community of yesteryear, particularly in the country where whatever came out of my ground, I could share with my neighbours and even further afield than my family and my friends and my neighbours, secure in the knowledge that whatever came out of the neighbours ground in due season, I would get a share. Jack Odle came from that background and that helped to inform the kind of public service that he was willing to give and indeed did give, without asking for any reward.

That sounds trite. People like to beat their breasts and say, "I do this and that and I do not ask for any reward." Jack Odle was not of that ilk. He was not one who would beat his breast. He quietly did what he had to do and there was no question of any special reward coming. Those of us who were able to go to the funeral observed the Odle clan, friends of that clan, parishioners. Those were the people that we saw at the funeral, the colleagues of Jack Odle. There was no element of show there, it was quietly, respectfully and well done and I think that Jack Odle would have approved of that.

I believe that even in the years when he was retired from active politics, in fact I should not say that I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that in the years when he was retired from active politics, he continued to do whatever he could - particularly in the parish of St. George - to help people, to be available as someone who could counsel people. He inspired many, as we have heard so many times now since his passing, this would have come down from generations to him. His father gave parochial service, Jack in this turn, gave service at the national level and his children carry on that tradition in the Odle family. It is something to be lauded. It is something which I hope would inspire other families who have, to give.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to add my own words of condolence to his widow, Stella, who has made her contribution too as a public health nurse, political-wise, she tended to be in the shadows most of the time. She and Jack lived happily together. They produced a family of which they were proud and which did them well and made them proud but Stella makes her own contribution as well and so I would like to say special words of sympathy for her and her children and the wider Odle family. Indeed, as the Attorney General has pointed out, still doing public duty in the Other Place, his niece Jessica, I would want to record special words of sympathy to her.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the job of Chairman of Committees is a fairly thankless job as we come to the month of March when we have our long sittings when we debate the Estimates of Expenditure and that time will soon be upon us in this year of 2000. I hope that the current Chairman of Committees and those who will follow, would be able, looking back through Hansard, particularly those who would not have known Jack Odle and known him in that guise, to find some fine examples in the way that he conducted the affairs of this House when it went into Committee.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition and my own right and on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party, I want to join to in the tributes to the late Jack Odle and also to extend the sympathy of the family of the Democratic Labour Party and my own sympathy and those of my Parliamentary colleague to his family.

I first knew Mr. Odle while I was at school. He used to drop his son to school and collect him every afternoon and on some occasions as cricket, football or some activity was going on we would have conversations on basic pleasantries.

11:50 a.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

I will agree with the Honourable Member for the City that by and large he was a gentle person. Even in the days when the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) so-called great combination were strutting about in this Parliament in the 1970's, I would come here, and one was always amazed at the extent to which Mr. Odle, unlike some presiding officers - and I do not count you among them, Sir, - would seldom allow anyone to ruffle his feathers and would allow a lot of the little petty remarks that pass between politicians to fly completely over his head - as you do from time to time - basically to function with the maturity, the fairness and the good sense that would have permitted the debate to proceed without himself degenerating into either comment or discussion on the merits of a presentation by a Member.

In fact, one almost thought that on occasions that he was fast asleep or was not listening but invariably he would intervene without raising his voice and in fact showing no emotion to indicate how he felt about the matter and would make his ruling known. Those who failed to listen or acknowledge the ruling would do so at their own peril. I cannot even think of any occasion in my presence, that is, that the House had to be suspended in uproar for anybody to restore order when he was in the Chair as has happened sometimes with other Chairmen of the Committees because by and large he was, as I said, very methodical and quiet in the way that he undertook his duties. So he would have made his contribution to the regard with which this Parliament is held and also to the standards of Parliamentary debate which other people throughout the Commonwealth admire about the Barbadian Parliament.

Perhaps, in his later years in life and certainly in my last conversation with him it was clear that he was anxious to contribute a lot more than the Government would have permitted. In fact, he was more

than anxious to be involved in the success of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) not because he had contributed so much to their success but because I think he felt that those who had made a contribution in the past should be given an opportunity to carry on with the work which was necessary. It is a pity that it took so long for the Government to integrate him more fully in its work either at the constitutional or at the parliamentary level where his skills could have been applied more effectively.

So, today, I join with other Honourable Members who have spoken to extend my sympathies to his family particularly to his children who would be contemporaries of mine and to other members of the Odle family who have by and large connected with my family down through the years and also on this occasion on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) to thank him for the service that he rendered to this Parliament so that succeeding members of Parliament, as I have said already, would be able to enjoy the standards and the ambience for which this Parliament is well known.

I am happy to join in support of the Resolution moved by the Honourable Leader of the House who is the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I too would want to associate myself with the remarks made on the late Jack Odle. I, fortunately, have succeeded him in being the representative of the constituency of St. George North. I first met Jack Odle sometime around 1976 when he came to St. George to contest the election. I have known the Odle family for a number of years as a boy growing up in St. George. One had to know the Odle family because as all Honourable Members have said before, the Odle family was a family that gave service to the parish of St. George in all fields of endeavour especially in commerce and in agriculture. Of course, the older Julian Odle, was a postmaster as the Honourable Member has mentioned and he provided valuable service for the people of St. George especially in the delivery and posting of mail.

Mr. Jack Odle served the constituency of St. George North with distinction. He was not a Minister but he tried to put forward in many respects how a backbencher could ask questions and get things done. There are a number of things that were accomplished in St. George during the years 1976-1986, in particular the Glebe Polyclinic and of course the St. George Primary School. He asked for these two developments within the constituency because there was a need not only to create a better health service for the people of St. George but because of the central nature of the parish which helped the constituencies of the parishes of St. George, St. Philip and St. John. He was also responsible too in ensuring that the Glebe Tenantry was a statutory tenantry in its own right whereby the people of the Glebe would get land at \$0.10 per square foot. In fact, I must say that the Glebe is the only tenantry belonging to the church that persons can enjoy at \$0.10 per square foot and Jack fought for this and we are hoping very soon that persons who lived on other church land could enjoy a similar arrangement similar to the people of the Glebe, St. George.

Mr. Speaker, Jack Odle was a fine gentleman who came from a fine family background as Honourable Members have pointed out. He was a disciplined person and a person who conducted the affairs in this Chamber with a sense of feeling and with discipline. Of, course, I must say that he was a very highly educated person, who, gained honours from McGill University in mathematics and chemistry. He was good at numbers. He was not a fine speaker but he was a man, who, when he spoke, spoke with compassion and feeling and that is the important thing about the man Jack Odle. He came back from Canada just after the 1960's and went into business. So he was a businessman as well

and he could have enjoyed a fine career making money out of business, but, he entered politics to help represent the people of this country. I must say that during the years after 1976, one saw that the business of the Odle's especially the business in cement started to dwindle. Jack, during those years preferred to represent the people and the business started to dwindle away. He served not, himself, but he served to ensure that persons of the lower end of society would get an opportunity to have a voice in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that after he lost the election in 1986, Jack continued to work in the parish of St. George providing and giving of himself and he provided wonderful service for the people of St. George and we are eternally grateful for persons of this nature. I must say, Mr. Speaker that out of Jack's service to the people of St. George, we now enjoy a better rapport with the people and he has encouraged me in every way to meet persons of the middle and upper class.

12:00 noon

Tuesday, February 8, 2000

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

I must say to this Parliament I owe a lot of debt to the late Jack Odle who was not a selfish man in any way. He was a man who gave of himself to the people and to me, in particular, he wanted more than anything else to ensure that I succeed at this level and I am very happy and thankful to the Odles.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that during his last years here on earth Mr. Odle became very ill and, of course, many people did not know he was that ill because he was a person who did not speak of himself. He did not ask people for anything for himself but he was ill and kept these things to himself.

He was never a person to own a lot of wealth. I believe many people thought by impression that he was a very wealthy man. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that during the last years of Mr. Jack Odle's life, he suffered financially. It is important for us parliamentarians to look carefully at persons who have gone before us to see how we can help to ensure that parliamentarians here and after enjoy, to some extent, a better way of life after we leave Parliament.

I speak, Mr. Speaker, of that fact that the Management Commission of Parliament should put in place a good health package for members. We do not have a health package. I think we need to look at that, not that Government should pay but I think the Management Commission should ensure that we get some form of coverage.

During the last years of Jack Odle's life, especially days in the hospital, it was very costly on the family. I believe that health insurance is necessary for parliamentarians here and former parliamentarians. I think most of us have to rely, to a larger extent, on family insurance. Some of us have tried to put in place insurance packages for ourselves but I believe it could be better organised where the Management Commission would deduct from each parliamentarian a fee to ensure that if we have to seek medical attention that we will have this coverage. Of course, in Mr. Odle's case, a lot of

bills were left which have to be paid for by the family. Out of Jack Odle's life, out of what he has gone through, we must ensure that parliamentarians - we are not relying

on the State - but we could put in place a package to help ensure that at least we do not go into the almshouse or one of those institutions but we would be covered. I think we need to do something of that sort.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to say that it was a pleasure for me and an honour of knowing the late Jack Odle. I believe he has done yeoman service to this country and to his people. I would like, on behalf of myself, on behalf of my family, on behalf of all the people of St. George and in particular the people of St. George North to say that Jack Odle performed a valuable service to us and, of course to send our condolences to his wife Stella, his brothers and to his children. We give them our deepest sympathy. Thank you.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I first met Mr. Odle in 1971 when he was courting the constituency of St. Michael North Central. At that time there was North Central and South Central. My brother Frank was one of his main canvassers and he would not hold a meeting unless Frank was one of the organisers or the chairmen of that meeting.

Frank brought him to our residence and ever since then I grew to appreciate Jack. Most of the constituents at that time until now even refer to him as Jack in that sort of an avuncular way. Although at that time Rameses Caddle was a hometown boy, Jack Odle still gained an equal respect from the people of St. Michael North Central, particularly the Carrington Village area. Even Caddle's brother who today is still a hardliner DLP canvasser and supporter would confess to you that on many occasions, even after Jack Odle went to St. George and won a seat, he would approach Jack Odle when raising funds for the Carrington's Primary School as he was chairperson for the PTA. Sir, because of his affable nature, politics did not get between them (them - in the term of DLP supporter) and Jack Odle.

Jack Odle could be best described as a man of deference. As Jack made his way from town to St. George, you would see him pull in. He would stop and talk with the vendors, the shopkeepers, and would be embraced and held by the older folks particularly doing trade on Tweedside Road.

At that time, Sir, in 1971 I was still a student at Harrison College and Jack's nephew and myself were probably the only two Labourite supporters, at least openly. There were fellows who were closet supporters of the Barbados Labour Party but they feared to make that known at that time.

12:10 p.m.

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Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

Quite a few of their parents were openly aligned with the Government of the day and there was this fear that you could not express your mind and indicate what side of the fence you resided. I will always remember Ian and his father Derek who would ask about how Jack was doing at that time during such

wrong.

Mr. Odle made such strong links with the people of North Central that even when he went to contest the seat in 1976 he had a retinue of canvassers who followed him to St. George and did house to house canvassing, and quite often you would hear them complain of the country terrain and how fatigued they were when they came back but that never stopped them from going back to canvass the next Sunday.

I remember, Sir, being at a function with Mr. Odle and he said to me in that monotone that he had learnt from the late Tom Adams that there were at least two ways of solving every problem and that Adams said to him that sometimes it may be better to approach the solution from the more difficult way than the simpler way. I quite often reflect on that statement and see a great deal of sense in what he said at that time.

What I did learn from that 1971 election is that no matter how nice the constituent may make you appear or make you feel as if you are leading because of your affable nature, your gentlemanliness, it is another thing when it comes to casting the X. He knew that he was a good man that he would have done a good job were he to have been elected but that was not the case. Nonetheless he went on to win St. George and from all reports he performed well and he represented his people in a true parochial style.

I would like to extend condolences particularly to his niece, Jessica, who sat in the Other Place with me, just alongside me during the last term. I am much the richer in knowledge about local and parochial politics as I met Mr. Jack Odle. May he rest in peace.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Jack Odle was, as you are aware, a very close colleague and friend of mine. We ran together in St. George North and South in three general elections and in those elections we did not operate as if we were running for two different constituencies. We saw St. George as one parish. I lived in the North of the parish which was represented by him so that for the years he was a Member of Parliament he was my parliamentary representative.

He was very much a man of both the North and the South of St. George. Other speakers have mentioned the Odle name in St. George, the magic name of a family that has made very significant contribution to many aspects of life in that parish. I very well recall the first time I was introduced to the family by the old man, Julian, and he introduced me to Jack and said a few flattering things about me to Jack and that was the birth of the relationship.

During the General Elections of 1976 and 1981, and particularly the one in 1976 which the political historians will remember as one of the classic battles in politics in this country, in one corner was Jack Odle and in the other was Richie Haynes.

Jack Odle was a very modest man, of very calm disposition. There was almost a stoic calm about him. He did not get flustered about anything. Even though he was pitched in what was considered in that General Election as the battle of that election he never lost his philosophical calm.

We worked together on a daily basis and I did a lot of the work that was assigned to me in the North of the parish although I was running in the South. We used to meet occasionally with the Odle clan chaired by the pater familias, Julian Odle, and this was during the campaign, and the Chairman would

say, "Well, you know that Jack is involved in this classic battle and that money is washing away the North and we have to do something to counter it."

I remember he would be asking members of the family to pitch up and fortunately, he did not ask me to pitch up. Although I was in it I had my problems in the southern part of the choir. It was remarkable, the way in which the family worked together very closely - it was a big family - in this important battle.

When I remember and when we talk about the character of the man on his nomination day. I did my nomination and I went over in the North and I remember how the Democratic Labour Party candidate, Richie Haynes arrived. He sat in the back seat of a Mercedes. He was very nattily attired. He had two outriders, one was a postman in St. George and another one who acted as outriders and he arrived at St. George Boys School on that morning with a great deal of fanfare.

People stood off at some distance and watched but there was no show of emotion, no show of affection. After he left, Jack Odle came down the road in an old Morris Minor that was at least 20 years old, beaten and battered. He got out of the car and he was wearing a pair of old washy congs - old pumps, a khaki pants that had not seen an iron for many a year and a red polo shirt. He got out and the crowd moved towards him and showed their love and affection for him. He walked up and modestly did his thing. We knew that what had happened that morning the results settled.

He was an extremely modest man. Other members have spoken of his being Chairman of Committees in this Parliament. Sometimes the members of the then Government of which I was a part were a bit unkind to him because the Chairman of Committees really has to work harder in this Parliament than any other Member of Parliament. When you are doing the annual estimates for a whole week he has to sit down in the Chair for a whole day, and quite often members are unkind.

I remember Jack Odle sitting as Chairman of Committees and he was nodding to members on the Front Bench and to the Leader of the House, begging them to move a short adjournment so that he could attend the call of nature because he was sitting there the whole day. The fellows would laugh and they would refuse to ask for the adjournment and watch Jack squirm in the Chair and at long last would finally relieve him so that before he could report to the Speaker he was rushing through the door. But none of this changed the equanimity, the even temper, the calm and coolness of Jack. It seemed that nothing ever bothered him.

I never once in my life saw him angry. I have never seen him not have time for ordinary folk who would stop him, not only in St. George but all across Barbados as he moved as a Member of Parliament and as a private citizen and went about his business. He was affectionately known in St. George as Uncle Jack. Everybody referred to him as Uncle Jack and not only the children.

12:20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

His constituency, as I have said, borders mine and the Workmans/Jordans area was the area where he

lived. I was fortunate, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I did not have to do any work in Workmans and Jordans because that was left to Jack. He lived there and he said, leave it to me. My constituents in that area did not bother me with their problems because Uncle Jack was sitting in the house overlooking Jordans Tenantry and they carried all their problems to him. Alternatively, Sir, I looked after some of his because I live in his constituency and we worked that way.

I knew his family very well. The two families were close and his children and I were very close. Jack would come to my house and he was very close with my two daughters, especially the younger one who he treated almost as his own. It, therefore, was very painful for me, Mr. Speaker, when in December last year he spoke to me and said that he had to go away for medical treatment and I got the feeling that there was something final about our exchange at that time. He did not say that but I got that feeling. It was also painful when eventually I heard of his death. His family, his wife Stella and his children, with whom I enjoy a very close relationship loved Jack the way that he loved them. He and Stella were inseparable and his children were extremely fond of him and spoke in those terms about him and he would quite often go up to Canada to stay with the children who were living there for a number of years.

I would, therefore, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my family and certainly also on behalf of the large number of people across my constituency in St. George South to whom Jack was a father, a brother, a friend and who have expressed their own feeling of loss on his passing to me, I would wish on behalf of all of them today, yet again, to express my profound sympathy to the relatives of the late Jack Gordon Odle.

Hon. Sir Harold ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I belong to that generation of politicians that was a colleague of the late Jack Odle for a very long period of time, not only in Parliament but on a personal level outside of Parliament. I believe that I first met him when I was a young student at Harrisons College. He was a teacher and we used to meet in Bridgetown on Prince William Henry Street where a cousin of mine had a shop and who was also from St. George. My family and the Odle family were on excellent personal terms so that knowing Jack was not something that was unexpected.

Jack left to go to Canada and when he returned to Barbados I had already returned from study and we met up again. I do not believe that it is well known that in addition to interest in politics that he was a very keen farmer and exceedingly interested in the development of the cooperative movement in Barbados. He saw the co-operative movement as a vehicle to encourage small farmers, particularly livestock farmers, because he was a great believer that livestock farming could make a significant contribution to agricultural activity in Barbados. He had chickens, broilers and he even at one stage had an outlet in Fairchild Street Market which used to provide the mechanism for the sale to small farmers with eggs and broilers in a cooperative unit.

