
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 18, 2000

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, July 18, 2000.

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.)

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)

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. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (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)

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 to the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

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, July 04, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, July 04, 2000, which Minutes have been circulated, be confirmed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR
THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: A Message from the Honourable the Senate to the Honourable the House of Assembly:

The Honourable the Senate has the Honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that the following Senators were on the 28th day of June, 2000 appointed to serve on the Joint Select Committee on the Fair Trading Bill, 2000 and the Utilities Regulation Bill, 2000: Senator D. D. Marshall, Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds, Senator Sir John Goddard, Senator C. A. Mascoll, Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard.

Dated 28th day of June, 2000.

Sir FRED GOLLOP
President.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Credit Suisse First Boston (Europe) Limited) Order, 2000.
2. The Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter ending March 31, 2000.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the National Petroleum Corporation for the Financial Year ending March 31, 1997.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, on behalf of the Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, I beg to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Public Utilities Board for the year ending December 31, 1999.

Sir, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands, I beg to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the National Housing Corporation for the Financial Year 1998 to 1999.

Sir, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and International Transport, I beg to lay the following:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Tourism Authority for the year April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of a parcel of land at Workmans, St. George.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by the Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the following Bills were read a first time.

1. The Rock Hall (Vesting) Bill, 2000.
2. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Barbados, I would want to first of all congratulate the Barbados Amateur Body Building and Fitness Federation on having won the Eastern Caribbean Championships held in St. Croix on the 8th of July this year.

Sir, in the sport of basketball, I would also want on behalf of the Government to congratulate the Barbados Men's and Women's Teams for taking top Honours at the 15th CARICOM Basketball Championships which concluded on the 9th July, 2000 at the Sir Garfield Sobers Complex. The men winning 64 to 56 over the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Women winning over Jamaica 72 to 65.

I would want to say to them, Sir, thanks, for making all of us in Barbados very proud.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, I would like to congratulate the Barbados Football Team for a magnificent victory last Sunday evening. This victory has helped the Barbados Team in their pursuit to qualify for the semifinal round in the World Cup.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit in which the House is congratulating these various teams, body-building, basketball and football, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 7 – THE CAVES BILL, 2000

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I do not know why this Bill is in my name on the Order Paper.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member who has responsibility for the Environment, Sir, will do the Second Reading speech on this Bill, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, when the Bill which is going to be the subject of parliamentary debate today was laid, it was so laid and then after the Government was minded to make a number of amendments. I, therefore, am soliciting the lead of this Honourable House to lay the amended Bill instead, copies of which I believe have been circulated in place of what has been originally laid and to allow this amended Bill to be the subject of today's parliamentary process.

I am therefore seeking your lead, Mr. Speaker, to lay an amended Bill in place of what has been there before. It is not called an amended Bill, it is very much the written Bill and it is very much labeled a Bill entitled as an Act to provide for the control and management of caves and related matters.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections, such permission is granted.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on or about the 24th day of June this year at Sturges in the Parish of St. Thomas during an event called "The Integrated Nature Tourism Area", I indicated to the Press that as soon as would have been practicable, legislation would have been brought to this Honourable House to establish the Caves of Barbados as a separate entity and in the process to take it out of the National Conservation Commission.

Honourable Members will no doubt recall, Mr. Speaker, that in 1980 after Mr. Ole Sorenson of Denmark had spent more than six years doing exploration, excavation and engineering at Harrison's Cave, an entity was established called the Caves Authority.
11.25 a.m.

The Caves Authority was very much a statutory board set up with a board of directors. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, that Authority only survived for two years because – and you can let me go back, Mr. Speaker – at that time when the Caves Authority had been established, there was an institution called the Parks and Beaches Commission.

In 1982, a merger of the Parks and Beaches Commission and the Caves Authority occurred and both of these existing bodies were abolished and in 1982 the National Conservation Commission Act was passed by this Honourable House. At that time, therefore, what transpired was that you had a new agency subsuming under the activities and policies of the Parks and Beaches Commission alongside the activities and policies of the Caves Authority. I just, therefore, Mr. Speaker, with your leave wanted to put the matter in its historical context.

Mr. Speaker, between 1980 and 1998, it was determined that the Cave should be a sub-unit within the National Conservation Commission. In very many respects, despite the general mandate of the National Conservation Commission to do all that it could for the environment – it was rather different for the NCC from the point of view that a range of activities outside cave matters pursued by the NCC were nothing at all relevant to what was going on at the cave.

Therefore, we had a situation where the National Conservation Commission found itself having very much to manage a portfolio which, from the outset, was intended very much to be a commercial portfolio. Honourable Members might query why this particular observation has been made but the hard fact of the situation is that many of the activities pursued between 1980 and 1998 – indeed many of the activities pursued to this day – were very much in the form of what the traditional Parks and Beaches Commission had been doing under the National Conservation Commission as the NCC had emerged to take over.

The Cave was very much the engine driving the National Conservation Commission in such a way that there were times when it seemed as though the National Conservation Commission wanted the Cave for the principal reason that it was a significant revenue earner. What it also meant was that the management of the Cave within the National Conservation Commission put a tremendous amount of pressure on the NCC to do all that it had to do and still try to do its utmost to do the best for a commercial entity.

Therefore, in June 1998, Government, critically aware that the Cave ought to be a commercial enterprise, took a decision that the Cave body should be brought under the National Conservation Commission and should be treated as a separate entity. Government was of the opinion that there were compelling reasons for bringing the Cave to stand on its own feet.

Among the reasons which were cited for proposing that the Cave be treated differently were that – and I am talking about the rationale for having a separate legal entity – establishing the Cave as a separate legal entity would allow a more businesslike approach to matters affecting the Cave, it would also allow for greater autonomy; it would encourage conditions under which sustainable development of the Cave would take place and it would also allow for the raising of finances for development and related matters rather than having to depend on Government's subventions to get things going.

At the same time, Government was mindful of the fact that, although at this point the sole commercial cave is Harrison's Cave, the possibility is always there that in the future other cave systems close to Harrison's Cave could be developed or caves elsewhere in Barbados could be explored and put in shape that would prove to be positive and sustainable resources for this country.

Government's policy then became more aware and rather than have an entity to cater solely to the needs of Harrison's Cave, the policy – and the policy will be reflected in the legislation that we are proposing – should be one where, rather than isolate one cave and bring rules and regulations for that, we should have regulations for caves acting prospectively in the event either that we expand the existing cave that we use or that we locate other cave systems in the future.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak, there are people here in Barbados and overseas who have looked at the Cave and have been assessing its potential. Let me say up front, Mr. Speaker, in the presence of all Honourable Members and others here, that the Harrison's Cave as we know it, is a very precious but delicate eco-system. As the English would say, it is an awfully delicate eco-system. What I mean by that, Mr. Speaker, is that as an eco-system there are vulnerabilities threatening – if you could permit me a personification – the livelihood of the cave.

Bearing that in mind, by the time I come to look at the Bill before this Honourable House, you would notice that beyond ordinary regulations and the establishment of the agency by which the Cave would be run, we have taken into account a number of serious environmental concerns which we are going to address in the legislation and which we propose to take effect in such a way as to have teeth to ensure that that eco-system is protected whilst at the same

time, exploited for economic gain.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that being aware of what we should really do to ensure and to heighten the best possible management of caves in Barbados, we have taken a conscious and deliberate decision that the caves of Barbados, both the current one and any that might come into existence commercially, be set up not only under a separate legal entity – because in 1980 it was set up under a separate legal entity too, but that was a statutory corporation – but as a limited liability company. Meaning, Mr. Speaker, that since in the real world many businesses in the private sector are very much led by limited liability companies that we are deliberately treating this as a business. We are setting up Harrison's Cave and any caves that would come into being in the future as a business.

Mr. Speaker, when I say as a business, I want all Honourable Members to get me right. We mean practicing financial prudence. We mean operating in a businesslike fashion. We mean bringing a particular measure of professionalism to activities. We mean looking at the existing plant with the view to improving it. We mean ensuring that all visitors are comfortable and that they can go into surroundings where they can feel at ease while enjoying this resource and such like. The attitude is going to be that it is going to be very much a business entity. Preparatory to today's debate, Mr. Speaker, we took a decision last year to set out on the process of incorporation. I can inform all Honourable Members that the actual incorporation has taken place and an organizational structure has been evolved. There is already a Board of Directors in place and what we are doing today is capping off matters by putting the legislative framework within which this entity will be in place. 11.35 a.m.

Let me inform this Honourable House as to a few matters that should interest Honourable Members. Barbados is no doubt a tourist destination. In fact, not only are Barbadians increasingly being more and more encouraged to be sensitive to all that they can do to keep here a desirable location, but of note is that the people of St. Thomas around the Sturges, Welchman Hall and Canefield areas have been sensitized through a process of frequent consultation to the need, not only to preserve the Cave, but to integrate it with a number of other institutions around there like, for example, the Welchman Hall Gully while at the same time several young people in particular in the St. Thomas area actively take part in programmes that sustain and develop tourism in that area.

If you permit me, Mr. Speaker, to go back to something I mentioned in the opening remarks of my speech, I mentioned the whole notion of integrated nature tourism. I indicated that it was on June 24th that I made public Government's decision to come here.

Mr. Speaker, a large number of communities in St. Thomas are actively participating in a tourist-type programme by which they try their utmost to make tourists as welcomed as possible. Concomitant with this, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the St. Thomas people themselves are of the view, if Harrison's Cave is going to enhance its sustainability, that it has to be operated not just alone but should really link up with Welchman Hall Gully and Jack-'N-the-Box-Gully. The future is suggesting that what we can do for Harrison's Cave is to offer tourists coming not just a one-stop visit to Harrison's Cave as a solitary event, but we want to have a package where they can go to Welchman Hall Gully the same day and Jack-'N-the-Box when we get to put Jack-'N the-Box as a trail.

The private sector of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, has done something in recent time that is very important. There are two agencies, I do not know the owners, but they are Safari Tours and Island Tours. They offer visitors to Barbados a package. The people go on tour and there are designated locations that they visit. They are allowed to do more than two or three activities while enjoying themselves. I see the day coming when Harrison's Cave is going to have to create linkages with other organizations and agencies close there with the aim to offering greater satisfaction to tourists. I do not see this, Mr. Speaker, as anything in the way of what some Honourable Members criticize as some type of packaged tour where the small man is left out. As a matter of fact, it is the small men of St. Thomas, Mr. Speaker, who have been adamant that Government should not only involve Welchman Hall Gully and Jack-'N-the-Box along side of the Harrison's Cave but the small men of St. Thomas want to be involved in the process.

I saw Honourable Members from the Other Place present and all Honourable Members who had the opportunity to visit Sturges on the 24th and 25th of June this year to witness that wonderful experience would have seen how a whole community came together to promote our tourism in the community's own way.

Mr. Speaker, in circumstances where Barbados remains a desirable tourist destination but where there are competitive threats to Barbados' sustainability in tourism, we need to have identified more and more programmes, activities and interests for tourists. The land mass of this country is so severely limited that there are islands close to Barbados which, if they positioned themselves, can very much become competitors to Barbados' tourism.

Therefore, we in Government and in this Honourable House indeed bear the responsibility to make sure that we locate newer resources, if you want to call them that, where we can find more things to offer to the tourists for them to be involved in – more fun for those who come for fun and more general visitor satisfaction.

To date, we are of the view that from all indications there is considerable visitor satisfaction even though we cannot be so complacent, Mr. Speaker, as to rest on our laurels and decide that what we have achieved through the evolution of this precious entity called Harrison's Cave is enough. We cannot sit back and become complacent. In fact, before I go on to cite figures to show tourists' satisfaction, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that from 1994 there have been assessments at Harrison's Cave with recommendations for developing better sustainability and for improving the facilities there. Indeed, some consultants who had the opportunity to evaluate the potential of Harrison's Cave have suggested that we should have a Visitor Reception Centre which can handle visitor numbers during peak periods, including provisions for ticketing and a better restaurant, and a large retail area and administrative offices. We should also have a new maintenance facility for the trams, obviously to ensure that maintenance of the trams proceeds properly so that we do not lose an opportunity for revenue through frequent breakdown of trams or absence of proper maintenance facilities.