In addition to that when he decided that he was going into politics it was not surprising to me that he had chosen the Barbados Labour Party. I knew that his family had deep roots within the Barbados Labour Party and Jack Odle gravitated towards the Barbados Labour Party like a duck takes to water.

Quite naturally, at that time, we were in Opposition and it was a tremendous act of courage on his part to decide that he was going to soldier on with us against all of the odds. The Democratic Labour Party was at its height and those of us who had to weather that experience will recall that on many occasions,

it could truly be said that it took a great deal of courage to withstand the vulgarity of abuse that fell from the lips of prominent politicians in the Democratic Labour Party at that time. Jack was a victim of some of that but I was very happy to have had the opportunity both in the Elections which he fought unsuccessfully in 1971 and in the Elections in 1976 which he fought very successfully to have helped, participated and weathered the abuse with him.

He had a peculiar relationship as the Honourable Member for St. George South said to the people of St. George. It was really a loving relationship. The campaign in 1976 was a bitterly fought campaign by the Democratic Labour Party. Those of us who knew the opponents and the candidates for the Democratic Labour Party at that time would have recognised that no stone would have been left unturned by the candidates for the Democratic Labour Party and for the Democratic Labour Party to win St. George North. It was not to be so.

Jack was fortunate, as the Honourable Member for St. George South said in having a family that stood by him with all of their resources. He also had good friends who helped him and some of them acted as collectors for him. The point is that whatever was necessary to match the Democratic Labour Party was provided. The specific areas in which the battle was fought at its highest was in the Charles Rowe Bridge area and the area going from Charles Rowe Bridge towards the area of the villages surrounding Rowans Plantation. That was the battle ground. Many of us were convinced that Jack was on a winning streak when we went into the shop and saw the reaction of the people and the manifestation of love that they exhibited.

As a Member of this House he continued with his interest in agriculture, with his interest in the overall provision by the Party of the promises that it had made. Housing was a special interest and in addition to that few people would have known that Jack Odle was a person who had had academic training in science. Indeed, I believe his degree was in chemistry.

12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Sir Harold ST. JOHN:

Jack Odle played a particular interest in matters such as standards. As Minister of Industry, we were at that time very much in the forefront within the Caribbean economic community of ensuring that there were common standards throughout the Caribbean so that consumers in the Caribbean would feel comforted by the fact that whatever goods they brought, they had to meet requirements which were common. Of course, manufacturers were interested in common standards because they wanted to ensure that no manufacturers in any individual island, would have an advantage due to the differential in the standards.

I could almost rely upon the Honourable Member for St. George North for explanations of the technical terms which were used and which had a scientific foundation. Similar too, his interest in the Cooperative movement was something that I shared with him and other Members of the Labour Party. It is important that we recognize in Barbados that perhaps one of the most significant contributions the Labour Party made in this country is the fostering of the development of the cooperative movement - the credit unions in particular. It is true that our attempts at productive cooperatives have not been as successful as we would have liked but that has been, as I understand it, the experience of many countries in the world. But, when the administration, between 1976 and 1986 decided that as a matter of deliberate policy, it was going to target the credit union movement as a vehicle for special tax concessions to encourage savings, it was because of the encouragement of people like the Honourable Member for St. George North and a number of others that the Minister of Finance felt that that was an area of activity that the Labour Party could indulge in, with the fullest knowledge that it would make an important contribution to the social and economic development of Barbados. He was an integral part of that.

I also would like to say that on the personal level, I have no hesitation in endorsing the remarks that have been made by previous speakers about his good manners, his love of his family and his fellow members of humanity. It did not matter whether you were a "B" or "D." The fact of the matter is, if you were a human being and conducted yourself in a manner which Jack Odle regarded as being good, you were his friend. He never tolerated around him, behaviour which departed from the standards that he had been taught and which he expected others to adhere to. Political differences were never for him as matters which should prevent him from associating with other people.

I would like to join with the others in expressing my condolences and those of my family to his family. I know that they were comforted by the fact that he had probably one of the largest and final departures that we have had here in Barbados and that the esteem in which he was held was of such a high standard that that exhibition about the pouring of grief on his passing is but a manifestation thereof.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I join with Honourable Parliamentarians in supporting the Resolution before the House where we are paying tribute to the memory and work of the late Jack Odle. Perhaps it is fitting that he should be remembered as he is being remembered, with admiration and affection but Jack was a solid committed and efficient Parliamentarian. He first came to competitive politics in 1971 in which for many of us was a luckless election. That was a point in our political history of which a large number of talented persons came to competitive politics for the first

time and some of us are still in this Parliament today.

Jack Odle was almost an oddity in the sense that it was still an era of harshness and sharp personal divide in Barbadian politics. You only have to remember that even by 1976 and well beyond, the then Leader of the Opposition would not eat in here with Parliamentary colleagues on the other side, so sharp was the divide and the bitterness but Jack Odle had none of that. In fact he was almost the steady in contrast. He was the only man in 1971, to the best of my recall, who read his speeches on the public platform. He knew no bitterness. None of the harsh exchanges on the platform which characterized that period was any part of Jack Odle.

He was a gentleman and for him the political divide being DLP for example, or in any other Party was no sufficient reason for him not to establish a strong relationship with you as a fellow human being. It is very significant that while he was here he had established very strong personal relations with persons on the other side. That was the nature of the man, such been so properly said by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Jack Odle won his election in 1976 and served in this Parliament for ten years as the representative for St. George North. In that period he was, as has been already mentioned, Chairman of Committees, a job which he equipped himself with efficiency and with charm.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I think there are several interesting things about that election which have already been alluded to but it is the second time in the last 50 years that we have had elections in St. George. The first one was in 1947, the by-elections to succeed Hugh Springer as the Member of Parliament for St. George then, one of them for the double Member constituency system and the election of 1947, which was won by Macky Simmons. He served in Parliament then for a year.

12:40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM:

The newspapers of the day regarded the 1947 Election as the biggest and the most expensive rice and stew election that we have ever seen in the history of the country. Mackie Symmonds, whom I knew well, and with whom I discussed this matter on several occasion, told me that there is no question about it, that it was an exceptionably expensive election perhaps the most expensive of the century up until then and the full story of the money that was spent in 1976 in St. George has never been told. I think I was close enough to know of some of the sources and of some of the motivation for the provision of funds to Jack Odle but that too was a hugely expensive election as has been indicated by some members who were very close to the situation.

I think that Jack had established a few things in Barbados which we sometimes forget. You do not have to be an electrifying speaker on the platform, an extrovert personality or anything of that sort in order to be an effective parliamentarian or to win the trust and the admiration of the people. Jack is a reminder that all sorts of persons can come to Parliament.

The second point that I wish to make is, that Jack made his pleas on behalf of his constituents, not necessarily in Parliament where he rarely spoke but in the Councils of the Party at our parliamentary party meetings and in face to face contact with the relevant Ministers and he did as well as and in some instances better than many of us who were making our pleas on the Floor of the Parliament and in other public fora.

Jack, was gentlemanly and avuncular throughout. I believe he would be remembered as a gentleman and as a father figure for many many years. He was part of the large contribution that was made in that ten-year period by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in office. He was in that respect part of the new Barbados. It was my great pleasure to have known him, to have worked with him and to enjoy his friendship.

I am happy to give support to the Resolution before Parliament and to express to his relatives and in particular to his wife and children my own condolences and that of my family for his premature passing.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend support to the Resolution before this House and to offer my condolence to the family of the late Jack Odle.

My perspective would have been that of a 15 year old around the time of the 1976 election where the battle was waged on the ground which for me was not one of a battleground but of a playground where the areas of Charles Rowe Bridge, Newbury, Free Hill and Workmans were areas which I would have traversed for purposes other than political at the time. My experience and connection with Jack Odle would have been that of a young person having a public figure in whom I could have the utmost trust and indeed in whom I proposed the utmost admiration.

Jack Odle or Uncle Jack as he was known to all of the other people of the area was a very down to earth man. He was a man who was accessible at all times. You could find him at his home or you could stop him when he was passing by in his car and he would visit his areas often.

Although, technically, I resided in St. George South at the time - and the Member for St. George South is still very much present with us, I thank the Lord for that - I knew him for a very long time. I was on the border of St. George South and North and for several reasons which sometimes was of an amorous nature I went into the depth of St. George North and I therefore had substantial interest in the areas which were represented by Jack Odle.

Jack was very helpful to the young people of the area. He recognised, for example, that young people needed tremendous outlets for their energies and he was therefore very committed to ensuring that there

was an upgrading of the sporting facilities in that area, for example, the Glebe project which has been folded over the years, and Jack was able to transform the area around the St. George Parish church which in those days was primarily just the church, a little office in which one paid their rates and taxes, a post office and the boys' school. Jack was able to ensure that the small playing field there was expanded and the road was uprooted to ensure that there was a large field in which the active sporting interest of persons of that area could very well be properly ventilated.

Jack recognised as well, that if the communities within the St. George area were to reach their full potential that there was a need to ensure that the communities did not die. By that, I mean recognising that with the improvements which were being made in the economy and the people with their standards that more and more people in St. George were having access to motor vehicles and having jobs that will require them to work unusual hours in those days. Jack had a very aggressive programme of work construction in the area and I have to say that I was able to see it with my own two eyes and that I was able to feel the difference as I put my feet on the ground. These were areas which I had traversed as I have said, for one reason or another which in some cases were cart roads or lines as we would call them in St. George and those areas became well-paved road which was easily accessible to vehicular traffic under the stewardship of Jack Odle.

However, Jack did not see these things that he did for his constituency or for his community as of any benevolence of a political nature. Jack lived within the community and Jack recognised what he was doing and he approached it not from the spirit of a handout and hoping to obtain any gain or mileage from it, in fact, I would digress to say that he was perhaps his own worst enemy in terms of not promoting himself as being associated with these fine efforts that he made and indeed perhaps many of us would learn a lesson in modesty from Jack Odle.

Mr. Speaker, Jack recognised that he was not dispensing benevolence and patronage but that he was building communities and that he was improving the infrastructure in these rural areas so that persons would not have to leave the areas to which they were born in order to be able to have a paved road to drive on, to have access to water in their homes, to have access to telephones in their homes, to have access to playing facilities and to schools. It is through the very strongly hidden work of Jack Odle that much of that area that I mentioned such as Cottage, Thorpes Cottage, Taitt Hill, Newbury and those areas have been strengthened.

Jack Odle provided much more than improvements in physical facilities. He was able to render advice to many young persons including several friends of mine. Jack was the person whom one could easily go to for advice on making educational choices whether it be in terms of choosing educational directions in Barbados or overseas. Jack was the kind of person, whom one could go to, to get a reference for a job. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I do not have to tell you how important those recommendations can be.

12:50 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Consider in a rural community like Jack represented, the child of a labourer at Cottage Plantation, or the child of a mason, or a carpenter from Market Hill, not knowing anyone in significant positions in society, but having someone of the calibre of Jack Odle who has personally known the individual from birth, being able to vouch for the character and attributes of that individual, that made a substantial difference on a very personal level to a generation of young persons coming up in St. George.

Jack Odle, Mr. Speaker, was also a person who was able to change with the times. Jack Odle, although he would have, in my case, for example, known me as a child, when I became a man and indeed when I entered active politics, Jack Odle accepted me as a colleague. In fact, Sir, I could always rely on Jack for advice or encouragement.

It was not unusual for Jack to give me a telephone call whether at home or in the office to offer some aspect of advice on my political career, particularly in the context of the last General Election where he believed he had some wisdom and, in fact, he did, which he could share with me.

Jack was truly a man, one of the most decent persons known to us in St. George. I was proud to have had the opportunity to know him. In fact, Sir, our association was such that I regarded him as a father figure. One of his daughters and I would be around the same age and we would have attended the same secondary school. All of us as school children, especially those from St. George area, would have viewed Uncle Jack as a father figure.

It therefore is with a deep sense of loss that I would have participated in the final tribute which would have been paid to him when he was laid to rest at the St. George Parish Church.

I consider my life and that of youngsters who would have grown up with me in what the older persons in political circles would have known as the battleground of 1976 which for us in those days would have been barely a playground but our lives were certainly made richer. We were kept on the straight and narrow and much of the success of those of us who originated in that area would have been caused by the guidance and leadership which we would have received from the late Jack Odle. May he rest in peace.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I remember in August 1971 going to what was described as

a political meeting at the top of Tweedside Road in the constituency of St. Michael North Central. The two candidates were the late Dr. Rameses Caddle and Mr. Jack Gordon Odle. I remember that political meeting in Tweedside Road. What struck me was that almost every speaker on the Barbados Labour Party's side was a debutant. What also struck me, as I saw the Honourable Member now for St. Joseph made a speech early in his career, and the deceased to whom we paid tribute speaking, was that if I were not present at that meeting there would have been no crowd. The Barbados Labour party was then not at all popular in this country. The Democratic Labour Party was at the height of its career but Jack Odle made bold to enter as a candidate in a constituency that I daresay he was not well known in at all.

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to be facetious or even to mislead the Honourable House but I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in that election did not get 800 votes or if he got, he barely got 800 votes. He got 686 votes. In those days, the Democratic Labour Party was rampant but Jack Odle made bold to offer himself as a candidate for a party that clearly was not seen by the electorate to be ready to govern Barbados.

In time, Mr. Speaker, I got to know Jack Odle as a very humble and modest man who was utterly approachable. I would see him wherever stopped by poor people and he always had time for them. I have known two things about him out front. I have known that he came from a well-known well-established family in St. George and I have known that he has had a university degree. Notwithstanding those achievements, he was a man who walked with a common touch and had a very quiet dignity.

Mr. Speaker, even when there were occasions when he clearly was succeeding and doing very well he never was boastful, proud or arrogant.

His finest political moment would definitely have been the election of 1976 when his opponent was formidable and when his opponent was seen as a possible leader of the Democratic Labour Party and of Barbados. But Jack Odle did his groundwork and was able to beat a candidate that had been a favourite to win in that constituency. He would have owed his victory in that election to the absolute love that the people of St. George North extended to him combined with the fact that his own father had done a lot of very important work for the small people of St. George North.

What also struck me about Jack Odle, Mr. Speaker, in a situation where politicians often seek the high ground, where several politicians like a lot of publicity, where some politicians when their days are over still would like to linger on, was that by 1989/90 when it was clear that there was a new emerging BLP candidate waiting in the wings, Jack Odle readily and humbly quit and made way for the current member for St. George North.

I was at the nomination for the current member for St. George North in 1990. It was Jack Odle who brought the Resolution proposing the current Honourable Member for St. George North as a fit and proper person to run for the Barbados Labour party and commended the Honourable Member for St. George North as having the necessary political bona fides to be a suitable and successful candidate. That struck me, Mr. Speaker, because I do not think that Jack Odle was yet over the hill politically but

when he realized that there was a clamour for a younger person, he in a gesture of unselfishness retired and made way for younger blood. In time we see the younger blood through adopting some of the strategies and some of the mannerisms of Jack Odle succeed certainly at the level of winning two successive elections with the prospect of further success to come in many different ways.

I join with all Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker, in extending sympathy to Stella, the deceased surviving wife and to all the Odle family. On behalf of the people of St. James North I would like as I associate with the very kind remarks made by other Honourable Members to note that Jack Gordon Odle was truly in the words of Chaucer, “a perfect gentle knight.” Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to associate this Honourable Chair with the sentiments expressed on the passing of the late Honourable Member. I myself knew Jack for many years and found him always to be a man of deepest humility, kindness, generosity, always willing to offer advice especially as it related to the constituency and presiding in the Chair.

In fact, many a morning I came to Parliament I would find him sitting in his car in the yard. He would always have a kind word of advice and encouragement. I found him never to be a bitter man even if it was a matter of acknowledging that the only thing that a parliamentarian was entitled to after many years of service was a space in the yard to park. In fact, many a morning we joked about that but he would always say that he was very pleased for his little parking space.

1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. SPEAKER:

He saw that a life of service was more important than anything else. On behalf of my family, my constituents of St. Michael Central I would like to express my sincerest condolences to his family.

This House with acclaim accepts the Resolution of sympathy and instructs that the appropriate Resolution be sent to his grieving relatives. As a mark of respect for the passing of the late Honourable Member, I invite this Honourable House to join with me in observing one minute’s silence.

Honourable Members stood for one minute’s silence.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 215 p.m. today.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2:15 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, towards the end of last year the father of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph passed on and many of us attended the funeral. We were deeply touched by the content of the eulogies. The late Lionel K. Cheltenham known to me, Sir, as L.K. was a Barbadian teacher of the old school. He had given years of service in the teaching profession, culminating with the principalship of two schools.

Of course, he was in vogue as a teacher in the days when teachers were people who earned and commanded the respect of much of the society, not only of pupils to whom they ministered but people at large in the society. In my days, as a boy, the society of Barbados paid due deference and respect to the teachers, particularly the headteachers, police sergeants and senior police officers and priests. Today that sense of values which commanded the respect in former times, that sense of values has changed and it is commonplace now for people, young and old, to have no respect for authority, to seek to behave in as indisciplined a manner as possible. I do not want to say adopting a laissez faire approach to life but pursuing human values in a way that to some of us is anathema.

The teacher of the 50s and the 60s in Barbados, the teacher of whom I was conscious in those days as a teacher, was one for whom the teaching profession was a vocation and a calling rather than a means to a dollar or a job. The profession of teaching was characterised by a desire to gain maximum personal satisfaction from the success and progress of students.

I am not sure that today those values still predominate but they certainly predominated in my time so that it was not a burden to a teacher after school to give extra lessons free or to organise sporting activities for groups of promising students.