We are also proposing, Mr. Speaker, a Cave Interpretation Centre which should be a world-class display to include a multi-media room. We are also encouraged to have better outdoor seating along with better picnic tables and a children's play area, a small outdoor amphitheatre, new trams and such like.

In other words, even as I speak, Mr. Speaker, we have the conclusions of an investigation done into the potential of Harrison's Cave which are pointing Government to the need to ensure that we not only exploit the Cave for its economic gain now, but that we look to see how we could constantly improve the facilities there with the aim to make sure that this Cave remains the number one tourist attraction.
11.45 a.m.

The information out of the bosom of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation suggests that there are some seven principal tourist attractions in Barbados. The Caribbean Tourism Organisation treats the Welchman Hall Gully, Andromeda Gardens, Gun Hill, a lot of plantation Great houses, the Flower Forest and Harrison's Cave as special tourist attractions. Of them all, it is indicated, based on information we have received from the said Caribbean Tourism Organisation, that Harrison's Cave is visited by 32.7 per cent of our long-stay visitors; the Flower Forest is 10 points behind – 22.6 per cent; plantation great houses – 20.6 per cent; the centre at Gun Hill – 14.5 per cent; Andromeda Gardens – 12.3 per cent and Welchman Hall Gully – 9.4 per cent.

What is indicated here is that Harrison's Cave is easily the number one tourist attraction in Barbados. What is

unfortunate about the whole thing is that we do have information that in any one year less than seven thousand Barbadians go to Harrison's Cave. Indeed, we are hearing that the number of Barbadians going to Harrison's Cave in the last five years has averaged between 6 500 a year but that in 1997 actual long-stay visitors to Barbados were 472 290 with cruise ship visitors being 571 888 and that of that number, if you combine the two, close to 180 000 visitors went to Harrison's Cave in 1997 along with over 6 000 Barbadians.

The significance of this, not only lies in the fact that people like going there. In light of the fact, as I have already submitted to you that this is a very delicate eco-system, if you have population pressure on Harrison's Cave and no proper environmental management plan for Harrison's Cave, bearing in mind how sensitive the Cave is, then if you do not have in place a proper policy the whole security of Harrison's Cave can be very badly compromised.

By the time I come to look at specific clauses in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, you will see how Government is inviting this Parliament to put in place a regime of legislation that would ensure not just improving the management of the Cave, but also making sure that this Cave remains alive and well into the future. It has been a fascination as far back as 1780. The environmental folklore of Barbados indicated in a very strong way that Barbadians of that era were fascinated with this most beautiful God-given delight. We, therefore, bear a strong responsibility to posterity to ensure that its integrity remains intact.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps you would permit me to look at particular clauses in the Bill. It is a Bill entitled an Act to provide for the control and management of caves and for related matters. For purposes of the Act, the Minister identified in the Act means Minister of the Environment. One of the responsibilities of the Minister, for the purposes of this Act, is to declare an area of land in Barbados to be a cave.

Earlier, I indicated that the legislation here will not just be addressing Harrison's Cave but that the legislation is envisioning a situation in the future where other caves could come under this legislation. There are those who are of the opinion that persons who reside close to a cave need to know that they are responsible or ought to be so responsible as not to damage the Cave.

There are those who are of the opinion that a lot of Barbados is literally sitting on caves and that Barbadians must know for sure what areas are going to be designated caves and what areas are not going to be so designated. The purpose of clause 3, and I am not doing this Committee-style, is to confer power on the Minister, having taken the best advice to understand how imperative it is to let the public know which areas are designated as areas bearing caves and which are not.

This provision makes sense and obviously the Minister is going to be empowered under this to make regulations for the better management of caves generally. The definition section is also quite clear as to what this legislation wants us to accept as a cave. It says for purposes of this legislation that a cave has to:

1. be below the surface of the soil;
2. has to be naturally formed; and
3. be of cultural, educational, geological, recreational and scientific interest.

It is a fairly general description of it, avoiding the use of strong geological jargon.

Mr. Speaker, what is also significant is that we are contemplating a situation where when any new cave is located that since it is a national resource, power and authority should be given to Government to take control of it. The legislation is sufficiently clear that in the future if new caves are identified Government has power to take control, whether under the terms of our well known Land Acquisition Act or whether by arranging a private contract with the owners of the lands surrounding.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am coming now to a particular provision in the Bill to which I referred earlier. I said that the Cave we use now is notorious as a highly sensitive and delicate eco-system. As I said, it is prone to threats and abuse if no regulations are put in place to control activities in the Cave. I would want to refer all Honourable Members to clause 6(2) which is quite clear. We are into a new era of environmental awareness worldwide. Barbados has in many respects sent strong signals, going back twelve years and earlier, to the world that Barbados, too, is prepared to be a responsible manager of its environment whether the immediate environment within Barbados or whether the environment as it might touch and affect neighbouring places.

Indeed, this Government always wants to identify with international movement and policies that better preserve the environment. As I said earlier in my contribution, aware of the delicate nature of the Cave and mindful of our duty to prevent the Cave from being violated, we have brought here a proposal to this Honourable Chamber that I shall now look at.

According to this proposal, as contained in subclause (1) of clause 6, the entity responsible for managing the affairs of Harrison's Cave must, not later than three months after the end of each financial year, prepare and submit to the Minister an Environmental Management Plan.

11.55 a.m.

Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of all present that the company which is here being legislated into existence, shall not later than three months after the end of each financial year, prepare and submit to the Minister an Environmental Management Plan.

I have said that this whole world is moving into environmental awareness. We all talk about and we all feel the effect of global warming. We all feel the effects of environmental degradation and we are concerned that posterity, 100 years from now should be able to live, breathe and have their being in this world without the threat of environmental nuisances threatening their livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, mindful of those general national macro-environmental concerns and aware of the micro concerns specified here today, the Environmental Management Plan to be submitted to the Minister not later than three months at the end of each financial year, must indicate to the Minister what measures there are for the monitoring of air quality in the Cave.

This Government, like any other responsible Government, feels that there are a lot of people going into this delicate eco-system and, in fact, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there are some times when we close the Cave to let it breathe and to give it a chance not to be subject to the type of pressure of 182 000 persons going in there each year.

Mr. Speaker, if I may digress a little bit. The question of air quality is occupying the attention of this Government not just specific to Harrison's Cave but we have instances of several buildings in this country, the quality of whose air is troubling us. Anything that we see as a threat to any living being on this earth, Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about and will deal with. Also, Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Management Plan to be submitted to the Minister, must also advise as to the level of temperature in the Cave along with the level of water and the quality of water in the Cave.

Mr. Speaker, several of my officers make it their business, some officers not directly employed by the Cave but employed by the Central Ministry, always, as they perform their responsibility to this country, go into the Cave even before this legislation and make it their business to check the water quality both in terms of whether the water is dissipating or whether the water is being contaminated. To date, there is no reason for concern but aware of the fact that some people disrespect the environment, including disrespecting environmental masterpieces, we will be compelling this company to submit its Environmental Management Plan to the Minister requiring that the level of water and the quality of water in the Cave be reported.

The Environmental Engineering Division (EED), located in the Ministry of Health is receiving repeated complaints about the level of noise in the whole of Barbados

and the EED must certainly be looking at legislation and we are also going to require those who bear responsibility for managing the day-to-day affairs of the Cave to submit to the Minister what level of noise affects the Cave.

Mr. Speaker, let me divert a bit to say that I want to compliment those responsible people who live in the Bryan, Welchman Hall and surrounding areas. Most of them have done their utmost not to do anything to interfere with the Cave. Some of them are patient enough to know that when we put short-term measures in place that discomfort them as people but are designed to protect the Cave, that there will come a time when the pressure of their being forbidden from performing certain acts, though short term, is necessary to protect the long-term national interest and will be eased in time.

In addition to the four areas to which I have referred, Mr. Speaker, the sanitary conditions generally, that touch and affect the Cave must be reported on. Any deterioration in the Cave has to be reported on. Any aspect pertaining to the environment, not touched on by the six other areas must also be reported on and any aspect of the operation of the Cave that affects the outside environment also has to be reported on. These, then, are some of the duties that those who look after the Cave on a day-to-day basis in the future would have to perform and we are going to be insisting that that proposed statutory requirement be observed.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that we want never to violate any cave and so aware are we of the fact that in the household you will tell a wayward child, "don't", and the wayward child still does, aware of the fact that in the school you will tell a wayward child, "don't", and the wayward child still does, we still feel that as much as we may make, what people might call 'a song and a dance' about educating the public about being environmentally responsible that there will be those who will fracture the law. Even the divine law, though crystal clear, Mr. Speaker, is often disobeyed and since we know that there are those who may disobey, we have put in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, some penalties. The purpose of these penalties is not to oppress the small man or to oppress the poor but the purpose of these penalties, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that people respect caves, that people generally also respect the environment and that when people go into a cave, they are not tempted to break daily regulations that may be displayed in a cave.

Mr. Speaker, according to Clause 10...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I am not saying section 10, it will only become a section if it becomes law. At this point it is definitely a clause, it is not a section and it will become

law when passed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is a part-time student of law and he understands it well and he knows, based on the quality of law books, all of which have been donated by other MPs, that at this stage, nothing here is called a section yet. He knows that when it goes to Committee, Honourable Members will hear Clause 1, Clause 2, *etcetera*.

Clause 10 is determined to stop the law breaker in his tracks. It says:

“10. (1) Any person who, without lawful excuse,

1. breaks any calcite formation in a cave;
2. takes samples of any calcite formation from a cave;
3. removes from a cave any flora or fauna of any kind;
4. digs or removes from a cave bones or artifacts
5. carries out on land above a cave, in a cave or near thereto dynamiting or quarrying operations resulting or likely to result in damage to the cave;
6. interferes with or pollutes any watercourses, waterfalls, or watersheds in a cave;
7. sinks any well or deepens any existing well or makes any substantial alterations to any well resulting or likely to result in damage to a cave; or
8. deposits waste paper, rubbish or litter of any kind whatsoever in a cave, or in a sink hole within a protected area of a cave

is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$50 000 or to imprisonment for 2 years, or to both.”

Mr. Speaker, even if that person deposits waste paper, even toffee paper, rubbish or litter, those little things will add up. Even if the chap, Mr. Speaker, attempts to drop CCC toffee paper, so much of these toffee papers for 100 years done by 100 000 people create environmental nuisances. In that the maximum always starts with the minimum, you have to deal with it even when it is minuscule. 12.05 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, anyone who deposits waste paper, rubbish or litter of any kind whatsoever in a cave, or sinks a hole within a protected area of a cave is liable to penalty.

Mr. Speaker, Government on this Side is known to be caring, Government on this Side is responsible for the sacred confidence and trust thrust upon it by the sovereign people

of Barbados. Government has to be responsible for protecting the majority from the tiny minority who might want to interfere.

You may ask, Mr. Speaker, how come sub clauses (a) – (h) have been cited with the structures and no penalty has yet been mentioned. Let me say to this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that anyone breaking the particular provision of Sub Clause (i) of Clause 10 is liable to a fine of \$50 000 or a two-year imprisonment or both. We must be so responsible that even the first offender who is not sufficiently dutiful, nationalistic and patriotic as to respect State property, especially when it is so precious, even the first offender has to be prepared to feel the wrath of the mighty law, Mr. Speaker.