It is in that kind of environment that Mr. L.K. Cheltenham joined the teaching profession and developed his personal profession as a teacher motivated by selflessness, motivated by a desire for excellence. It was again commonplace in those days for teachers to take great pride in what they said and in what they wrote. Grammatical errors, inelegant language or turn of phrase, offended their sense of excellence.

2:20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

I do not think we have to wonder where the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and his other brothers got their love for language from. I am sure that that love for language and in respect of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and his brother Pat, the desire to excel in their professions must have come from their father. I think also the kind of joie de vivre which they both have, Sir, also came from their father because L. K. Cheltenham was known as a very happy person, willing to engage in debate and argument and a very lively character he was. You can see some of the mannerisms reflected in his sons who are lawyers.

Sir, like every other teacher of the 50s and 60s, L. K. Cheltenham was determined that his children should not only enjoy a better life than he had, because teachers in those days did see it hard, but he was determined that they should have the best education. He, I am sure, Sir, motivated his children to aspire to professional careers and to excel in those careers. Sir, I am sure that his heart would have been gladdened during his lifetime that he would have been able to see many of the dreams that he had for his children fulfilled. I know, from the one or two occasions when I spoke to him, Sir, that he was particularly pleased in the 1976 Elections that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was returned to this Honourable House of Assembly where he has given distinguished service over the last 24 years.

Sir, I believe that I speak for all of us who knew the late L. K. Cheltenham and those who did not. We would wish it recorded that we are deeply appreciative of the contribution that he made to the teaching profession of Barbados. We are sure that that will be duly recognised and written of in subsequent history, and it deserves to be. After his sojourn in the teaching profession had ended, he continued in active life. He worked in the private sector and there again brought to bear not only his skills learnt as a teacher but also the rich experience of life itself and contributed handsomely in the private sector.

On behalf of all Honourable Members on this side and also on behalf of my family, I wish to tender the condolences of this House to the Cheltenham family. I would say, Sir, that my father knew Mr. L. K. Cheltenham even though he was younger than my father they were both in the teaching profession in the 60s. On behalf of my mother, she has asked me whenever I got the chance to be associated with these remarks, to tender our condolences to the family and it gives me great satisfaction to be able to move that his Honourable House in due course tender the usual Resolution to the family, Sir.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I just rise to second this Resolution of condolence to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and members of his family in respect of the passing of the late Lionel K. Cheltenham. I did not know him personally but both his sons, the Honourable Member for

St. Joseph and Mr. Patterson Cheltenham often spoke highly of his wit, humour and skill as a raconteur and as a person, who from the generation from which he sprung, was a great source of inspiration to them in both professional success, their success as Attorneys-at-Law and in the field of politics as well as to many of the personal attributes which they have brought to their lives. On behalf of the Democratic Labour Party and the parliamentary Opposition and on my own behalf I extend my sympathy and I rise to second the Resolution move by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. Sir Harold ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the previous speaker. I myself knew the late Cheltenham for many years. As a matter of fact, I well recall two matters which are worthy of mention. One is that it is not generally well known that the district of St. Patricks in Christ Church in the 40s was very famous for the production of cricketers. As a young boy, growing up in Christ Church one looked forward on Saturdays to going to cricket matches either by Searles or in those days in Maxwell where there was a cricket ground around Maxwell where Shangri-la Hotel is right now - the whole of that area was a cricket field. Among the famous cricketers there was a Cheltenham. I believe that he was a Senator. It was not the Honourable Member's father. He was a famous batsman. Those matches were followed by the men in politics in Christ Church such as the late Jack Ashby and as a young boy we used to be taken to those matches. One could readily understand the esteem in which the name Cheltenham was held in Christ Church. It is not only the gentlemen that brought this but I believe that many people in the St. Patricks area will speak highly also of the contributions that was made by the Cheltenham's ladies in that district.

2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Sir Harold ST. JOHN:

When I first ventured into the political arena in the late 1950s and ran in 1966 and I journeyed to St. Patricks, it was there that I received great encouragement and among those who encouraged me was the Cheltenham family. I can certainly testify to the interest in which the Cheltenham had in education and also to the great degree of respect and interest that the late Mr. Cheltenham paid in his sons' advancement. It was with a great degree of satisfaction that Mr. Cheltenham was able to live and see his sons rise to the heights, in politics and in the legal profession.

The basic position is, Sir, that the Cheltenham family's contribution to Christ Church and to Barbados as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has said, is well known and I would like to associate myself with all of the remarks that have been said in extending my sympathy to the family.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the period 1914 to 1918 would have witnessed the first World War, Mr. Speaker, it is significant that during this time Lionel Keith Cheltenham entered this world. Even though as time progressed his reputation never developed as that of a warrior, certainly having come into this world at that time and having been able to brave the great depression of the 1930, to survive it and to emerge a stronger man, we must say that Lionel Keith Cheltenham was a person with an indefinable spirit. He was a person who, despite being born under lowly circumstances, was so determined to succeed that he fought many a battle, not in a literal sense but in figurative sense.

Mr. Speaker, one of the significant things about Lionel Keith Cheltenham's life was that he became what was known as a pupil teacher. So far as the days of pupil teachers are concerned, a pupil teacher would have been a promising teenage child in school, brighter than almost all of his peers and in whom confidence was reposed from time to time to teach his peers and lower but the school always reserved the right to send him from the status of teacher back to a pupil. It is known in the annals of education in this country that there were pupil teachers. They were teachers for some days and when they resumed their role as students, they got flogged and they got flogged publicly.

We do not know and it is not recorded that Lionel Keith Cheltenham's career was such that he ever had a flogging in school during the days when he was both a pupil and a teacher. It is clear that he made a determination in his early days that he would develop into a career teacher and in the 1950s he underwent formal teacher training. He saw that the enthusiasm to teach was not enough and that unless one was prepared to submit to learning how to teach properly, one was not properly equipped for the job.

He was a member of a famous St. Patricks' family and some of the family members are known to this day as the Moseleys, the Durants and the Clarkes. Mr. Speaker, he was married for 59 years and as a family man he made sure that he impressed on his children the need for them to develop through education. As an educator himself, he was careful to stress to his children that the way forward for the dispossessed, the way forward for the deprived and the way forward for those who were not fully dispossessed nor deprived but the way forward for us was through the process of education and he encouraged his children to pursue excellence.

When the history of the Village of St. Patricks is written, mention will have to be made of an institution in that area called the "Crusaders." In an era before television became popular in Barbados, Lionel Keith Cheltenham encouraged his children to take an active part in the Crusaders. It was a club, it was a youth group, it encouraged sports, it encouraged the development of culture and Mr. Lionel Keith Cheltenham was very much like a patron to this movement.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, almost everybody who belonged to the Crusaders of that time made a success of his or her life. I am told that Mr. Cheltenham himself made time to witness many a debate, whether it was a debate on politics, whether it was a debate on the need for Barbados to transform itself from a colonial experience to the status of being an independent country, whether it was a debate on sports, Mr. Cheltenham always took an interest, attended and encouraged all of the members to do their best to use the opportunities in those institutions for self fulfillment and for self advancement.

He lived a highly successful and satisfying life. He saw his children, two of whom I know very well, make the type of progress that he would have wanted for them. While his children were growing up, his teaching career saw him go from the St. Patricks School where he started, then for a stay at the St. Lukes School in St. George, in Shrewsbury and St. Martins in St. Philip. He was Principal of the Shrewsbury and St. Christophers' Schools and at all two he was able to function either as a classroom teacher or as a principal for 45 years, where, during a time and certainly at the start of his career, it would have been true that teachers did not earn the type of remuneration that their efforts really warranted.

2:40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who said that he would have been a teacher who did not see his task as consisting of a mere job, but that he saw it as a vocation. A vocation means that the person who is involved in that particular calling is interested in selfless service in the interest of humanity without hope either for personal gain or considerable remuneration. His was a career characterised by selfless service where he gave his utmost against the odds and of very little pecuniary enticements to teach and to lead schools in the interest of this country.

After he retired, he did not go idle and he did not go home to sit in a lounge chair or to rock away in a rocking chair. By the time he had retired, he moved to the area of Belleville somewhere between the 1st and 3rd Avenue and after having left the teaching service he worked for a while with the leading wholesaler R. L. Seale. I remember that experience because at that time a young lady who had a lot of potential and who had failed very miserably at secondary school told me that while Mr. Cheltenham was working at R. L. Seale he met her and spoke to her and she confessed that she had wasted time in secondary school and he persuaded her in clear and cogent terms that if she was to escape the misery that had by now come to her life, she had to go back to study.

I am not going to call her name because I do not have her permission to call her name in this Parliament but the point is this, Mr. Lionel Keith Cheltenham, even after he had retired from teaching, saw a student who was never his student and saw potential in that person, heard that this person had not made the best opportunity of her secondary schooling and made it his business to persuade her to go to an evening institute where eventually within two years she was able to put together 11 O' level certificates to be able to command a job in the world of work. Today I am sure she has a very good job in this country and she insisted that it was Mr. Cheltenham who was the person to bring back her confidence, who was the person to inspire her and who was the person to act almost in loco parentis because she apparently had a problem where not only did she failed in secondary school but she had lost her way in life and has certainly been the victim of low self esteem and Mr. Cheltenham was able to assist her from a life of abject misery, making the point that education is the way forward for those of us who want to get through in life.

He lived a thoroughly enjoyable and fulfilling life. He was 82 years old at the time of his death. He touched upon the lives of hundreds and hundreds of persons of this country. He was a stalwart and although he himself never became a member of this Honourable House, we have the evidence here in the form of a distinguished colleague whose example to us here and whose levels of scholarship are such that he bears ample testament to the fact that he received the type of rearing at the feet of such a pedagogical genius that his skills have been sufficiently honed for him not just to become an outstanding member of this Honourable House but also an outstanding member of a profession that few have strived in to the degree that certain Honourable Members have and a profession that has been the envy of many a person in this world.

I want to say that it is to the enduring memory of Lionel Keith Cheltenham that the successes that many of his students have made of their lives as well as the successes of his sons, Patterson, my direct contemporary in age and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who though not a direct contemporary in age, but he is certainly my chronological senior and a contemporary in Parliament nonetheless. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the evidence is clear that Lionel Keith Cheltenham was a genius from the district of the parish of Christ Church whose genius will remain with us because he will have established an indelible mark in the annals of history and of education in this ordinary little land.

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I too am one hundred percent supportive of this Resolution before this Honourable House.

I thank you.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lionel Cheltenham was one of my constituents and although in the latter years we spoke rather infrequently, in the earlier days - that was about some fifteen years ago - we would come across each other a lot more often and this is when I went to do business at R. L. Seale. Our first encounter was not one of the nicest because I remember Mr. Cheltenham keeping me in a line for a long time, he overlooked me, probably because of my puerile looks then. I asked him, "but, Sir, why have you kept me here waiting so long" and he reprimanded me but not without rebut from me. Nonetheless, subsequent visits to the wholesale department saw our friendship grow even stronger and he would always call me "Deane" and I asked him why and I told him that I was not "Deane" and he said to me that I reminded him of a friend called one "Laddie Deane" and then in subsequent years he got the name right.

I also remember him from my first canvass in 1994 in the Belleville area where I visited his house on a Sunday - not the best of days to canvass a person - and he said to me that he was fairly religious and he would go to worship and to come back. I went back the following Monday and I do not think that I was able to do another house in that district because he kept me there and he lectured to me and told me about the vagaries of canvassing and running for a seat in politics.

I once remember him - and this is where I know I must have had a close relationship with his sons - following a case which his two sons had done jointly and he asked me if I had heard the news and he was fairly concerned because he had not heard the midday news and he was wondering what had happened and he had indicated that one of his sons did not seem so confident. The next time we met, I reminded him of it and he said that he always knew that they would have pulled it off. He also indicated to me that they had lunch quite frequently and this is not a very common thing in all families.

In some families there is always the opportunity for the old boy to sit and have lunch with the younger ones which is something I myself enjoyed doing with my father when he was alive. He, like Lionel Keith Cheltenham, is a man who put a high price and premium on education because that was the most that you could decree to your children.

Mr. Lionel Keith Cheltenham did his own quiet canvassing between RB1 and RC1. Quite frequently I would see him doing a late evening stroll and I would stop and ask him what was going on and he would always say to me to beware of the little inducements which may come late in the campaign and that to never cry victory until that ballot had been closed.

In 1998, he was a lot more frail than he was in 1994 but his voice, his intellect and his recall had not waned proportionately. When he was hospitalised, whenever he got the opportunity he would send a message by my sister who was then on the Intensive Care Unit to enquire how I was doing and how the campaign was going. So this shows a man who had his wit up until his final days.

2:50 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D.T. GILL:

He came over to me, Sir, throughout the 15 or so years that I have grown to know him as a man who loved education, who loved Grantley Adams, who loved the Barbados Labour Party, its philosophy and causes, I do not know in what order. So, Sir, it is with great respect that I join all Honourable Members in offering condolences to the Cheltenham family and in particular his son Johnny who is on the back bench with us these days. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me associate this Honourable Chair with all the sentiments expressed in the passing of the father of the Honourable Member. I personally did not know the father of the Honourable Member but I have heard of his contributions to education and of his care and commitment to his family. I am told he was a great motivator and a very inspirational person.

On behalf of my family, my constituency and myself, I would like to express my sincere condolences.

This House with acclaim accepts the Resolution of sympathy and instructs that the appropriate Resolution be sent to his grieving relatives. As a mark of respect to the passing of the father of the Honourable Member I now invite this House to stand with me and observe one minute's silence.

Honourable Members stood for one minute's silence.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 3 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER GRANTS OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, before I move that the House goes into Committee of Supply, I am to advise that the substantive Chairman of Committees is overseas. In his absence, subject to the agreement of the other side, I move that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, who has deputised on a previous occasion, be the Chairman of Committees for today, Sir.

Hon. J. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If this is acceptable to the House, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will be Chairman of Committees for today.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. J. W. PAYNE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. T. GILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee of Supply.

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$28 202 015

**FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLEMENT
THE ESTIMATES 1999-2000 AS SET OUT IN THE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 14 AND THAT THE
THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEADS 13 AND 19 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN THE
SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION**

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, under Head 19 I rise to deal with three matters, two of which will require the allocation of additional financial resources, one which will require the reallocation of funds already voted by Parliament.

I will deal with the first matter, Sir, the request to Parliament to provide for the first time ever a subvention to the Caribbean Congress of Labour. The Caribbean Congress of Labour was formed in 1960 at the height of the regional effort to bring about unity in the region. It was conceived of then, as now, as being the institution that would provide the voice for the regional labour movement.

The movement would have, over the course of the last 40 years, more than established its worth as one of the estates in the development of the Caribbean region. Historically it has been funded by a number of donors but, in recent times, the administrative support and other funding that the labour movement of the region has received from donors has entirely dried up. The movement itself has come under financial pressure as the incidence of unionism has decreased in the region.

As a result, over the course of the last three years, the Caribbean congress of Labour has found it almost impossible to meet its obligations. The result has been that despite its own effort to carry out its own institutional reorganisation, including redundancies and downsizing, if I may use that word, Sir, of its institution, the institution has been incurring a substantial debt.

This Government believes, Mr. Chairman, that the labour movement still has a vital and, in fact, a heightened role to play in the development of the Caribbean region. It has a heightened role as we continue in pursuit of a dominant development paradigm which puts an accent on private sector-led market driven approaches to development. That approach in and of itself accentuates the need for vibrant labour institutions that can defend the interest of workers.

It is the wish of this Government that the Caribbean Labour Movement should not perish. As a result, we are seeking to accede to the request to provide the Caribbean Congress of Labour with funds to enable it to meet its obligations to its principal creditors and to meet obligations arising from the severance of its staff.

3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

Of the amount being sought, \$350 000, almost half amounts to funds owed to the Government of Barbados and over \$100 000 would be the nature of PAYE arrears. Some additional sums are owed to the National Insurance Scheme, so there will be in many respects a benefit to our country from enabling

the institution to meet its obligations.

I must say that I have had meetings with the principals of the Congress and they have prepared a brief which they have asked me to present on behalf of the Caribbean labour movement to the Heads of Government at the inter-sessional meeting of Heads which is scheduled to take place in March.

The Caribbean Congress is not just seeking a handout. It is seeking to restructure its operations and institutional arrangements to enable it to become self-financing and to continue to promote and protect the interest of the workers of the Caribbean.

We have evolved a long tradition of support for private sector institutions. Most private sector organisations within the region receive direct contributions from Government and most unions already receive support from the Government of Barbados in Barbados and I think it is worthwhile to sustain the continued existence of one of our more longstanding icons of regional unity. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I am commending to the House that the House should vote this \$350 000 that will enable the Caribbean Congress of Labour to take itself out of grief and to sustain its operations, with the assurance, Sir, that a full regional solution will be found to this particular distressing situation facing this regional institution. I am hoping that the region will rally to the support of the Congress of Labour and I feel confident in saying so, as I said, because the times that we face require a stronger rather than a weaker labour movement.

The second major item under Head 19 is a request to put \$1.5 million in additional resources into the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Mr. Speaker, for the financial year 1999-2000 the revolving fund has already received \$1.5 million from the Consolidated Fund and it has had access to \$3 million from its own loan repayments but the \$4.5 million in financial resources to which the Fund has had access have not been enough to meet its outstanding commitments nor indeed the demand for new loans. Funds are now required to cover the cost of the Fund's operations for the remainder of the financial year because beyond what we are being asked to provide the commitments of the Fund and the demand for resources provided by the Fund are so great that a fuller replenishment of the Student Revolving Loan Fund will have to be undertaken in the next financial year.