In some countries there is the concept of economic crimes, where if you do anything that impedes the economy, interferes with the economy, threatens magistrates and such like, in some countries there is such a crime and rough justice is meted out to those who breach these economic crimes. I am not going to state the countries because some of the countries do not have the most enviable records and suchlike.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we have to alert Barbadians to the fact that they eat, drink, shelter and earn their livelihood out of the national cake. These caves to which we refer, represent an ingredient in the national cake. The Americans call it the apple. We do not want any part of the apple, Mr. Speaker. The court is going to be given a discretion of bringing up to \$50 000 or two years' imprisonment for the first offence. For the repeat offender, it will be, Mr. Speaker, \$100 000 or imprisonment for three years or both.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question might be asked which courts are going to be responsible for administering these proposed legislative provisions. The High Court is a court that is busy. It is a court that should always be kept for the more serious things. I am not saying for any moment, Mr. Speaker, that the breaches here are not serious. I am saying that even 25 or 30 years ago, the breaches to which I referred would have been dealt with by a High Court. We are going to empower the magistrates on the assumption that magisterial justice is dispensed swiftly. We are going to empower the magistrates, assuming that magisterial justice is never seen affected or infected by delay. They will permit summary trial even though there would have been a time when a magistrate could not, ordinarily, have been able to fine anybody \$50 000 or \$100,000.

Mr. Speaker, increasingly, as you are aware, we are compelled as Government to create pieces of legislation which allow magistrates more power, specific pieces

of legislation beyond Chapter 116, so that magistrates can get rid of these matters as quickly as possible. In circumstances where National Conservation Commission has been very much in charge of the caves, and where NCC therefore would have been responsible as employer, would have worked out the formulae by which they can protect the interests of the employees who have either opted to remain with the Cave or go back to their previous substantive employer, the NCC.

My advice, Mr. Speaker, is that some 58 persons had been employed under the old system. Let me say, Mr. Speaker that the system by which the Cave operates is not yet a new entity, it is the old. I understand that 38 have opted to remain with the Cave and the others have gone back to NCC. If Honourable Members wish, later on in the last contribution, I might be able to provide further and better particulars.

Mr. Speaker, conscious of the fact that a person might exercise an option and then later come back and claim either that he did not understand the option, or that he was subject to undue pressure or he did not speak the truth, aware of the facts that in a transition there are those who are involved and who may be adversely affected, however cruel we are, in explaining their rights to them, we have come here to seek this Parliament's leave for the passage into law of Clause 9. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and the indulgence of all other Honourable Members I will wish to read all of Clause 9. This is on the point which my humble and learned friend from St. Lucy would want assurance from, because the newspapers at long last recognise him as the champion of the small man. After an application for five years, on a day when there is no news to report, they have acknowledged the Honourable Member as the champion of the small man.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Clause 9 (i) As from the commencement of this Act,

- "1. any person who was employed in the service of the National Conservation Commission immediately before that date and is employed by the Company on that date shall be deemed to be transferred from the service of the National Conservation Commission to the service of the Company;
2. the persons transferred under paragraph (a)
 1. shall for purposes be treated as if their emolument in the service of the National Conservation Commission was employment in the service of the Company, and
 2. shall, upon their transfer to the service of the Company, be employed under terms and

conditions no less favourable than when they were employed in the service of the National Conservation Commission;"

Mr. Speaker, my respectful submission is that this is manifestly clear, the language is clear, it is preserving the rights of the employees, but for the avoidance of doubt, let me say the policy is that no employee should be disadvantaged by opting either to go back to their original employer, the National Conservation Commission, or to go to the Cave. The purpose then is to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that employees are employed on terms no less favourable now and in the future than they would have whilst their *status quo ante* have been prevailing.

I have heard, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding a meeting of their union some 14 or 15 days ago, I have heard no formal complaint. I am being frank. Under a duty not to lie or make any misrepresentation to this Honourable House, I have heard of no complaint in the last two or three months from any employee as far as this transition, transfer or any retention is concerned. If Honourable Members have any evidence to the contrary, they will then have to tell this Honourable House.

In any event, as I indicated earlier, if any employee exercises an option or a choice and then is dissatisfied even before this becomes law, as things are right now, the NCC and Caves would accommodate reasonable, logical and sensible submissions. In any event, by the time this Bill becomes law, there is going to be full legal protection of the interests and the rights of the employees.

This is a Government, Mr. Speaker, that made bold to amend the Constitution of Barbados to make sure that public sector employees, generally, should not be subject to terms and conditions that are prejudicial to their interests.
12.15 p.m.

I remember during the context of the debate in here when we made law to make sure that the civil servants got back their 8 per cent, we indicated also by law that established civil servants should never be subjected to salary cuts, I remember the Honourable Members on that Side – I am pointing in that direction...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: ...there used to be a time, Mr. Speaker, when that Side had, not a plentitude of Honourable Members but more Members, I remember at least two Members saying that a Government should reserve the right to cut people's salaries.

I am happy to say that consistent with our policy of humanitarian treatment of the workers of Barbados, we are going to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that employees are not

oppressed by being forced into any arrangement that would act outwardly against the oppressed interests.

Mr. Speaker, I have very much, without being exhausted, introduced Members of this Honourable House to the principle and more far-ranging provisions of this proposed piece of legislation but there is a counterpart. In the context of a situation where in life you do one thing and then there is an immediate consequence, let me come now, as I seek to close this rather modest presentation, indicate that I have already conferred with the Honourable Member for St. John and told him that it is our desire today to consolidate two pieces of legislation in one debate but when we come to the procedure of passing revert back to treating them singly.

Sir, for purposes of our Parliamentary and Legislative chapter, I am confining my contribution at this stage to one presentation and I therefore would want, in a situation where Chapter 393 of the Laws of Barbados, the National Conservation Commission Act, has amalgamated the Caves Authority to Parks and Beaches, I would like in a situation where up to now, the NCC still has responsibility for the caves because they are not yet separated by law.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Chapter 393 had provided not only for the accommodation of the parks and beaches entity of things under Chapter 393, but it had also made plain and repeated provisions for matters to do with caves. Since now, we are setting up a totally new Caves Act and we still want the NCC to remain in existence doing non-cave-type things, it is going to be necessary for me humbly, Mr. Speaker, to propose some amendments to the National Conservation Commission Act.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this proposed Bill, which is entitled an Act to amend the National Conservation Commission Act, has become necessary so that we can leave references to the Cave and caves out of the National Conservation Commission Act, so that you can free the NCC from having legislative responsibility for the operations of caves.

Perhaps Honourable Members should be told the truth. Honourable Members, especially Honourable Members on the Other Side, might have their own concerns about the NCC but I give this Honourable House my word that we are aware, in consequence of the behaviour of particular politicians for close to 20 years, the NCC has found itself saddled with a particular culture.

Mr. Speaker, we are also mindful of the fact that the NCC over time, had but few stabilising influences because of the rapid turnover at the top and because of harsh and wicked political decisions on many sides. A culture has evolved at the NCC where to those outside of it who have a certain view of life, the NCC is a natural employer. There are some in NCC who believe that the NCC has unlimited opportunities for employment and are in the streets inviting

hundreds upon hundreds to come and work at the NCC. There are some who feel that they are at the NCC already, they feel that the NCC is the mighty, majestic employer with unbounded means and resources and they trumpet it all through Barbados that opportunities abound at the NCC.

This week alone – not counting Sunday when I went to Church and the church service that I attended lasted very long and therefore offered me a measure of Sacred Protection – excluding Sunday, but 30 people have already approached me about work at the National Conservation Commission; not as accountants, not as deputy general managers and not as clerical officers. But in consequence of the political pressures that politicians have been subjected to, to employ people at the NCC and also in consequence of the political jeering going on accompanying the political pressures that people have had to force the top management at the NCC to employ pure political employees, a most unfortunate culture has developed where we still have to get the appropriate returns for the monies that we invest in our employees.

12.25 p.m.

Nonetheless, those on board now who are responsible for the management, either at the level of the board of directors, general manager level or at deputy general manager level – we are fortunate to have had a deputy general manager who is the stabilizing force by being the institutional memory, being on board, a very productive and outstanding worker.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Good things come to those who wait and all those who have been...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: All those who are staying at the National Conservation Commission, I thank them for having served so well but one thing that I have to tell this Honourable House is this. There are those in the institution now fairly close to the top doing their upmost but I am still pained and hurt to say that we are in default to this Honourable Parliament as far as our recent annual reports of activities are concerned. We are in default. I mentioned it. I have to be candid. I have to tell the truth.

The person primarily responsible for the accounts at the top has not been with the institution for so many years as to be the target who should be blamed. In fact, he is already seen to be the best accountant ever to be employed. He is doing his upmost but he is working against systemic forces that have been there before him. He is virtually kicking against the prick.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Whilst the external auditors were aware that there were principalities and powers affecting the institution and doing their upmost ...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, kicking against the prick is biblical.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, surely, it depends on how you are seeing these pricks.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Well then, Mr. Speaker, I rather apprehend that I am not possessed of the type of gender that can easily answer that question. There will have to be another gender to answer that question.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the position is, we are definitely in default as far as our annual reports are concerned. The auditors are currently working on the current annual report. They worked for us last year. They worked for us the previous year and they worked for us the year before. They have been summoned by the Ministry and have been told to do their upmost to get their side of the annual reports in order and to do their best so that that laxity can be cured.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I am not sure if they check but there have been no reports for quite a while. I am honest about that.

Mr. Speaker, although ...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I do not want the Honourable Member to mislead the House particularly if he is prompted by senior persons who, speaking from their seats, do not know what they are talking about.

The last annual report and audited financial statement of the National Conservation Commission cover the period up to March 31, 1995. If there are any systemic problems, they would have occurred from financial years 1995–1996 and since then. In other words, from March 31, 1995 to the present.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, that was laid in 1997 so there cannot be anything systemic. Two years later it was ready.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, if we are prepared to accept the Honourable Member for St. John's position, then it would mean that we would be in default for 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I will do my best as the person responsible for the Commission to make sure that we do get these annual reports ready. It is very much a source of concern especially when another Parliamentarian speaking from the Other Place can say that in the private sector people are prompt with their annual reports but that state-run entities and para-statal entities often do not provide annual reports on time.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, just let me sum up. The purpose of what we are doing here today is to create a separation of the management of caves from the National Conservation Commission. I started by saying that when the National Conservation Commission came into existence in 1982, it subsumed the Parks and Beaches Commission and the Caves Authority under one type of legislation and one type of management.

I am saying, especially bearing in mind the last few observations that I made, we envisage that a company running the affairs of the caves should be such an institution as will operate the caves in a businesslike way and along strong commercial lines.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are asking this Honourable House to lean favourably in favour of proceeding with Government's desire, a desire that goes back to 1998 to set up a separate legal entity and to do its best to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that those Government-type agencies in need of care and also in need of being steered properly be given a chance to chart a course by which they can assert themselves and make their contribution to national development the way all of us would want such a contribution made.

Therefore, we are asking this Honourable House to accept Government's position that we should really streamline the operations of the Cave by a separate entity.

I want to apologise for the fact that we have not been sending in our reports here from the National Conservation Commission. I also want to give the assurance that I will do my best to make sure that such reports are up-to-date and are brought here.

I also want to say, as I suggested earlier, that the purpose of the second piece of this legislation – and I just want debate on it as I have said – is just to tidy up Chapter 393 so that the Chapter 393 would be so clear as to reflect the fact that caves would have been taken from under the aegis of the National Conservation Commission and that we would now have a National Conservation Commission without a cave or caves and a Caves of Barbados which would be responsible for the general management and oversight of caves now and caves to come into being in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to you for your patience and your indulgence. I am very pleased and happy to have brought this piece of legislation here today before this Honourable Chamber, and I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that and I would speak if you permit it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, we do not. It is whom the Chair recognises.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, please. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was on his feet but he sat down when the Honourable Member ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: He cannot second a motion unless he wanted...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the motion was seconded.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, just proceed please. When one looks at the regulations and the particular demands that will be put on the management and the Board of Directors at the Cave, it is quite clear that these directives can only be given if the Minister honestly believes that he has been asked to privatize the Cave and which might be a rather difficult job because I know...

12.35 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of elucidation. Government is the proposed sole shareholder of the entity. There is no privatization here.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is also said by the Government...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It also must be recognized that the Caves of Barbados is not an accident because all through Barbados people honestly believe that the Government is preparing the caves for the Cave.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Now I am hearing, Sir, that the Caves have been given the Port and Heywoods and that there is nothing wrong in giving them the caves because by name they were the natural owners of the Cave.