I am saying, Sir, that this \$1.5 million is to help the Student Revolving Loan Fund meet outstanding commitments and to meet demands for new loans and, if I may be specific, of the \$1.5 million being granted today, \$1.1 million is to provide the resources to meet obligations to 75 already approved applications. These applications are for students eligible for funding who have already had the approval of their applications. There are 75 known applications already approved towards which \$1.1 million will go and \$0.5 million is to enable us to approve some 34 new loan applications.

Sir, there have been certain various patterns in the manner in which students are providing for their education which has made funding of education far more costly. The advice rendered to me is that most of the loan beneficiaries who have requested funding for a Masters programme have opted now to pursue one-year programmes in the United Kingdom rather than the 18 months programme in the United States of America and that the impact of this new trend is an increase in the cost per loan due to the shorter period of studies.

It is also true, Mr. Acting Chairman, that there is an increasing number of beneficiaries who, having

obtained funding, are now seeking to continue their studies at Master's level rather than returning immediately to work having completed their undergraduate work and there has therefore been a substantial incidence of deferrals in the rate of repayment of loans and I want to stress that point, Sir, because I will have to say something to add to the point. Many students are now obviously seeking to carry on from undergraduate to post graduate level. The finances of the Fund as a revolving fund are predicated on the notion that the loan should be revolved and that people, having completed undergraduate work, will come back and repay. But we are having a substantial number of deferrals.

That apart, Sir, the deferrals of payment because of post-graduate education is but one aspect of the problem facing the viability of the Fund. There has been some improvement in the collection of loans repayments since a credit unit was established in 1995 but there is a tragic, distressing and, in fact, a very disgraceful thing that the Student Revolving Loan Fund is today owed approximately \$9.3 million by 1206 defaulters. It is a shocking thing, Sir. I would like to repeat it so that the House can be sobered by the numbers. One thousand two hundred and six Barbadians who were the beneficiaries of loans from a Fund which is intended to be a revolving fund are now in default to the fund by the amount of \$9.3 million. I say that it is a disgraceful thing and something that cannot simply continue.

Sir, in this country we are still in the first generation of independent development and too many Barbadians who have been given a leg up on the ladder of development believe that their responsibility is to kick down that ladder rather than allow other Barbadians to be able to benefit from access to resources. Politicians on both sides have had strictures thrown at us for the closure of the BDB but I have always seen it differently Sir, that we as politicians needed to respond to their needs. They were given a chance but then they did not see themselves as having an obligation to help other people come into possession of property through access to loans in the same way that they were allowed to come into access to property through loans.

In a similar way, Sir, there are a large number of Barbadians now enjoying strong and profitable professional careers whose qualifications have been made possible by access to student revolving loans who do not accept the obligation to repay. It is a wrong thing because they are depriving persons coming behind them from having access to resources to build skills in a society where the building of skills is crucial to overall national development.

The matter therefore will not be allowed to stand. I want to serve warning to the House that the Fund has been given very clear directions that they must pursue this matter with resolution. Parliament should not have to come and replenish this Fund over and over again because it is supposed to be a revolving fund and we should be replenishing this fund only to the extent that the demands on it are beyond expectations but the Fund is not now in a position to meet normal expectation because people do not feel that they have to honour their obligations to repay.

3:10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

I would hope that this is a matter on which there is going to be no partisan divide. We will have to speak with a strong voice to say that people who have receive access to resources to improve themselves have an obligation to the country to pay. Therefore, people will be given, Sir, not an amnesty but an opportunity to put in place arrangements with the fund to put themselves in condition of solvency and in currency with the fund. Once that is put in place, Sir, and people have been given every reasonable opportunity to put their deficiency right, the fund will be obtaining the services of credit collection agency and will go as far, Mr. Chairman, of publishing the name of the persistent defaulters and will be initiating such legal proceedings against defaulters and their sureties as they circumstances warrant.

Mr. Chairman, this really is a bad thing. If the fund had access to the \$9.3 million the House would not have to be voting supplementaries today at all, Sir. We would be able to meet all of the demands and the reasonable demands being put on it by Barbadians who want to improve themselves. It is a sad thing that there are so many young Barbadians who now want to have an opportunity to improve themselves but have to be told that they have to put their own careers on pause while the fund try to scrape together resources to meet their legitimate needs and there is this drastic and outrageous situation of default.

Mr. Chairman, I am just serving notice to the house that this matter has been clearly represented to us as an area of national deficiency where urgent remedial action has to be taken in the interest of the development of people and that the Government will not resile from doing what is necessary in the circumstances.

The later matter under Head 19 pertains to the census. In some respect, Sir, what we are doing is clarifying for accounting purposes the way in which funds granted at the start of the financial year are to be spent. Sir, the 2000 Population and Housing Census will be conducted during the period May to June, 2000. Census Day will by 1st May and enumeration will begin on 2nd May and continue between four to six weeks. We expect that some \$2.6 million will be expended during the course of the next financial year to complete the census. The planning for the census, the equipping of the office of the Statistical Department to carry out the census was anticipated. In the course of this year's Estimates of Expenditure an amount over \$447 000 was voted for the census but it was put under the Head of Professional Services.

Sir, at the time when this was done we did not have clear itemisation of the amount of furniture, supplies and materials and other things necessary to carry out the census. We are now in possession of

that material and as you will appreciate, Sir, we cannot from Line 626 - Professional Services - purchase plant, equipment, furniture, supplies and so on and, therefore, what we are doing now is that we are breaking up the vote now that we are clear about what the objects are. This \$300 000 is really not additional financing. We are now aware that to do the planning and the start up of the census that \$127 000 will be for professional services and that will remain in Line item 616. We are now breaking out the amounts required for National Insurance, Personal Emoluments, Plant, Rental of Property, and so that we do not collide with the strictures of the Auditor General, doing the right thing but doing it in the wrong way.

Sir, I am saying that the amount voted in March was over \$400 000 for us to start the work for the census that is to begin in May and that it will be adequate for the purpose. We cannot spend it on Line 626 as was voted by Parliament so we are just merely complying with the financial rules in specifying the way in which the funds vote under Line 62 will now be reallocated. They will, in fact, in some respects, Sir, be a saving under Line 626 and a diversion of the funds in the manner that is now prescribed.

Sir, in 1980 and 1990 when the Population and Housing Surveys were conducted the House will recall that with the continuous labour force, some surveys to derive the level of unemployment in the country were suspended. Generally when the population survey is being undertaken there is no household sample surveys in those months to be able to gauge the level of unemployment.

In 1980 and 1990, the household sample surveys were suspended for two quarters and there was no information available on those quarters because the staff of the office was fully engrossed at that time with The Population and Housing Survey. On this occasion, Sir, it is anticipated that the labour force sample survey would not be suspended for two quarters but for one quarter but that would be an unavoidable situation. I do not want anybody to say that the Government is playing 'fast and do statistics' when in September you do not get publication of the labour force or statistics on unemployment in the country. It is standard practice when the department is totally engrossed on this particular exercise.

Sir, I believe I have fully accounted for purposes for which the funds are being sought under Head 19. As I have said, Sir, I am particularly eager to urge upon the House that we should look with compassion on the Caribbean Congress of Labour and that we should, in fact, commend the institution for having taken the initiative to want to put together a plan for its own re-organisation and its own sustained development. What we are doing is only a one-off stop gap measure to stop the institution from collapsing. It would effectively have to close if this measure was not to be put in place. I hope to be able to convince the other Heads that the region must continue to support the labour movement. I hope that there could be an agreement at the regional level for a subvention for the labour movement.

Sir, I believe that I have covered this matter as comprehensively as I can. I have given the House all the facts in my possession pertaining to background that lie behind the numbers and I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

3:20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I start with the item with respect to the Student Loan Revolving Fund. I would agree with the Honourable Member of St. Peter that there should be no partisan divide on this. I am extremely alarmed at the statistics that have been provided for the number of people who are defaulting. I was extremely grateful when my time came to have been able to draw, to supplement my expedition, from the Fund of the Student Loan Revolving Scheme.

When I returned from Trinidad, I went to the office and I told them that I would prefer to muster the money and pay in a year. They told me "No". If I did that, I would have stopped somebody else, perhaps reduce the resources available to them because they would want to earn the interest over the period of time; so I paid it. I remember in 1994 when the Government changed, they suddenly had a collection office in place and they were collecting down to the last cent. I am wondering what has happened since then.

Sir, we had this debate only four years ago and even though the matter is in the Ministry of Finance, by and large it is the Ministry of Education that is responsible for managing this Fund. I am extremely alarmed to think that within those four years, the situation could have deteriorated.

I remember for the first time in my life receiving a letter telling me exactly what was outstanding, whether my payments were current - and they were - and I decided at that point to pay it off. I assume they did that with everybody else. Since then there seems to have been a major slide in the Ministry with respect to the management of this Fund. It places a lot of people in jeopardy because there are many young Barbadians, some of whom have already entered the work force and have to give up jobs to travel off because the entry requirements in London seem to be slightly more amenable to them to go and do courses in tourism and a whole range of other studies that are relevant to Barbados and important to us.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Many of them will come back, do not worry, unless they get married or something else, but they are going to do post graduate studies. In any event if they do not come back right away, it does not matter because the experience that they acquire over there, when they do come back, it can be deployed to the benefit of Barbados. I am not talking about that. What I am saying is that they are a large number of them who set off to London not sure whether they will be able to

actually be on the programme.

Fortunately, unemployment in those economies is down. Therefore, many of them are sought after and they have to go into small, what otherwise would be considered menial tasks to see their way through. That is happening a lot. Many Barbadian students who go and live in the university towns are working in the fast food shops, bakeries and other places because even the resources from the Students Loan Revolving Scheme would be inadequate. I admire their dedication.

Therefore, it is a serious indictment on Barbados that there are people, all of whom are probably in responsible positions in this country (we are not talking about people who are not paying their licence fees to operate in the market or something like that) we are talking about professionals who may be working in the Government or self-employed and who have a responsibility to ensure that succeeding generations will benefit from the resources which are made available under the Students Loan Revolving Fund.

This is a very helpful programme and as I said, there is no divide. We agree 100% that every attempt should be made to sure up the funds, both by collecting the outstanding money (it is a rigorous programme of collection) and also that there must be adequate resources given. If they have to be diverted from other areas of the Government no matter how tight the cash flow or whatever, we will support resources because we are not spending enough in this kind of activity, where somebody goes out and identifies an area that will be helpful to national development; where our own university does not have the places or cannot provide that specialized work; or cannot manage the large number of Masters' students; or cannot do it in such a short space of time that we need to have this Fund fully operational to benefit those individuals. I think that is extremely critical and important.

Sir, regarding the CCL, again we do not oppose this. I think support for the CCL is worthy. I would have preferred that the Government would have been coming here today with minimum wage legislation, the wrongful or unfair dismissal legislation, the occupation health and safety legislation which the Minister promised us since 1998 and the changes in relation to severance payments which are so critical. These issues are going to be vital and it is not just a matter of providing the subvention to CCL because that is a book transaction. I understand what this is all about. You come across these situations. They will never be able to pay the debt they owe the Government and therefore it provided the subvention essentially to ease them of that obligation. They can start to swim and move on and that is desirable but, as I see it that does not say the Government is committed to a worker that does not make any such statement. That commitment has to come in other forms and we are supporting this because this is but a small way of demonstrating some faith with the trade union movement.

We would expect that those other activities and measures that need to be taken to secure the rights of workers in Barbados would be undertaken without delay because the Opposition is ready to give full support to those measures, assuming that they are in keeping with our philosophy whenever the Minister bestirs himself and brings them to this Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I want to add my support first of all in respect to this question of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. In an earlier administration I was a Minister of

Education so I can speak with a little bit of authority in respect of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Surely, the collection agencies were there on the ground but there is an attitude in this Barbados that as long as it is the Government you do not have to pay.

It is like the attitude to water rates. People will pay the electric bill because they know the Light and Power Company will come and turn off the lights if they do not pay the bill but they do not feel they have to pay the water bill because it is the Government and the Government is a bottomless pit, as though the Government is not all of us who are taxpayers.

Now, the Mahatma Gandhi once said that those who would not work, not those who could not, were stealing from those who did and it is like this with the Student Revolving Loan Fund. In my judgement, those who borrow and will not repay are stealing from those who need the opportunity now to go out. What the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said is perfectly true. We are starving for a number of skills which Barbados needs to go forward today. We need people who are trained in international trade law. We need people who are trained in matters to do with the environment, including environmental law. We need people who are trained in areas of new technology. Nowadays, when location means nothing, it does not really matter where you are and we have such an excellent quality of education, we have the potential to create endless jobs in Barbados but people have to be trained. Parents today are even now making sacrifices, parents whose children have not won scholarships, parents whose children for one reason or the other are not going to any of the campuses of the University of Barbados, and even some of those whose children are going there, are making sacrifices and denying themselves so that their children can go. Yet, these same parents are being called upon today to pay taxes and some of their taxes must now be voted today to supplement this vote in respect of parents who are delinquent and it is a bad attitude.

Mr. Chairman, as has been said already in this debate you are not talking about people who cannot afford, these are people who are high earners ...

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Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

... and sometimes I question the sense of responsibility or the lack of it on the part of these people who feel that they do not have to repay the Fund although they must know that they are denying other young people an opportunity to make their contribution to Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, in effect, what this is doing is creating a drag on the development process because if we do not have trained people to move into these jobs swiftly - because the way the new technology is, is like overnight - and if we do not have people who are re-tooled and trained to move into jobs swiftly to carry the process forward, Barbados will be left behind. We are making a monumental investment in education. We have been doing that for years through successive administrations and clearly we are going to continue to do so.

However, in this very vital area where forward planners and forward thinkers well know what Barbados needs now for tomorrow and the day after and the years that are to come, it is very wrong for them not to repay the loans and I would like first of all to appeal to those who are defaulters to voluntarily pay up. The reality is that every time a student loan is made, it requires at least two guarantors but there has been an attitude in Barbados that if you cannot get the money out of the borrower, that you do not go against the guarantors. So, we have to get tough and decide that we will go against the guarantors but the first person that you really ought to be moving against is the borrower. They make other things affordable. They buy fancy cars and invest in all kinds of fancy consumer durables and yet somehow they do not feel that they have to repay the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

The same thing happens with the textbook's scheme. They get the best out of the books and then they lick up and kick up the books not caring about the next lot who have to come to use these books. It is a bad attitude and we have to take the strongest steps now to put it right.

It is incredible that in Barbados the Student Revolving Loan Fund could be in arrears almost stepping into \$10 million. It is unthinkable. There is no discipline and there is no gratitude. Even if you cannot expect a fellow or a girl to have some gratitude, they must have some sense of responsibility. Something is wrong with young people who feel that they do not have to go into the workplace before they move on to further and postgraduate studies. They are bonded and they must come back and give of their service to Barbados. People who have been given less are on a daily basis giving more back to Barbados. Who are these people who now think that they are not only above the law and the regulation but that they also have no sense of civic responsibility whatsoever.

I am very supportive of whatever steps are going to be taken to replenish this Fund but the reality is that we are behind the game as it is with the Fund and we need the Fund to be expanded now to be able to respond to these new areas of training which are absolutely vital to us, if Barbados, in a modern early 21st Century is going to be able to compete in the first instance to survive and certainly to be competitive.

I want to say a few words in support of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL). It must not be allowed to go to the wall. It is a very important institution. We have in Barbados something which we are pleased to call the social partnership and the labour movement is an important player in that social partnership. The Ministry of Foreign Trade falls under my responsibility. There is no important trade negotiation meeting that I do not invite a representative or representatives from the labour movement and from the private sector as well to be accredited to the Barbados delegation.

I just came back this morning around 4 o'clock from Guyana where the CARICOM Trade Ministers were meeting, I chaired the meeting, a good meeting it was, and we work hard and finish the work in half the time and we were able to move smoothly and without any rancour partly because many

delegations led by the Barbados delegation had the private sector, the labour movement and various other organisations represented and who sat at the meetings, so it was a global effort.

Therefore, there is an important role for the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) because as the Honourable Prime Minister quite rightly puts it, the number of persons who are unionized nowadays is shrinking everywhere in the world including Barbados. People watched all of that going on on the television when we were in Seattle a couple of months ago without properly recognising that in the great United States of America only 10.9 per cent of the workers are unionized but the Unions there have a different attitude as to how they do business and they are very wealthy. Our unions here are not wealthy in that sense.

We have to recognise for instance that the whole world of work is in a mode of very rapid change even as we speak and as the 21st century opens up it is going to change. People are not going to be working in jobs for 30 and 40 years anymore. People are not going to be working 40 hours a week anymore. Already in some parts of the European continent, the work week has shrunk from 40 to 35 hours and it is getting shorter. People are going to work in modules of work. People are going to work at home.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I am very proud to say, I went in there and found flexitime and we have built on that. The Ministry is now virtually a paperless Ministry. In self defence I had to learn the computer because everything comes that way. Everybody has a monitor, you go in, in the morning and you switch on and your 'in box' comes up. All your messages are there and you have to take care of them. You go to the firewall and you authenticate because you are on to the Intranet which we have and the Internet as well but there is not a lot of difference between the two and every day ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, I am not ashamed. Mr. Chairman, I took lessons. I am not too old to learn. I had to learn. I must say that they were very supportive and friendly in the Ministry. When I was having my hour lesson in my lunch time which was my time, not the Government's time, the young people and so on there were very accommodating and very helpful to me.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that somebody else in the House had lessons and they did not take it in their own lunch time.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Not at all, but I am saying that this is the way of modern work. You go in there on a Saturday or a Sunday, midnight or 5 o'clock in the morning and do your work. One Monday morning when I cleared my 'in box' I saw messages from people who were obviously working either on Saturday or on Sunday and this is the way that it is done. All of the 10 missions of Barbados abroad are on line. I do not have to fly heads of missions in here to consult with them, we conference call and I can do that at a fraction of the cost and that is the way of work.

The Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) representatives and the representatives of labour in

Barbados to my knowledge are at the cutting edge of all of these things and these are the new areas that labour has to be concerning itself with and that is only the thin end of the wedge. There is so much more now that labour has to be leading the way and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) is well placed in this region to be doing that.

We are coming very swiftly to next month when the Prime Minister will go to the Intercessional Meeting of the Heads where the last two protocols will be put before them for approval. The Caribbean will move now to a single market and single economy and there is so much that we have to be doing and we are preparing ourselves for it. It would be a terrible thing when we prepare ourselves and then when you look in a few years time there is nothing but a void yawning before us.

In my judgement, what is on the agenda of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and what should be the business of the Student Revolving Loan Fund are very much connected so I have absolutely no difficulty in lending my support to this Supplementary Resolution to allow the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) to get on with what it is doing and to allow the Student Revolving Loan Fund to be able to address at least some of these new areas which are vital to the strategic interest of Barbados.

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Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

I keep saying in here, and it was a very prideful thing. It gave me a wonderful feeling to be in other small countries and hear people say: "You know we are following the Barbados model." It makes you feel very good but the Barbados model will begin to shrink if we cannot provide the resources that are needed.

Let it go forth from this Chamber today that we call upon those who are defaulting for no good reason in respect of the Student Revolving Loan Fund, to come forward voluntarily. They do not have to wait for exposure and all of that. It is not necessary. Make it possible for other people to have the opportunity which they had and by their inaction are now robbing other young people.

Mr. Chairman, I am much obliged to you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I am prepared to support this particular supplementary but I want to say something about the Caribbean Governments.

They have now destroyed the trade union movement within the Caribbean and they have an obligation to make sure that that organisation they have destroyed that they put some money behind it because the workers, and I warned this House already ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I really must rise on a point of order to correct the record that the Caribbean Governments have not been irresponsible in the financial, institutional nor other

affairs of the Caribbean Congress of Labour.

The financial problem they find themselves in is that they have historically depended upon members' dues which have been shrinking, and from the resources of international donors which have now been cancelled. The regional Governments have nothing to do with the financial plight within which the labour movement in the region finds itself and to have that entered into the record is a false and misleading statement. The Governments have not destroyed the Congress, Sir.

D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Peter stated that it is because of the dues that they are not getting now from their members. It is obvious and you will find it throughout the Caribbean that every trade union within the Caribbean will have reduced membership.

I have warned this House about the politics of inclusion that happened within the Caribbean where the trade union leaders felt they had to connect with the leaders in the political party and where the masses of the people felt that the trade unions were too far away from them. If you doubt me, Sir, I want you to ask VOB for a tape some three Sundays ago where a trade union in Barbados admitted ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The only trade unionist who ran with political parties in Barbados were persons who ran for the Democratic Labour Party so if the Member for St. Lucy is saying that trade union politicians associating with the Democratic Labour Party have destroyed the labour movement, he should say so specifically.

I know what it is, Sir, to have a trade unionist running against me consistently on behalf of the DLP. I am very pleased that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy now is confirming that she is a destructive agent.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying that the Prime Minister knows quite well what I speak of because just today the Prime Minister was reading a book called "Strengthening a Democracy" and not by accident. When the Prime Minister is reading his book, he does not go to the back to recognise that his name is in this book. It so happened that attending that Conference that the Prime Minister had a trade unionist with him. Look at the names. You are going to see your name in there and you are going to see another trade unionist.

I am saying that the trade union movement in Barbados allowed itself to be depleted because instead of connecting to their people they are connecting with leaders. It happened within the Caribbean. That is why workers felt their case was not being put by the trade union leaders within the Caribbean and I am not surprised that the CCL which is supposed to be looking after the trade unions, the mother of the trade unions in the Caribbean, finds itself in a position where it has now to come and beg the people that they are supposed to be fighting when looking after the interest of their members.

I am saying that the Caribbean workers have to wake up and tell the leaders of the trade union movement whether they be the normal trade union movement or the CCL that we understand how they

got there and we do not want you begging on doorsteps because if you are representing our interest, we would have paid the subs, we would induced people to come and join the trade union movement and you would not have to do that.

The politics of inclusion teaches you to deplete the masses and then have them come begging you. That is exactly what has been practised in Barbados and exactly what has been practised in the Caribbean and now we have the CCL. Throughout the world, politics of inclusion have destroyed the trade union movement.

I warned the leader of a particular trade union in this country if he did not wake up that some day he would find that he is the leader but he would not have a base and the evidence is here today. This subvention to the Caribbean Congress of Labour is not a minor one. It is a Bill that will destroy the whole trade union movement. Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I really must rise on a point of order, Sir, because the Honourable Member caused the House to believe that I attended a conference in which I was advised by a trade union leader and that the record shows that I attended the Conference with him. A Mr. Robert Morris was there in his own capacity. I just want the House to be assured, Sir, that at no stage has Mr. Morris been a political adviser of mine and that what was left as an impression that there is a document that shows that I was at a conference at which I was in cahoots with a trade union leader is false, misleading and a misrepresentation by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who should know better.

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Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I never said that the Prime Minister would be in cahoots with that gentleman because I know that he would have kept his distance from the Prime Minister and he is not party to the politics of inclusion. If you were speaking about the other one I would agree with you and support you, but not on this particular gentleman.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, it took a Banks truck driver, and I heard him on VOB, to put commonsense in the heads of certain people in this country when the Banks truck driver told the trade unionists that you have to stop dealing with the top and get back to deal with the basics. That is why we have May Day 2000. They now realise they have to get back to the people who have made them.

Do you imagine that somebody has to come and tell me that I have to meet with the masses and be part of the masses and stop dealing with three people at the top. That was a programme on VOB, out of the mouth of the same gentleman. I am not making this up. So I am not surprised that we have to

support the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and I will support it but this is the last time I will support CCL or any trade union movement in this Parliament, not when they have destroyed themselves by linking themselves to the Governments in the Caribbean and not recognising ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I said this is the last time I will be supporting the CCL or any trade union movement for this reason, when they have moved away from their people and gone to support governments at their own expense. If they had gone and supported the masses of people within the Caribbean they would have got their dues and they would not have to go and beg governments for subventions. It is disgraceful thing for any trade union that finds itself having to negotiate on people having to go back to the same people that they have to negotiate with and beg them for subventions.

I think that even though I will support this it must be taken in the light that it came here because the Government destroyed the trade union movement and then have them begging for scratch grain.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. I have to request that those remarks be struck from the record. I want to speak on behalf of Caribbean Governments that they have had nothing to do with the administration of the affairs of the Caribbean Congress of Labour. The problem faced by the institution is that the international support that has carried it from its inception has been withdrawn and its membership dues are not enough to sustain it. Governments have not destroyed the movement.

Contrary to what he says, Sir, the Government of Barbados in particular provides subventions for every trade union in this country and far from destroying the trade unions in this country over the course of the last four years we have expanded the subvention for the trade union movement in Barbados. The charge that the Government has destroyed trade unions is a false and misleading charge and is not supported by fact and I must ask that to the extent that it does not even collide with the truth that it be withdrawn as being unparliamentary and should be struck from the record.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I had said the Barbados Government, do that! You deal with the Barbados Parliament. Do not be misled by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. He knows better and he will not use any strategy in here to get away from my debating.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, the reason why the international organisations are now moving away from giving donations to certain organisations is that the reason for which they give money, the organisations are not acting under that premise any more. That is why and you need to ask them.

The next thing is the student revolving loan I support it too. There is a problem in this country that too many of us believe that we have to kick down the ladder that helped us up. We saw situations where other people because they are rich borrowed money and did not repay it there are a lot of people in Barbados who believe that they have to do the same thing. Foolishness! Not recognising that whenever they do that they are keeping down their own families.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I do not borrow from Government, not even from the National Bank.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that we need to recognise one factor in this country that if we do not pull along the people below us, this country will not go anywhere. I have already said that there are too many of my people I am seeing behaving too much like Jamaicans. If we do not do the right thing we are going ...

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member not be sidetracked. Time is slipping away.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying, imagine that we have a massive debate going on in this country as to whether Government has dealt with a particular situation or not and there are qualified economists in this country and other people who should have knowledge but they are too great to get involved in this debate and the University of the West Indies has educated these people and they cannot give an educated view.

There was a time when economists and accountants in this country were prepared to give an assessment of the economy but we have educated them and they sit down and drink coffee and laugh at poor people. That, too, must stop.

The same Student Revolving Loans are the same loans that helped them to University. They have to earn their worth in this country or I will attack them wherever I see them because they have to give an independent opinion in this country. We educate you to do that. We expect that from you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have one more minute to wind up your contribution.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I support these measures but I have to bring the facts and the Prime Minister knows quite well what I am speaking about so these side tactics by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter will not remove me from where I stand on this matter. I am saying that the trade union movement in this country and in the Caribbean need to be rebuilt. The Democratic Labour Party is to rebuild the trade union movement by not negotiating only with the top but we are prepared to negotiate with everybody in the trade union movement and the politics of inclusion for us does not start at the top. It starts with the masses.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, The Student Revolving Loan Fund was conceived in 1976 and the agreement establishing it in Barbados was in 1977 and the first draw-down from the Inter-American Development Bank was in 1978. I say this, Sir, to show that I know a little bit about this and when it was established it was established to assist persons of low income groups to have access to post secondary education.

At the time, Sir, the ceiling was \$24 000 and that excluded a significant amount of the middle class who were told then even in this Parliament out of my mouth that they should go and borrow from the commercial banks because we were only providing money for people of low income groups.

In those days, Sir, and right up to the period of 1986 the delinquency rate in repayment was hovering around one per cent. The ceiling was raised considerably and then embraced the whole middle class of

Barbados and it is then that the delinquency started. I do not think the Honourable Member on the other side should preach with so much piety because I remember back in 1984 the Government of the time brought an amendment to this Parliament to convert loans that were due and payable for 182 days, that was six months. The Government would pay all loans outstanding after 182 days. That was changed by the Democratic Labour Party.

I remember it well because I remember I had occasion to say that that would deplete the funds available for on-lending. That is one of the other reasons why we are in this position today.

The Government of Barbados also made a decision in this House that loans maybe converted to grants. That was in the original piece of legislation that loans could be converted into grants at the discretion of the Student Revolving Loan Fund Committee because there were a number of extenuating circumstances that could arise among the people in the lowest economic income groups such as happened in the early 1990s putting these people in a position not to repay.

In the early 1990s when the Democratic Labour Party was the Government there were over 200 graduates from the University of the West Indies, Barbadians in Barbados, who could not find jobs.

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Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

Over 200 who were unemployed. All that is in the record. The original provision was that you could convert those loans. The Democratic Labour Party brought legislation - I do not remember the year - but they brought legislation to change that and amended it out of legislation. These things are important to remember. It is important because we have a philosophical divide over what should happen in respect of this fund. We are either going to be providing money for low income groups, people who have no access to other financial institutions and bring about a certain educational

egalitarianism in this country where the children of the nutsellers, porters, gardeners and maids can have access to tertiary education, if they have the ability.

One of the things that I would like to put also in this debate is the question of the small number of high school graduates in Barbados who attend university. It is one of the lowest in the world. It is lower than most places in Europe, it is lower than most places in Asia and it is lower than most places in Latin America. We have a very low percentage of high school graduates who are going on to tertiary education. I would have thought that any strategy of development in future, particularly in these days with the challenges of globalisation and so on, would lean heavily on specialised training of our people at the post secondary education to meet that kind of challenge. I understand until recently the numbers of Barbadians who have been registering at the University of the West Indies that the numbers have been falling. Therefore, we have to try and find out why. The Students Revolving Fund is a life line to many young Barbadians who do not have access otherwise to money for education. Therefore, it is important, not only that we supplement today, but that we take a close look at the way it has been operating to find out why in this year it should be owed over \$9 million.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that the policy for collection of outstanding funds is rather weak. The Ministry has not set up a strong enough recovery unit to get the money back. If you do not tell people to pay the money, they are not going to pay. If you do not get after them to pay, nobody is going to exert themselves on paying money when the other bills are coming in with greater pressure. One of the things that has to be done is to reconstruct the unit to make sure that it is better prepared to carry out the work of recovery.

While talking about recovery, Sir, I am interested in hearing the Leader of the Opposition talked about people in London who had to find a lot of money and had to do these menial jobs and so on. The Democratic Labour Party some years ago toyed with the idea. I put it no stronger than that because they had a study done to have cost recovery which meant that students at the University of the West Indies, at Erdiston Teachers Training College, at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College would have to pay fees for attendance at those institutions. This matter was raised here in Parliament before the change of Government in 1994. It was an issue that was talked about and canvassed on platforms during that Elections. The Democratic Labour Party - I certainly have copies of the documents - have never been able to reconcile what they boasted about, about Errol Barrow being the father of free education. Like my learned friend yonder who talks so much about the poor people, I am concerned about those of the lower socio-economic group whom the Democratic Labour Party had targetted for paying fees to attend these institutions. We are going to throw all that in if we are going to talk about what really is the background to this particular issue.

Sir, I am also concerned about the policy of the Government in relation to the large payout it does for education at the tertiary level because it pays the University of the West Indies a massive sum of money. It also has many millions of dollars it gives to scholarships and exhibitions in additional to the money for the student revolving loan fund. The outlay is a massive amount on an annual basis. I have always been concerned that the University of the West Indies has not been sufficiently a beneficiary of the best brains of the young people of this country.

I remember, Sir, when I was Minister of Education I instituted a policy that people who were going to study at Government's expense must attend the University of the West Indies if the university offered

the disciplines that they were pursuing. It was only when the University of the West Indies was not offering such a discipline that they should study outside the region. That policy has been changed but I do not remember when it has been changed. What it has done is to starve the University of the West Indies of the brightest of our young people and believe me, Mr. Chairman, in this era we need all of them.

One of the other areas I want to address very briefly before I take my seat is the question of the perception of who can get loans under the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Most people believe that it is only for university study. There has not been a vigorous promotion by Government that funds are available to people to go to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College and post secondary institutions generally. The 1200 who are defaulters, are all university trained people without exception. None of the people who got money to study refrigeration, plumbing, or mechanics at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or the Barbados Community College are delinquent. Not one of them from the information that I have received from the department.

Sir, I understand the difficulty. I share the view, as other Members before me, that those who are borrowing have a responsibility to repay. That it is unfair that they should benefit and now other students, some of whom have been promised funds and were supposed to start their courses in universities overseas in January, last month, were not in a position to go and had their entrance to the university deferred. A number of them have spoken to me.

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Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

I think it is cruel and insensitive of them including the professional class. There are many Attorneys at Law who borrow money from the Students Revolving Fund and will not repay. There are some politicians, they tell me who borrowed and will not repay. There are a lot of professional people who borrowed money and are doing exceptionally well and will not repay.

It is therefore incumbent on the Government which is going to take \$1.5 million to replenish this

fund, money that could have been spent fixing some roads in St. George South and these delinquents who can pay, refuse to pay thereby depriving the people of Brighton Tenantry in St. George stopping them from getting drainage and so on. This \$1.5 million definitely has stopped the ...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am asking the Government, all of us feel the same way, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, he feels like I do that the loans to those in the lowest economic sector who through difficulties cannot pay, should have their loans converted into grants. Those hundreds who are in a position to pay, should pay. The Government should set up a kind of enforcement unit. I do not share the Prime Minister's view of putting it in the newspaper. I do not like that. There is something about putting my name in the newspaper ...

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Not me. I do not owe them. The Fund came long after my day. To put your name in the newspaper could cause a lot of misery among your family.

The people signed bonds and the people who bonded them and gave them sureties you can go against them and more often than not, the people who signed the sureties are people of means and I believe that the Government should strengthen the existing unit. \$9.3 million can give some lawyers about \$1.4 million in legal fees.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The scale says 15 per cent of the money you collect. If you collect \$9.3 million, you get about \$4.4 million in fees.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Not me. I am not making a case for me because I do not want any work with the Government.

If you consult me, I can advise the Government on who are the hots among the Attorneys, who would go after you, who would have your house set up for sale early. I would give them the names if they want them.

Mr. Chairman, I did not intend to end on a note of levity. I feel very strongly about this fund. I have an emotional thing about this fund because as I said its intention is supported by both administrations and we could make tertiary administration accessible to the children of the poor. You would know, Mr. Chairman, without any body saying to you how deep is my commitment in that regard.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, \$9.3 million is a lot of money for there to be delinquency in terms of the payment to the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Mr. Chairman, regardless of how euphemistically you or how many pretty words we use, I think what we are actually saying this evening, Sir, is that a lot of those who borrow from the Student Revolving Loan scheme do not really have a conscience. I think that is what we are actually saying.

Mr. Chairman, when I was going to law school, I was one of those persons who benefitted from the Student Revolving Loan Scheme. I have to admit that when it came to repayment, never paid monthly. I used to find myself paying now and the next three months and the next four months and so on. I knew that I was not necessarily doing the correct thing even though I sent in many cases more than I should have sent. Sir, it really and truly got to me one day and I said "I cannot go on like this." I know the nature of the Fund and unlike the Honourable Member for St. John who said he wanted to pay it in one lump sum, I said I was not going to do it that way. Whether they like it or not, I am sending all of the money back one time and I paid them off. When I heard the Honourable Member for St. George say that there are a lot of people even politicians who are delinquent and who owe the fund, I said "Praise the Lord, not me."

Sir, I know he could not be speaking about me. Indeed, let me say this, if I had not repaid that money and was delinquent still, I would have been extremely embarrassed in this House today when this debate is going on. I feel good to know that I have paid them back. It is a fact that there are many people who have concluded their studies, they have done their courses in law and medicine and so on who without this Fund could never, never have completed those courses. This Fund has been a tremendous help to many professionals in Barbados.