I am saying, Sir, that if this is going to be part of the Government's privatization programme it must be said from the outset. Barbadians and the taxpayers should not be the ones who have to foot the bill to put Harrison's Cave and all other caves in a good state now for them to be sold to the private sector group when they have the resources to do it themselves.

One must understand the reason why the Minister spoke in the particular vain that he did, because a lot of the workers opted to remain with the NCC. They felt that they would have been in a better position to remain with the NCC than to remain with the Caves of Barbados if it had to be privatized. One must also recognize that a lot of the workers did not accept the contract because they were asked to accept terms and conditions which would be worse off than what they were getting previously. A good example of that, Sir, is that they are asking them to have three weeks vacation when some of the workers would have been enjoying a month's vacation.

I believe, Sir, that anybody who understands the Laws of Barbados will recognize that after a particular point in time that workers are entitled to a certain number of weeks' vacation. Also, Sir, if by law they are not allowed to have that and if they had a contract previously which stated that they were entitled to such and they are now being told that they have a new contract, one of the things that one would expect is that the new owners would abide with the previous contract when it comes to certain working conditions.

No wonder, Sir, as I understand it from the unions, workers are a bit worried about the new contract that has been given to them. They are also worried, as I said before, with the belief that certain entities within Barbados, which I was told owned so much, will be getting a lot more

and that the terms and conditions will be much worse for them than they would have had with the NCC.

I also want to say, Sir, that the National Conservation Commission must recognize that its role is also to look after the beaches of Barbados. They must understand that they cannot allow certain private companies to destroy the beaches of Barbados for their private use without acknowledging that the citizens of Barbados have a right to have beaches too. I have not heard anything from the NCC telling anybody in Barbados that they have developed their properties to such an extent that they now have one of the best beaches which was always the best in Barbados. But the beach to the north of that particular area has been affected.

I am calling on the Minister, Mr. Speaker, to tell the people who have to do the necessary work at the NCC that the beaches of St. Lucy belong to the people of St. Lucy and any investor who believes...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...and anybody else. I can only speak for the people of St. Lucy because it is clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are some MPs who do not feel that Barbadians should have a right to the beach. If I feel that they should have a right to the beach, I have an obligation to speak on behalf of the people of St. Lucy. Those other Ministers and Members of Parliament who feel that Barbadians have a right should get up and say the same thing that I am saying. I can only localize the issue. It is for the other Members of Parliament to get up and state to this House how they feel about beach access in this country.

We have a serious situation, Sir, stretching from Retreat as far as Sherman's where previously there was what we called a beach. All of a sudden, Heywoods beach is now the most beach in Barbados. As I said, it has always been so but it is now wider and places like the Retreat and Sherman's beach areas are now gone. Now the sea is meeting the road and I want to know from the Ministry of Public Works what plans they also have for that particular road in Sherman's. Sir, nobody will be able to come to this Parliament and allow certain things to happen with that particular beach so certain investors within Barbados can get the right to close off that road and use beach erosion as the excuse.

I want to sound a warning to this Government about Sherman's Road. I know the Honourable Member for St. James North would not agree with that terminology because he would say that it has a different name now. But I am saying that Sherman's Road must be protected from the investors who came here in the latter years and that no Government should go to bed with investors to close the road for their private uses when the masses of people in this country...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I would advise you to speak to the Bill before the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am dealing with the NCC and the Caves of Barbados which also means beach erosion and which falls under the NCC Act. That is all under it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, just make your connection please and proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that the interests of Barbados must be protected. Certain people who come to Barbados feel that they have a right because they are investing money in Barbados to have every single thing in Barbados and Barbadians living here who are accustomed to having a particular type of lifestyle should not now enjoy that particular type of life. Certain Ministers feel that they must only look at the economic side of it because Barbadians are not providing that economic side.

I am telling the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Public Works that they must come and have a visit to recognize what is going on in the north of Barbados and that the wishes of the people in the north of Barbados must be accepted and corrected. There was a standpipe on the Shermans beach. Now that standpipe has been washed into the sea and nobody within Government is doing anything to correct that particular problem. Every time I am hearing that Heywoods can get whatever they like. Even a boat can come in every week unchecked.

I am saying, Sir, that something has to be done because I am hearing from the calypsonians that they understand what is going on in this country and the Government must listen to the calypsos. Too many of these calypsos are referring to 1937 where the masses felt they had to pick up arms to defend their rights. We do not want that. I do not want that but I would hate to see the day where the people in the North of Barbados feel they must form a human blockade to get the message over to the Government of the day.
12.45 p.m.

What is even worse is what is happening at Six Men's. We have a situation where the beach at Six Men's is no longer there, where the sea and road are now in a common relationship. They have been newly wedded and I would like to see that corrected.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: And you have the most horrible statement from the Minister of the Environment: "May they enjoy it" as if the people of Six Men's do not have a right to have a beach too.

I am saying this is a serious matter, Mr. Speaker. We must recognise that the caves of Barbados are also our main focus. The beaches of Barbados are more important than the caves of Barbados because when you take account there are more people who use the beaches of Barbados than they use the caves.

I am not saying that the caves are not important but we must recognise that if we are going to be pushing tourism, the National Conservation Commission must have a significant role to play in tourism. If we are going to ignore certain factors, we are going to have a situation in this country where the conflict will continue to be like what we are having on the West Coast where there is a big conflict between the jet ski operators and the hoteliers.

Once you create a scarcity, you create a demand. Once there is a demand, there is going to be conflict because when greater numbers are fighting for a scarce resource you know what will happen. It is like the ZRs fighting for work on the streets of Barbados. That is only an example and I do not want anyone on the Government Side telling me that I have brought in the ZRs in the Caves debate but sometimes you need to make sure that you bring examples that people can understand what is going on in this particular country.

I am saying that the NCC which will have to be one of the most important Ministries at this time of life in Barbados, somebody must tell the Cabinet of Barbados that the necessary resources must be placed in the hands of the NCC staff to make sure they can carry out the particular work that is needed on the beaches and caves of Barbados.