We have to try to get home, Sir, to those who borrow from the Fund that it is revolving in nature. In other words, Sir, you have to replenish the fund so that someone else can borrow from it. I do not think a lot of people realize this. I do not even think they realize the significance of the name of the Fund and this is something which I believe we have to drive home to the borrowers.

Sir, the scheme has gone to lengths to help people. I know they have a type of cheque system where they have send books to you and tell you just write it up every month and send it to them and that is going to help. They have gone to lengths to help people and still in spite of all that they are doing and all that they have done, those who have borrowed from the Fund continue to treat it as though it is their play thing and they just will not repay it.

Barbadians do not know how fortunate they are to have a scheme like this in place. There are so many other Caribbean countries which would die to have a scheme like this in place. When you do to law school and you tell people how you are being funded by the Student Revolving Loan Fund some of them put their hand to their mouths and say "what?" because they are scrounging to make it through on their own.

4:20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

I was there so I can tell you. Barbadians do not realize how fortunate they are to have a scheme like this in place and it is a shame that we have reached the point where the delinquency rate is now some \$10 million. As the Honourable Member for St. George South said, it would shock you if you knew some of the names of the persons who are delinquent in repayment of the Fund. They drive around in the fanciest cars and live in the fanciest houses but they are badly in arrears to the Student Revolving Loan Scheme.

I even know of a situation where the Student Revolving Loan Fund has started to send work to the lawyers and one of the lawyers that they sent to, to collect the actual money from the people, he was badly in arrears.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I believe that we do need to put a bit more pressure on the guarantors especially those who have and as I said already, many of the guarantors are people with means and if you put pressure on them, they in turn, I believe, will put pressure on those on whose behalf they signed the guarantee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could say a few words briefly on the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL)
...

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, every time the Leader of the Opposition gets up, he talks about the Labour Minister and the labour legislation and so on and I believe that he wants me to be on his back but there are so many people on his back now that I would not join them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very happy for the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) because they have been in the forefront of workers' education in the Caribbean for many years. The Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) has done tremendous work right through the Caribbean region. Indeed, it is always felt that Caribbean workers - when you go to international meetings you get this coming through - are more educated than workers in most other parts of the world. Caribbean workers know more about labour issues, their rights and their strengths than workers in other parts of the world and a lot of it come from the workers' educational programme which the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and of course other unions in the Caribbean as well have virtually perfected.

Another thing about the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) is that it has a much broader perspective of labour issues than most of the other unions because you find situations where a Jamaican Union thinks Jamaican and where a Trinidadian Union thinks Trinidadian and so on but the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) is spread over the region and it is like an umbrella organisation and it takes great interest in many of the issues like harmonization of labour legislation throughout the region whilst the other unions tend to be ad idem on this point and that point and so on. Therefore, the Caribbean Congress of Labour, as I said, has a much broader perspective of labour issues than the kind of indigenous workers unions throughout the region.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Unions cannot survive at all in this part of the world without an input from Government. I believe in almost all Caribbean jurisdictions, not only in Barbados that the Government very often has to make a grant to trade unions because they would not be able to survive strictly on the dues of members. From time to time, you are going to get situations where in spite of that, labour institutions still run into financial problems, as we have a situation here now with the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL). I do not think that we should scoff at the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) or put it down because of any mismanagement or anything of the sort. Indeed, as I have said, if you pull certain props as has been happening here, from under them they will virtually collapse.

I am happy to see that the Barbados Government has come to the virtual rescue of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL). We must not allow an institution like the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) to die. I supposed some might be asking why give it this grant when you have other unions who need grants as well in Barbados. People may very well argue that, but I do not think it is a question of whether it is a Barbadian thing. This is a regional organisation which has pulled Barbados along and I think we are virtually indebted to it and I welcome this initiative.

The Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) is always very supportive of each and every Caribbean Government. Whenever we go to international labour conferences such as to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and so on, the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) supports us all along and I believe that it is because of their presence that the labour movement in the Caribbean has earned the respect from international organisations that they now enjoy. Whenever we meet with the Director General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at the ILO office in Trinidad, they accompany us there, and whenever we put issues before the Director General which we think would augur well for the Caribbean Labour Movement, they always make a contribution.

Indeed, Sir, I am extremely happy to see that rather than allow the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) to flounder, that the Barbados Government has ensured that it gets back on its feet.

I am obliged to you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I rise to bring the debate on Head 19 to a close and to thank Honourable Members who have contributed to the debate. I am not going to respond to the provocations from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because the Government has had no part in the destruction of any labour movement. For many long years, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) has supported a number of candidates in the field who were members of the labour movement. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have himself succeeded other persons of the labour movement

who served in this House and he would have also supported in three unsuccessful elections a native of St. Lucy in her unsuccessful attempt to come into this House by way of a seat in St. Peter.

Therefore, there was a strange hollow empty echo to the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that sought to connect political parties to the labour movement and through that connection to the destruction of the Labour movement. I said it was a strange hollow echo which could have been in the nature of a strange hollow confession on the part of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) for what it has done to the credibility of the labour movement over the years.

4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I said the Democratic Labour Party helped to destroy the trade union movement. The Right Honourable Member knows quite well that it was not the Democratic Labour Party that introduced the politics of inclusion. So you can only associate politics of inclusion in destroying the trade union movement in this country and the Caribbean.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, he lambasted the labour movement. He attacked every economist in Barbados for not trying to understand the gibberish that issues, not in this House, Sir, but issues from him when he calls the call-in programmes and I have spoken to them as to why they do not come to his rescue and they said that they were trained in economics not in religious education because when he speaks on financial matters, Philipians apply. It is like the peace of God that surpasseth all understanding. No economist is capable or elsewhere is in a position to bring enlightenment to what passes from the lips of the member for St. Lucy as economic analysis, so I apologise on their behalf.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Right Honourable Member has just admitted to the House that we have wasted all of the money we spent on the Student Revolving Loan Fund because he is saying that people at Cave Hill are not qualified to speak on the economy.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Sir, I enjoy the member for St. Lucy's speeches too much and I am to have to try not to hear them and to respond to them but I really must say, Sir, that he is a treasure and if he had not been invented this House would have to invent him. He brings a levelling touch - I mean this not in any bad way - a little folly to serious matters that makes the serious matters ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Right Honourable Member is misleading the House. I cannot understand, Mr. Chairman, how you can allow the Prime Minister to say that matters that deal with the economy of Barbados...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If I recall correctly, the Right Honourable Member said to bring some folly into serious matters.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: It is also a reflection on the Chair and he will have to withdraw those

remarks. What the Right Honourable Member is saying is that you allow folly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot speak for me, Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am only repeating what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is saying.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, we are all Honourable Members in here, but he is the closest thing we have ever had to a sports model as a Member of Parliament.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I cannot believe, Sir, that a man that cannot count can refer to me as a sports model. The sports model taught him how much money would be collected in VAT. It was the sports model that told him that he was printing money.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, let me proceed. The matter before the House is a matter of great seriousness. Just to say that as regards the CCL the amount that is being provided by Parliament to the Caribbean Congress of Labour is not intended to be an annual subvention. It is intended to lift them out of a situation of virtual insolvency. It is a one-shot rescue act but the Congress will be putting up to the regional Governments a request, supported by a programme for institutional reform, for a subvention amounting to about \$1 million to support a three-year programme beginning in the year 2000.

I believe that it is not too much to find \$1 million over two years to support this institution. It is an institution that has 31 affiliates in 17 Caribbean countries serving over 127 000 workers most of whom are from the lower and from the middle classes. It is worthy of regional support, whereas this is not going to be an annual subvention to this extent I would imagine that from time to time over the course of the next few years that the Government of Barbados will be providing support in our estimates for the Caribbean Congress of Labour.

I will be going in the inter-sessional meeting of Caribbean Heads, in March, to make that pledge on behalf of the Government of Barbados in support of the continued existence of the Caribbean Congress of Labour.

Sir, the debate that we had today on the Student Revolving Loan Fund really speaks to a larger and a more distressful syndrome in society. The reality is that 34 years after independence Barbados is becoming an over indulgent society and it is a matter that we have to pay attention to. People have come in this country at an early stage in our development as an independent nation to enjoy what appears to be an effortless prosperity.

I suspect that because of the range of opportunities, the welter of concessions and special programmes that are put at the disposal of the people of Barbados that each succeeding new opportunity is being taken for granted and less and less work is being attached to the opportunities that people are now enjoying. This Student Revolving Loan Fund is but a small part of an overall wide spectrum of supports, expenditure programmes, special incentives to train and educate the people of Barbados. It goes hand in hand with over \$50 million a year in support for education of our people at the University of the West Indies.

The expansion of the facilities made available under the Student Revolving Loan Programme has gone hand in hand with the virtual doubling of the intake at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. It has gone hand in hand with a massive expansion in the range of disciplines made available at the Barbados Community College. It has gone hand in hand with programmes being instituted to allow the Community College to work with the University of the West Indies in aggregate degrees and the like. It has gone hand in hand with an expansion of funds for education made under the development plan. There must be no slackening in the national effort to train this generation and future generations of Barbadians in keeping with modern requirements. I suspect, Sir, that Barbadians are now reaching the point where we are beginning to take it all for granted and believe that it is like that passage in Richard II that we are a nation "on whom nature and God has determined that certain special indulgences will forever be conferred".

In too many walks of life I believe that spirit of over-indulgence is now taking the place of long-standing Barbadian values that have been in the forefront of making this country a strong and stable society.

I feel that all of us who are called to public life must accept responsibility to help to bring back that sense of thrift, that sense of discipline, the sense that you cannot just get something for nothing, the sense of pride and industry that were such emblems of the Barbadian character and that are now I fear being destroyed because there is a sense that it is all coming so easy that there is no need either to struggle or to live up to the responsibility.

It is sad to say that it is not only in the area of education, Sir. There is a general abuse by Barbadians of the facilities in the area of health. Institutions do not feel that they have to account.

4:40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

In this supplementary there is a line item that Mr. Errol Barrow, when he was Minister of Finance, used to quarrel about every year and that every Minister of Finance quarrels about year. Supplies and materials of institutions are just routinely abused. It is a matter of fact, Sir, that there is a culture that condones it, that if you beat the system and get away with it even though you yourself have to pay by paying taxes, that there is a momentary thrill of victory that you have done a wonderful thing. The truth,

Mr. Chairman, is that Barbados must never reach the stage where we have no sense of what our realities are.

Sir, tomorrow, I am going to give a speech at a seminar sponsored by the World Bank, CDB and the IMF....

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Well, they are in the Caribbean. It is a regional seminar. The reality of business in Barbados is such that we have done well but what is before us as a challenge is something that Barbadians must become alert and alive to.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the point I am making is simply this. That those persons who are in default to the Students Loan Bureau share a disposition with many other Barbadians who feel that they can beat the system and get away with it or abuse the system or use the sources intended in one use for another use and that they are doing a wonderful thing. That they should be encouraged to do so particularly if social justifications can be advanced on their behalf that they are doing it because they are the small black man.

Sir, it is not justifiable but I say to this House, Sir, that is an aspect of our national life that is weakening the fabric of our society and that we all have a responsibility to move to correct it by instituting new systems of discipline. In every respect, at some stage it will come to the individual having to make a choice.

I want to come to the last point that I have to make. We have to avoid creating a society where we disassociate people from having a direct responsibility for their own survival, for their own success and for the consequences of their own behaviour. Government in particular has the responsibility to protect the vulnerable but too many issues in this country are being confused because of what I call 'a sociology of confusion' about roles and classes. We are busy disconnecting the individual from the consequences of his own behaviour and casting that obligation on the state and justifying corrupt, immoral and irresponsible behaviour by all kind of false sociology that people have a social right to do so because you are victims of some historic process or victims of some kind of bad behaviour.

Barbados, Sir, will go the brink if the attitude that everybody must beat the system or that everybody must be indisciplined becomes the order of the day. I see this, Sir, in the broader sense as being reflective of this over indulgence that this society is sadly coming to accept as the pattern. I feel that we have, Sir, as the persons responsible for this country's destiny to call serious and searching attention to it and, in fact, Sir, to rescue the country from its perpetuation because if we take this attitude with us into the future, this attitude of which this default record is a part, Sir, then those things that have made Barbados strong will vanish.

Sir, I close by saying that Havelot Brewster wrote a very perceptive piece which I would commend to all Members of the House. He spoke about the role of the social capital in economic development. It is his piece and the work by Francis that I keep referring to. He makes the point that the difference

between a Jamaica and a Barbados is that Barbados has had a strong social capital and a strong sense responsibility. There were networks that intended to put the public good about the private good; there were networks to keep families strong and communities coherent and that at the end of the day, that social capital which is stronger than financial capital was the basis of nation building. We might be in danger, I suspect, Sir, of unwittingly eroding the social capital by causing people to feel that it is too free and all too easy.

Sir, I have seen this broader picture of which this that is but a part.

The Government will do its best to bring back discipline to this programme. I also feel, Sir, that the Students Loan Revolving Programme was one of those programmes where the notion that it will at some stage be made free, was part of the psychology. I feel that all of us, Sir, have to get away from that at some stage. We have to stop telling people who live in the National Housing Corporation houses that they do not have to pay their rent. We have to stop telling people that they do not have to pay their taxes. We have to stop telling people that they have to look to the Government for every expenditure and to do for them themselves what they can do for themselves. I really want to make this point because it is not only in this program but in very many aspects of national life that one sees that dangerous, inextricable deterioration in values which underlie this.

Persons in my generation, Sir, would have been afraid of borrowing money and not paying because that is how we were brought up. We were afraid to owe. There is a whole generation, Sir, the real bedrock of the Barbadians society were the first persons to pay their land tax because they were not ever going to be found in a situation where anybody could cast any stain on their good names. That has changed. I really therefore, Sir, am urging the House to let us all not see this just as a financial issue but as an issue that goes to the heart of the society and recognise the obligation that we have to generations of Barbadians not yet born, to stop what I regard as a slide in values of this society that will only destroy our social capital and carry with it the civility of this country.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19 MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS - AMENDMENT TO SUBPROGRAMME 148 - EXPLANATORY NOTES

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Amendment to the Explanatory notes 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 & RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, this request is for the sum of \$314 438 for the continuation of the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development Program for the remainder of the financial year.450 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, as is customary from time to time the financial planners at the various Ministries will be out by some small figure. In this particular case the main subprogrammes which are requesting these funds as the paper indicates, the main one would be the marketing facilities. A sum of \$108 886 is being requested for the maintenance of property. Work is to be done on plant and equipment at various markets located throughout the island. There are four forklifts which require servicing and part of these funds will go towards the servicing of these projects in addition to minor work on the buildings.

Sir, under Operating Expenses, we are seeking \$25 000 and this amount will cover the cost of outstanding claims which were brought against the Ministry for the spoilage of fish at the various markets. From time to time the refrigerators at the Bridgetown Fishing Complex especially, malfunction and those who use those refrigerators for storage, occasionally would suffer some loss as a result of spoilage of fish. We are seeking \$25 000 to meet the claims of these aggrieved fisher folk. It means that the clients of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would be able to have their claims met in the very near future.

We are also seeking just over \$45 000 for marketing facilities, supplies and materials. Careful analysis of the stocks and the utilization rates of the stocks indicate that we would need to replenish certain types of goods and we are seeking \$45 000 for that purpose.

The Subprogramme, Fishery Services requires an additional \$23 800 to cover the cost of a laminating machine which was delivered during the current financial year but was ordered the previous year.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier we are seeking \$314 000 itemized as follows: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has been able to do a reasonably good job this year with the management of the funds allocated at the beginning of the financial year and we are just seeking to have these additional funds to see the Ministry's subprogramme through to the end of this financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I beg that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, we must recognize that this is now Supplementary No. 14 which were supposed to be things of the past. We are now at No. 14 and it is clear to me that a lot of them still will have to be presented before this House.

I was hoping, Sir, that in these Supplementaries we would have been able to get some substantial

amount of money to compensate the Sugar Industry for the lost quota that they will be having shortly. It is clear, listening to the CEO of the Sugar Industry that they were expecting a reply since January. This is now the month of February and they have not heard that reply as yet.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, No, No, from the European Union on the lost quota. I am saying that if the Sugar Industry is not given that \$54 000 sugar quota, the Barbados Labour Party will have to compensate them for the loss of revenue. It is because of the Barbados Labour Party policy's on sugar that they were not able to meet the sugar quota and I am a bit surprised that in a country like ours that we cannot get a serious analysis on an issue like this.

I have raised this issue and it seems to me that nobody in Barbados is capable of dealing with this issue. Yet still we hear in Parliament about sports model. If this is an issue that is regarded as a sports model, then this Parliament could close down and all of us could go home. We have a serious situation in this country where a deliberate policy has destroyed the foreign exchange base of the economy and we are going to hear things about sports model in this Parliament.

I am saying, Sir, that the agricultural industry in this country will be threatened if we do not get a positive response from the European Union on the sugar industry. It means that we will have serious environmental problems in this country. It also means that the land sharks will continue to take every (single) piece of land in this country and cut it up for their usage.

Sir, we need now to move away from the sugar industry and I need to hear that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance will take over this issue and that they will treat it as a serious issue and stop leaving it up to the CEO of the BAMC. This is much heavier now than the CEO of the BAMC and if they do not take it over by the end of the week, then I would know that they want to destroy the sugar industry and I would also know that they want to connect with the IADB Report.

I am saying that this is too serious a matter for a decision not to be taken that sugar industry should have been given since January. It has not been given and not one single Minister has decided to take up this as a serious issue. I am calling on the Prime Minister to make sure that whichever Minister who was supposed to deal with this particular issue that the issue be dealt with.

Another thing, Sir, I want to know how it is that we have a cotton crop in this country that can bring in valuable foreign exchange and every single year at least between 25% and 50% of the crop is not reaped but yet still, we have a situation that whenever construction workers are needed in this country, people can bring them in. I am telling you now that we need the foreign exchange from the cotton crop this year and they should make sure that work permits are issued so that the crop can be reaped.

I strongly believe that the same way our workers can leave here and go to the United States to pick apples and tobacco and all that foolishness to make sure that they get foreign exchange, we could bring people in here to reap the cotton crop to make sure that we maximize foreign exchange too. There is nothing wrong with that so I am calling on the Government to make sure that our foreign exchange is maximized.

5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

The Government must understand that they have a role to play to make sure that they maximize the cotton crop for the simple reason that if the industry is not doing it, they will have to move a step up because it is in the total interest of Barbadians. Do you think, that the United States of America Government waits on the farmers to decide whether they are going to bring people from Barbados or not to work on the farms? The United States of America Government made sure that a policy was put in place to bring the workers in to ensure that they maximize the foreign exchange and that is what I am saying.

The Barbados Government needs a higher involvement in the industry. The Government is giving subsidies every single year to the sugar industry and they must understand that the sugar industry is not only about sugar but we should have an agriculture industry where we can look at the total agriculture sector and seek to maximize the foreign exchange benefit from it. In this country we must understand that these things must be done.

The next thing, Sir, just last year, we had a debate in here about the Abattoir down the Harbour Road and we were told in this Parliament to give the private sector the right to run the abattoir and everything will be well. Less than six months later, we had to hear a Minister saying that he has to subsidize the Abattoir, when the butchers said not to give it to them because as soon as you give it to them that they will be coming for subsidies. We had a meeting and they told us that and they would have told the Barbados Government the same thing. If the Abattoir is going to continue asking Government for \$200 000 and 400 000 - I understand it cost \$ 1.4 million - I am calling on the Minister of Housing and Lands to bring the necessary land compulsory acquisition in here and let us acquire it because it is doing the same thing that was done when it was down the Harbour Road. If we are going to subsidise something, let us subsidise something for the small farmers not those people who increase their prices for slaughtering. You know what is ridiculous, they increased the prices and reduced production in this country and now we are subsidising them - no. Let us compulsory acquire it, reduced the cost of slaughtering and get production back up, it will make more sense. I know the Honourable Prime

Minister will agree that once production is up, the food bill will be lower and we will not have to spend so much foreign exchange.

Just because the reserves are high, it does not necessarily mean that we have a lot of money to play with. I have already said in this House that every single cent in my pocket could be borrowed money and it means the same thing with the foreign reserves. The foreign reserves that we have in this country are all borrowed funds and if you want me to account for it I, but I will not waste the Parliament time with it again. I am saying ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am also saying that the Minister of Agriculture must make sure that the fishermen in Barbados connect to CARICOM. It is a waste of time telling me about Protocols because we cannot get protocols within our own country and this is where we should practice them first. I am saying that if the Barbadian fishermen cannot fish in Trinidad and Tobago waters but Trinidad and Tobago drinks can come to Barbados as they like that there can be nothing called Protocols in the CARICOM region because Protocols are supposed to be about fair play and there is no fair play.

If my fishermen in Half Moon Fort, the ones in Oistins, the ones in Skeetes Bay, the ones in Conset Bay, the ones in Bathsheba, the ones in Speightstown, and the ones in Six Men's cannot fish in Trinidad and Tobago waters, I am saying that we have to stop drinking Trinidad and Tobago soft drinks. I am serious about this and I will tell them the truth. Until I see positive action in this regard, do not expect me to sell a Trinidad and Tobago soft drink because my fishermen that got to come and buy them cannot get Trinidad fish so they cannot drink Trinidad soft drinks. The day that they can fish in Trinidad and Tobago waters, you can bet your life that they can start drinking Trinidad and Tobago soft drinks and that is simple.

I wish that they were more people in Barbados that would think like me because you know why we have to stand up for people like the fishermen, it is because in this country we feel that fishermen are nobody and there are people who feel that they do not have to put a case for them. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would back me on that, that we have to stand up for the fishermen, or not the next time I see him in Oistins talking to the fishermen I will have to tell them that he is not doing what he is accustomed doing so I know that he will support me on that.

I am saying that if we are going to have Protocols in the Carribean we first must make sure that the underprivileged will gain from them. Do not come telling me that the professionals can move through the Carribean as they like because the fishermen must be able to move through the Caribbean as they like also.

Thank you very much.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I particularly enjoyed and thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for the support that he is giving to the Government's position on the matter of interregional trade and the position that the Government has staked out in the strongest possible terms about the need for us to make sure that all parts of the Caribbean single economy can be made to feel as though they are members of that single economy. The Government has spoken to this matter with great force and

the initiatives at the highest level to put in place an arrangement with Trinidad and Tobago to resolve all outstanding trade issues which will continue. Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke on the sugar issue, I listened in respectful silence because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, as we all know, was once the Financial Controller of the Barbados Sugar Industry Limited (BSIL) from which position he presided very happily over the financial ruins of the sector and he can speak with ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, for the umpteenth time, The Prime Minister has lied to Parliament on that particular post and I would ask you, Sir, to respectfully ask the Prime Minister to respect his position and to withdraw those remarks.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy worked in the Barbados Sugar Industry Limited as an Accountant. He did that for many years and it was a period that coincided with such a dramatic decline in the financial fortunes of the sector that I think that if we were to do a linear regression that we will find that there is a positive correlation between his input into the sector and the financial ruins of the Barbados Sugar Industry.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I have asked you to ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter to withdraw those remarks because he knows that at the same time I was at the Barbados Sugar Industry Limited, he was at the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) doing worst than I.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, it was because the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) had to accept direction from the overall industry. Sir, the matter of the sugar industry present and its future is a serious issue. Effectively, the fate of the Barbados Sugar Industry was set in 1974-75 on the occasion when the LOME Convention was being negotiated and a decision had to be made as to the level at which our quota with the new the LOME was going to be set.

The history of the matter is very interesting. There was that period when there was a temporary shortage of sugar on the world market and sugar was being sold to the Arab countries. The Government of Barbados which was then selling 113 000 tonnes under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement determined thereafter to set its quota in Europe - and Mr. Branford Taitt did it - to 54 000 tonnes. What that has meant is that the industry waned after. I remember that at Independence Barbados was producing 200 000 tonnes of sugar and an industry that could have produced 200 000 tonnes of sugar, thereafter found itself having 54 000 tonnes of guaranteed export market and 14 000 tonnes of local market as their only preferential market and anything above 68 000 tonnes - that is the 54 000 tonnes on the European market and the 14 000 local - had to be sold on the world free market.

5:10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Prime Minister is misleading the House. It is quite clear he does not understand about sugar because there is also provision that when you are finished exporting your 54 000 tonnes of sugar, you are also allowed to export something called carry-forward sugar which can be used to make up the following year. It is not 68 but 68 plus the carried forward that would have been regarded as guaranteed sugar.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, you can only carry forward if there was a shortfall and that it could be shown that the shortfall was due to circumstances. The reality is that in the mid 1970s, the future of the sugar industry of this country was shaped to the extent where its guaranteed markets were so drastically reduced that a large part of the industry came to depend upon world market prices for its survival. We know about the history of world market prices for sugar. Therefore, beginning in the 1970s an industry that used to produce 200 000 tonnes has comprehensively had to be compressed because there is simply no way that given our costs the Barbados sugar industry can have a large part ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Prime Minister knows quite well that up to 1976 we were not producing 200 000 tonnes of sugar.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, that is 1966 but the impression is being given to the House that we were producing that up to 1976 and then we had to cut back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not how I have read it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I bring you forward because I will not have it said from the mouths of the spokesmen of the Democratic Labour Party that this Government has destroyed the sugar industry of this country.

In 1994 when we inherited the Government, the sugar industry production was 38 000 tonnes and unable to meet our market commitments to Europe.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Prime Minister is misleading the House again for the simple reason if we had produced only 38 000 tonnes of sugar ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you on a point of order?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes. Mr. Chairman, the 38 000 tonnes of sugar had to add to something to make 54 000. That is exactly what I am talking about. We would have had to have carry-forward sugar to make up the 54 000 tonnes to supply the quota. Now you understand how it works.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I will not be distracted by foolishness. In 1995 there were 38 000 tonnes of sugar. Plans had been set in train to incur a lot of loans to restructure the sugar industry to bring it back up to a target where it could have supplied the preferential European market.

One of the first decisions we took was to review that because the truth of the matter is that the best market for Barbadian sugar is not the European market. It is the local market because the price paid for sugar locally is higher than the price we get on the European market. Therefore, to the extent that the sugar target set by the Democratic Labour Party would not have allowed the sugar industry to reach a stage where it would both produce the 54 000 for the European market and to satisfy the requirements of the local market, this administration asked the industry to change the sugar target to allow us to go to a stage where our sugar production could be brought up to 70 000 tonnes rather than the \$ 60 000 that was the basis of the Democratic Labour Party's sugar programme.

It also meant, Sir, that we had to review the arrangements in relation to factories because the DLP's provision on sugar production was that if you set a lower than 70 000 tonnes sugar target, one of the sugar factories would have to go and that factory was going to be Bulkeley. We reviewed the issue pertaining to the factory in that context.

Sir, the industry then pleaded that they were not in a position to finance a replanting programme to bring the industry back from 38 000 tonnes to 70 000 tonnes and they asked the Government for financial support to enable them to bring back the industry. Between 1994 and 1998, therefore, the Government of Barbados has been instituting a programme of support for the industry to help it to bring back sugar production to a stage where we could look forward to the prospect of being able to produce both to meet our external market quota requirements as well as to reach the stage where we can produce sugar for the local market.

Sir, it is not just a matter of national pride here. A large part of the financial survival of the Barbados sugar industry will require it being put in a position where it can produce to sell sugar locally because the local price of sugar is higher than the price we get for the European market. The Government has therefore told the sugar industry that where the industry's operations coincide with the national objective the Government is going to support it. We gave the industry support, as I said, for replanting.

As regards our present policy, Mr. Chairman, that has to be set in the context of the changing dynamics of international trade rules. Under the Uruguay round for the first time trade in agriculture was brought within the ambit of multilateral trade negotiations. New rules to govern agricultural trade are part of the built-in agenda for the multilateral trade organisations. That agenda will continue whether or not the international community decides that the next round will be a development round, a Clinton round, a millennium round or whatever.

Services and agriculture were brought within the context of international trade negotiations at the Uruguay round. Commitments had been given on the part of those countries that have subsidised their agriculture that as part of the effort to introduce a new international regime to govern the trade and agriculture, they were going to reduce their domestic price support.

The Governments of the European Union today provide at least 47 cents in each dollar of the farm incomes of their agricultural producers. In Japan 60 cents in every dollar of farm income is a subsidy paid by the Government. The world is eventually going to move towards free trade in agricultural commodities. You cannot have free trade if some countries are subsidising their producers and other are not. Therefore, binding commitments have been given by the Europeans that they are going to, over the course of the next 10 years in each year reduce their price supports to their produces of beet sugar.

The crunch is that the price they pay their producers is the same price they pay us.

5:20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

We, therefore, face a scenario in which we are already aware that under the new rules of international trade the revenue payable to us in those terms will decrease each year because of the new rules of international trade. The situation is even being made more complex because as you have already seen in order to ensure the competitiveness of the European economies the Euro, the currency in which most of the business is being done now, is now coming in as a weaker and weaker currency.

There is a very stark reality that we must face that over the foreseeable future because of the commitment of the European Union to the WTO we are likely to receive less revenue per tonne sold on the European market. This is in the context of a situation where we start from being not only a high cost producer but one where our cost of production is so substantially higher than the revenue, that a large part of the independent farming community in Barbados can no longer afford to produce sugar because unless your sugar production is above a certain scale the cost of harvesting and transportation of sugar for small farmers is higher than the price that they receive when they sell it to the factories. Most small farmers in Barbados cannot now afford, unless they are otherwise wealthy, to produce sugar. The harvesting and transportation costs are higher than the price that they receive.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a certain sense of reality now has to be brought to the sector and to the planning of the sector. Eighteen months ago in anticipation of this I spoke to this House in a budget debate when I said that the time is upon us when there has to be an agricultural trust, and it will be here by April, for us to be able to find ways of subsidising the sector but ways that are WTO compliant because there is that many and no more ways that you can subsidise sectors now under the WTO rules.

My concept of the support that has to be given to the agricultural sector by way of the agricultural development trust is not to encourage inefficient producers to increase their costs and then we give them money to buttress their inefficiencies. If sugar is to survive and it must survive because sugar is vital not only to the rural society and vital to foreign exchange earnings but Barbados will not be serious about being a tourism economy with a scruffy, bad-looking rural society. It is a large part of the charm, and the ambiance of what Barbados has to offer comes from the fact that we have a rural society in good husbandry. So we are all in this together. It is not only about sugar. It is about the whole society.

We have to find ways of helping the industry come in contact with resources to retool and recapitalise itself to be able to contain costs and increase productivity. Sir, that is the message that I want to get across. Sugar like commercial agricultural, like industry as well where people cannot look to old techniques of protectionism, has to look seriously to retooling, recapitalising, changing of techniques of production and our financial support has to be to help them to do that so that they have a chance of being able to compete in a more competitive world. Sir, I want that message to go forward.

In the case of manufacturing, I have told manufacturers to stop asking me to give quotas and put quotas on other people's goods or use licences or ban people's goods. The time is upon us when we must find industrial solutions to industrial problems. Trinidad & Tobago bit the bullet to their credit and they retooled and they recapitalised their manufacturing sector and they have become a relatively competitive industrial site in the region.

We also now have to start finding agricultural solutions to the agricultural problems. The Government can help but the word has to go forward that there has to be an instinct in the sector that they want to address the question of increasing costs because if you have a situation of increasing costs with decreasing revenue it is like two trains on a collision course, just time to smash and to destroy each other.

That, Sir, is our brutal reality. The industry is already a high cost producer. The small scale of production means that the per unit cost of production is higher than in most other locations. We have to help them to control their costs. I want the message to go forward that we will want to give incentives as I gave in my last Budget to relatively efficient farmers to improve their technology to find ways of increasing their efficiency, to control their costs.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Right Honourable Member is batting well. I hate to bring him to a close.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the interruptions by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Sir, I made up for that. It is a learning exercise as well but I must bring you to a close.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Sir, I want therefore in my last long paragraph to put as clearly as I can - because we have been discussing the Ministry of Agriculture - that the Government of Barbados will support the industry with incentives to help them lift their production up to national target. In circumstances where the sector is the victim of exchange rates variations beyond their control and losses can be attributed with those kinds of extraordinary circumstances that are the result of our choice

of a policy because the truth is that we have chosen exchange policy that bears on the sugar industry and if it can be shown that the losses of the sector can be attributed to exchange rates variation then I believe that the Government has an obligation to help as well.

We also have an obligation for agriculture and industry to find solutions at source to become more competitive and we are going to raise funds through the agricultural development trust to help retool, recapitalise, rebuild the sector but the Government has no desire to cause people who are inefficient to believe that the Government is going to buttress them by just giving them the taxpayers' funds. We will give support to people to make them more efficient and effective and more competitive.

I want to stress that point in the context of the abattoir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Sir, I do not know that you can go into the abattoir at this stage. You can come back.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has spoken and he has said a lot. A lot of the things he said are correct but the point is that the Prime Minister must understand that the ECU is not the currency that it is being paid in anymore. You are now being paid in the Euro which means that the sugar industry which is ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If I recall correctly, Honourable Member for St. Lucy ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I have not finished my statement as yet. The Euro that is declining will also go to impact on the sugar industry and with a decline in quota that is also going to impact on the sugar revenues of the sugar industry.

I know what the Prime Minister said and I agree with him on that. I am also saying that if they do not get the 54 000 quota that the decline, because now they would not have that guaranteed market, will reduce the amount of revenue that they get in.

I also want to challenge a point made by the Prime Minister. It is true that the local sugar brings in the most revenue where it is sold on the local market and not to the European Union but the truth is that when all the sugar is sold to the European Union and sugar is imported into the country that is where we make the money. The problem is that the wrong source has been making the money. If you look at the records you would see that I have always called upon the Government to transfer that right from BADMC because they have no connection with sugar.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. The member for St. Lucy is grossly misleading this House. It was the Democratic Labour Party that put the BADMC in a position where it was importing the sugar and using the profits from the sale of imported sugar for its operations. When in 1985-86 we agreed to increase the local price for sugar above the export price it was in the context of using the differential to provide funding to redeem the sugar price support bonds that had been issued in the 1980s. The funds were never put in the price support bonds and we, having thought that we had provided for the industry came here and found that the DLP used the profits from the import of sugar not to support the sugar industry but to support the BADMC which you all amalgamated.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that in 1994 when I came to this Parliament I spotted the problem and told the Government and they refused to accept the good advice because those sugar moneys should have gone into BAMC. It is the oldest industry that can connect to sugar and this is now six years after and you have not taken the advice. You also made the error by not exporting the sugar because if you had exported the sugar the country would have been better off in terms of revenue.

There is also another serious problem and I am going to talk about it. I cannot understand when a government like the Democratic Labour Party Government could amalgamate so many estates and the cost still increased. It is the only country in the world that could amalgamate so many estates get better equipment and the cost increased.

5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I am saying that that decision alone of amalgamating the estates should have seen a reduction in the production cost. I feel that the sugar industry should have to answer to that instead of you coming in here and trying to flog the Democratic Labour Party for putting a good idea. It is the Government's role to account for the subsidies that they have given the sugar industry. Can you imagine that there were estates with 200 acres some with 1 000 and now this industry has about 20 000 acres - I am talking about BAMC - to manage and they cannot reduce cost? I am saying that the Democratic Labour Party did a good thing but you cannot blame the Democratic Labour Party since 1994. I remember when the Prime Minister came in here and said he was going to give money for replanting and I asked the Prime Minister what conditions you have with that money and he ignored my advice and you are paying dearly for it.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: If you had taken my advice - go back to your records and see that I gave you good reasons and you refused it - we would not have seen an increase in production cost but you would have seen a reduction in the cost.

Let me tell you something, there is no way that you can have BAMC operating - one plantation has a cane fire in St. Lucy with massive area and there is another up there reaping green cane. Every single piece of equipment should go to that plantation that has the cane fire. I am saying that all that is needed is a better utilisation of the equipment available to the BAMC and we will get better productivity in this country. The Democratic Labour Party Government gave them the necessary equipment and finance to deliver the goods. Another thing, there is no where that we could have a BAMC in Barbados and we do not have a yearly supply of things like onions and vegetables because, in order for the BAMC to be profitable, there must have diverse crops to help supplement their income. The sugar industry cannot be seen as the sugar industry anymore. It must be seen as the agricultural industry in this country and that is the mistake we are making. We keep referring to it as the sugar industry and it is the biggest

error that we could make in this country because we need to say it as the agricultural industry. The day we see it as the agricultural industry, we are going to get a proper processing plant. When you want to discuss agriculture, come to me, I will teach you all some things.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: This talk in here about the Financial Controller and running down the industry, it is quite opposite. If you need advice of my financial dealings at the sugar industry, you need to speak to Mr. Deane or Mr. Johnson who served on one of your Board and they will tell you that if a lot of advice I had given was accepted the sugar industry would be a lot better of.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Since those persons did not understand the advice, Sir, he should pass it around so that we can see if we can follow it, Sir.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I educated the Prime Minister for six years on a simple matter and he did not take it in, how will take it in now. The Honourable for Christ Church South agrees with every thing but the Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot agree so it tells me, Sir, that they are sitting in the wrong positions and they need to change for this country to go forward.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, not only that. There is link between tourism and agriculture in this country. A lot of people very skillfully, and the Prime Minister talked about the problem that the declining currencies would have on the sugar industry. It will have the same problems on the tourism industry. The only thing is that if the people in the tourism industry are prepared to do their job they can market Barbados as a cheap place to come.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I do not want to hear about a good point. I want to see you taking these points and using them. Do not tell me about good points in here and then do not use them. The days of people making silly remarks about what I am saying, they are over. The public of Barbados do not accept that anymore.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I was trying to point out to the Member that impact of a weak European currency on the tourism industry would be exactly the opposite because it would make a visit to Barbados cheaper ...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: You are a product of a confused mind. I was trying to point out to him that he was making a mistake, Sir. Sir, he is this wonderful financial controller and I really want to hear him speak about the advice he gave that the Minister could not accept.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I never said what the Prime Minister said. I said that the Prime Minister must understand that there is the same relationship between sugar and tourism because the cost of sugar to the Europeans would be less and the cost of tourism travel to the Europeans would be less also. What is so difficult about that? Because the pound is declining...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: That is not so. The Pound Sterling is at \$3.25 and we knew when the pound was strong at \$3.83 so do not give me that foolishness. If we are going to be bragging that the pound at \$3.25 is strong then there is something wrong with this Parliament. The day that we get the pound at \$4.80 we would get so many tourists in here that we would be glad.

I am saying, sir, that we need to market Barbados the right way and we need to understand the importance of quotas. We need to understand that. That is why the sugar industry will take my criticism in the light that it is given and do not see them as personal attacks like how the Government, whenever you give them good information, feels that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is attacking them.

I have a role in this country. Ideas are not things that I must hide, ideas are things that I must share with people and I will share them.

Sir, I thank you very much.

Hon. Sir Harold ST. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, before the Honourable Minister gets the opportunity to reply there are a number of matters that I would like to draw to the attention of the Honourable Minister in relation to this Head. I am very glad that provision is finally being made under the Head of Markets for the long outstanding claims that small business people have against the markets in respect of losses which occurred as a result of failures of refrigeration at the Bridgetown Market.

I also want to draw to the attention of the Honourable Minister that there can be no doubt that serious problems are developing in respect of the present manner of utilisation of the markets, in particular the Bridgetown Fish Market by the users thereof. The Public Health Department, my understanding is, is on the verge of taking serious steps to prohibit activity which is going on at some of these markets.

I would urge the Honourable Minister to make sure that a proper study is carried out as to the present utilisation of the markets for fish processing. There is absolutely no doubt that both Oistins, which was a pioneer, and Bridgetown, were designed for small scale fish processing. There is no doubt about that at all. It was, however, never the intention of the planners of the markets, nor were the markets designed for what one would call large scale industrial fish processing to take place on the markets' premises. Everybody contemplated that fish would be processed at the market on an individual basis by a large number of people with a through-put which would be to large extent determined by the production of the individual persons working for themselves.

What we have now, increasingly, particularly in Bridgetown, are proprietors who have become fish processors who have commandeered large areas of the market, excluding those small processors and carrying on a business there which is heavily subsidised by the Government. If you talk to any of the

inspectors they will tell you that it is a real abuse of the position. The Minister, will, I have no doubt, now that it has been drawn to his attention, make sure that those conditions do not continue.

I want to say also that we are due for an upgrading of the physical appearance of the fish markets. They were revolutionary in the 80s when they were built but today, modern markets have gone a stage further. Everywhere now in modern fish markets the whole area is tiled. The use of cold cabinets is here. You cannot bring fish which is iced at seas into a market to be processed except it is being processed under ice. That is a problem that we have. This is a matter of education and it is a matter also of further expenditure to further upgrade our markets. That is a matter that we have to take into account. I am all in favour of the upgrading of the markets because one of the great attraction of Barbados is on the sea coast. If you go there any day of the week, you see the number of visitors and locals who go to the market to watch the activities that take place there.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I hate to have to interrupt the Honourable Member but the debate must wind up in another twelve minutes.

Hon. Sir Harold ST. JOHN: I will be quite willing, Sir, to give way to the Honourable Member because I have made essentially, the point that I want to make.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I will be very short because I would like to hear the Minister wind up but I think it is very important for a couple of quick points to be made.

The first point that needs to be made is that one should not make too much of a case about the low levels of sugar production in 1995. Those levels of sugar productions were anticipated and the records will show that that was a year in which essentially you had to cut your losses and start to implement the programme that the Government had designed and was announced in the medium term economic document. Therefore, the 38 000 tons cannot be attributed to anything other than a conscious policy of the Government which the people who are versed in the agronomics and other aspects of the industry will recognised. There will be no way on the records of the Ministry of Finance, at the time when I was the Minister, where you will see anything that would reflect the Government's expectation that the sugar industry - the 1995 sugar crop would have been a significantly high sugar crop. In fact, I think it came in slightly better than we anticipated. It is after that that you would have seen the production levels increased once again and certain measures were put in place.

I also think that the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, needs to explain to the public, if he going to keep making the point about the price of sugar on the domestic market, he needs to explain why that price is more lucrative on the domestic market. It would be cheaper for the Government to import the sugar from overseas for use on the domestic market.

5:40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

The price that the local sugar gets on the domestic market is as a result of certain financial arrangements which are put in place, including the levies and the other taxes which are imposed in the sale of sugar. I think that is something that needs to be very clearly understood.

There was a Sugar Sector Reform Programme in place. If it has changed significantly, then we should say that. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South needs to take a very serious look at the sugar industry from two aspects: the future of the sugar industry which is important but let us not forget that the cost of the past, in other words, the transfer of BSIL's assets for the debt of BSIL which basically was interest free since about 1993 or 1994 together with the value of the sugar estates and the debt that those sugar estates are carrying and the cost to the taxpayers at the end of the day of taking the sugar industry forward. In other words of bringing all of that debt forgiveness and so on to account is something that the country needs to know about. One of the reasons why the Democratic Labour Party had to raise this issue in an open letter to the Prime Minister apart from the politics, and it got side tracked with a lot of nonsense, was because the people of Barbados are entitled to know the true cost to the country, the taxpayers of the sugar sector reform and restructuring. It does not have to come from me. I had a vested interest because I was involved in it. Therefore, if you feel uncomfortable about it, let us know the cost and then blame whom you at the end of the day. I think that is extremely important. The sugar industry is still vital to the economic development of this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I sat there listening with keen interest and I must share the view of the Prime Minister that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, despite the fact he made some good points from time to time that he really is a victim of a confused mind. I will tell you why. Early in his presentation he said that the Government move away from sugar agriculture and shortly afterwards he said that if the Government does not protect the sugar industry it would lead to ruining the environment.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have never said what the Honourable Member is quoting me as saying.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Wait, I should stay in here and let people lie on me all the time?

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: If they are telling lies, I must interrupt them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please get ahead with the debate?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I said, Mr. Chairman, that we need to understand that we should not be dealing with a sugar industry now, we should be dealing with our agricultural industry. I do not know what is difficult about that.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, he also said that towards the end of his presentation but as I said he is suffering from the state of his mind and he will make these confusing statements in a matter of seconds.

5:50 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

This is not the first time it happened because from time to time he makes these statements. These things happened because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his exuberance and excitement gives this Honourable House the impression that he is the expert on agricultural matters and he will falter time and again.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member also gave the impression that the problems that the sugar industry might be facing at this point in time dates back to 1994 or 1995. I want to inform him - he was not in this Chamber at the time - that when we look at a time series of all the important indicators one could use to assess the performance of the sugar industry, he would see that between 1986 and 1994 when the export price of sugar was on an increasing trend and the tonnes of sugar produced were increasing that the trend for that series moved in the other direction.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member from St. Lucy likes to talk about the foreign exchange earning potential from our involvement in the exportation of sugar. We have a situation where, when his party was in power, that they did not take advantage of the good prices that prevailed between 1988, as is seen here, and 1993.

Mr. Chairman, just let me give you some information. In 1988, sugar produced by thousand tonnes was 80.3 and the series goes like this. 1989 - 66.3; 1990 - 69.3; 1991 - 65.7; 1992 - 54.0; 1993 - 48.5; 1994 - 51.9; and when they sowed the seed so to speak in 1995, 38.8.

Mr. Chairman, let us look at the series now for the sugar export price in Barbados dollars per tonne. In 1988 - \$1086; 1989 - \$1004; 1990 - \$1183; 1991 - \$1181; 1992 - \$1276; 1993 - \$1249; and \$1362 in 1995.

Mr. Chairman, this is the clearest possible example you could ever want to provide evidential proof that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) - despite the shoutings from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy - had no clear plan in place to develop the sugar industry as an industry on its own or as an

industry that plays an integral part ...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. If he had read any previous debate in here, he would have even heard his leader say that he adjusted the plan that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) had in place. I will refer him to the development plan for 1993-2000 at page 119 which, in fact, sets out some of the key points that the Prime Minister made today about the sugar industry increasing the basis of agricultural techniques, the levels of productions, making the industry more competitive and the offering of the incentives. It is true that our work was put in place and that is the basis of the plan which he is now following. It was not written by us, it was written by the same managers who are now managing the industry.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I am coming through tidy. I got to 1994 and I chose that period from 1988 to 1994 to let the Honourable House see what has been happening since 1994 and the conscious effort the Government of the day has made and continues to make to revitalize activity in the sugar sector. The Prime Minister spoke at some length about applying these incentives.

We had a problem in 1994 with the low levels of production and the Government of the day in an attempt to take advantage of the arrangements which were made with the Europeans - that is, while with that arrangement we benefitted from the exportation of 54 000 tonnes of sugar, but we also had the potential benefit of a further 9 000 tonnes by the special preferential sugar. The Barbados Labour Party administration recognising that, knew that we needed to push the level of production in excess of 63 000 tonnes if we were to have a residual amount that could see us until next year's market. That is why as far as 1994 the Government took a decision to provide a series of incentives, of which the replanting incentive scheme is one, to push the level of production in excess of 63 000. The current figure at the time was 68 000 tonnes.

The Honourable Member for St. John is correct. We are under tremendous pressure in light of how things have transpired within the last five years or so for us to be that far but that does not mean that we should not be very assiduous in our efforts to ensure that we get as close as possible to the 68 000 tonnes. If we maintain our quota to the 54 000 and we have this 9 000 tonnes facility for special preferential sugar, the price for which sugar is sold under that arrangement is in excess of the world market price, we should strive to achieve in excess of 53 000 tonnes of sugar.

Mr. Chairman, while I welcome the advice from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I think the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) is in no real position to tell the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) how we should address our business as it relates to the sugar industry. We recognise that the fortunes have changed a bit on the international market and the time series, if I go on, for export and the price of sugar beyond 1995, the trend is moving in the other direction and continues to decline. Between now and the year 2007, projections are that the price we fetch on the European market will decline continuously on an annual basis by the tune of two to three per cent, so that is understood.

That is why the Honourable Member for St. Peter could continue to say that involvement in the sugar industry at the current level is unsustainable and it is unsustainable because we know that the price we are going to fetch on the European market will continue to decline and predictions are fairly accurate. It is left to us to deal with that side of the equation that we have some measure of control over, so it does not take a highfalutin economist or financial expert like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to

know that we have to seek to control cost if we are to maintain involvement in the sugar sector. It is against that background, that the Government of the day will seek to institute measures to ensure that the cost of production in the sugar industry can be reduced.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister has spoken about the importance of the Agricultural Development Trust, the importance of introducing cost-effective methods of production, the improved technology the importance of the revisiting the management practices that are in place for the plantations and the factories, all with a view of modernizing the industry and ensuring that over time that the cost of production in the sugar sector declines.

6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

It has to happen because if it does not happen, these subsidies that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is going on about we will have to continue. We have reached the stage that we need to ask some searching questions about the benefits that Barbados as a nation is deriving from heavily subsidizing the sugar industry.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy attempted once more to mislead this House by insinuating that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in response to the problems that Southern Meats are experiencing, has given some undertaking for the Government to provide a subsidy. Mr. Chairman, that is very misleading because it is sending a signal to the public of this country that this Government is in the business of protecting private monopolies.

Mr. Chairman, within the last couple of weeks, I have convened a series of meetings with a view of getting the private players, the producers, the processors, and the distributors bringing them together to seek their collective efforts to prevent the closure of a private entity.

Mr. Chairman, because I have convened these meetings to avoid closure of an entity which has serious repercussions for this country's national economy, one should not conclude by virtue of my involvement in these discussions that the Government is throwing out a lifeline by way of a financial subsidy to prop up a private monopoly. Mr. Chairman, that is not the case and I would want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to stop attempting to mislead this House. We have reporters who may take what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying out of context.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the talk about subsidies started with me. That is what I read n heard in the Press so if the Minister wants clear the air he is free and yo can give him all the time. I am prepared t sit down and listen. If he wants to clear the air on subsidies, I have no

problem.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, assistance comes in various forms and fashions. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has spent a lot of his working days in the account field so when he hears about assistance all he thinks about is money. He likes to go on about subsidisation of this activity and the next activity. Once he hears that someone is exploring the possibility of providing some sort of assistance, he naturally would think that we are talking about money.

In any event, Mr. Chairman, if the Government of the day saw it fit in order to avoid the closure of a very important business, and the Government of the day were to provide levels of subsidy-based on certain conditions which if applied will lead to a turnaround of a situation in the interest inters, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is asking me not to close down Six Roads but I would want to remind him that Six Roads is in the heart of the economic zone in my constituency. Six Roads has also been designated by this administration as a town centre. We need to have certain types of activities proceeding within a town centre.

Mr. Chairman, before I bring this discussion to a close, just let me give a word of thanks to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for bringing to my attention, indeed raising, because these matters were brought to my attention previously, about the need to upgrade the fishing facilities, the need to ensure that fair play proceed at the Bridgetown Fishing Complex.

Let me also thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for alluding to the fact that there is need of us to revisit diversification programme at BAMC. I also thank him for the suggestion that we need to strengthen the linkages between the agricultural sector and tourism. All of these are good points but these are points that are also being addressed vigorously by the Minister and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to close the discussion on this Head. I beg to move that the amendments to this Head stand part.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORT

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 37 stand part.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

6:10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 08, 2000

Head 26 was called and passed

The amendment to Head 13 was called and passed.

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 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 passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am very satisfied with the work done today. I had always targeted quarter past six for the adjournment and I am one minute past the time.

On that note, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until February 22 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I move the adjournment, I would like to inform the members of the Standing Orders Committee that we will be trying to organise a meeting for the Standing Orders Committee on Tuesday, February 15 at 230 p.m. We attempted to have one but it did not come off. It is important that we have this meeting so you will be contacted by the Office of Parliament.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will unavoidably be absent. The Legal Affairs Committee of CARICOM is meeting here on very important business so I will not be available, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if I can help the House, Sir, the House will recall that one of the reasons why we wanted to change the Standing Orders was to facilitate the budgetary process as one process. The Estimates really is the Budget although it is not so seen by the public. I would still want the House to press on with that because at some stage we will have to have one budgetary process where the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Budgetary Proposals are dealt with as one.

I am not sure given the lateness of this development whether we can do it now this year because we have to get the Standing Orders correct. Certainly, I would be the most delighted person in the world if we can have those Standing Orders ready.

The Estimates are to be laid in Parliament March 6th and therefore it would be a bit too rushed to have the one session this year. I am still glad that the Standing Orders Committee should meet to put us in a position where at the earliest time we can have the Estimates and the Budgetary Proposals as one.

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

6:20 p.m.