I also heard the Minister say that anybody who interfered with the environment should be dealt with. I wondered at the time when he said it if he understood that another speaker could get up and say that if the Cabinet of Barbados does not do what they should be doing that they can also be dealt with.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that every single person in this House should be concerned with what is going on in the north of Barbados and every single person in this House should recognise that what is going on in the north of Barbados can happen any place else in Barbados. The next time it will be in St. Philip.

I am being told that it is not the next time. It is already happening because a few investors believe that the beaches of Barbados belong to them and once they are investing money in the country, they can do anything in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it does not speak well for yourself or myself because we are supposed to be the ones to speak on behalf of the underprivileged in this country and if we are not doing it, we could as well shut up shop and go home.

I sometimes wonder, Sir, if we are not being encouraged to do that for things to get back prior to 1937 where those who were accustomed to ruling these Chambers will be back in these Chambers and ruling the day again.

We must ask ourselves if we continue to do what we are doing, where we will place ourselves. We are undermining our own and in this Parliament, this should not be an issue. We should be past this stage and be now talking on other matters. It is regrettable that in the year 2000 we have to be discussing issues like beaches when Barbadians honestly believe that the beaches of Barbados are now becoming a scarce resource.

We must stop and ask ourselves some questions, Sir. If we allow all the beaches in Barbados to be taken away from the masses of the country what will happen next? Let me tell you something, Sir. You might be somebody when you are a Minister or an M.P. but the day you stop being a Minister or an M.P. you are nobody in the eyes of anybody for the simple reason this country seems to be a country that only knows people with authority.

A good example is a couple headmasters who when they were headmasters everybody knew. If you visit some of those headmasters who were so well known to this country prior to their retirement and you see them now they have retired, you would not believe it, Sir. We need to make sure that we as legislators protect our beaches because if we do not do something the people of Barbados would have a right to ignore us.

I am saying if there is one issue in this particular debate that we must focus on it is not necessarily the caves because some people would want you to come here and debate the whole thing on the caves because they know who they are preparing it for.

I have said already in a debate in this House, Sir, that the whole structure of Harrison's Cave is wrong. Imagine, Sir, you have a situation where you have to drive right into Harrison's Cave, get off the bus right in front of the Cave and walk in. The people in St. Thomas who had to give up a lot of the things they would normally do to protect the interests of the Cave cannot gain one single thing from the Cave.

I am going to make this suggestion again, Sir, that the car park at Harrison's Cave should be removed from where it is and put at the beginning of the entrance so that those who want to enjoy the benefits of the Cave will also enjoy the benefits of the district but as long as you are going

to take people and take them straight into the Cave, those people who are living next to the Cave will not gain one single thing from the Cave.

If this suggestion cannot be done in St. Thomas, then we will need to develop the Animal Flower Cave in a better way so we can show them how it is available and how it can be done because I can assure you, Sir, that the people of St. Lucy would know how to deal with it.

If the Honourable Member for St. Thomas cannot accept this suggestion, then I would have to sack my M.P. If we need to show you by example we will do it because Harrison's Cave and that surrounding area cannot be only the small part at the entrance to the Cave and the Cave itself.

The problem with the Barbados Labour Party is they cannot see a total project. They can only see part of a project and that is why we have such a failing in this country. They must be able to recognise that once you have a focal point that the focal point is not only important but all those areas around the focal point must be important too. That is why I would expect some support from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas on this particular issue because it is in his interest to help develop the interests of those people who make such sacrifices to make sure that Harrison's Cave is the cave it is. They give up their lives to make sure that the Cave is not contaminated and that is why I am asking the support of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. I know that I will get it because he tells me he looks for the best for St. Thomas and he knows that in some way I might be able to judge that. I will be able to judge that from what he says in this particular debate about where the entrance for Harrison's Cave should be and where it should not be.
12.55 p.m.

It does not make sense having the restaurant there. You need to move these things further in. If Harrison's Cave is important, no matter where the entrance is, people will come and you cannot have people coming just because of the Cave. They must come to Harrison's Cave because of the other things, plus the Cave, and anybody who cannot understand that, something will have to be wrong with them.

The important thing is that tourism must be developed around the Cave and we must recognise that any asset must be able to branch off into other things and the focal point should not only be assets but also the by-product of the particular asset. I once said in this House, Sir, that the environment of Barbados is being impacted on in a particular way and that we need to look at the stress that is being created in this country.

Listening to the radio station yesterday, and I will not identify which one, I understand that people do not understand that things like monkeys have a right to the natural environment of Barbados and NCC believes that the only tree that they can plant are trees that are floral. I am also

saying to NCC that they command enough land that they should also be planting fruit trees. This belief that they should only be planting floral trees is a bare joke. They must recognise that fruit trees must be planted in the gullies, on the by-ways and wherever possible, because if you are going to have a natural situation where the monkeys are asked to live within Barbados and do not believe that you have to provide the necessary food for them, it is obvious that they are going to attack the farmers' crops.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes. Plant the fruits for the monkeys. There has to be some useful purpose for the monkeys here in Barbados, they had to be here for a particular reason and we need to explore the reason why they had been brought to Barbados and make sure that they are kept and used in a useful way. We feel that because a particular group of people feel that they have a right to shoot monkeys that they can do it under the excuse that the monkeys are interfering with crops. There are some people walking on two feet who do the same thing too, but the law does not provide for you to shoot them. I am sure that I have never seen a monkey selling anybody's crops. They only look for food, but yet the law says that you should shoot the monkeys. I do not understand what is going on in this country. There are Barbadians who destroy other people's things but you cannot shoot them either. You destroyed a whole economy in here and they cannot do that to you.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I would leave you to the OECD institution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just proceed!

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That was a part of my debate, Sir. I was proceeding.

Sir, we have to protect the monkeys and we must make sure that the NCC be the institution to make sure because now I understand that they are looking after the gullies and I am sure that if the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment can get a tree planting programme in place and the Ministry of Agriculture promotes grafted fruit trees, if they plant mango trees within the gully area of Barbados I believe that the farmers of Barbados will be able to reap their crops without many problems.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have never seen a monkey throwing away young mangoes. They know ripe mangoes. It is obvious that if you are starving them they have to test what they eat.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine that at a debate dealing with NCC and the caves of Barbados where the monkeys are impacting on the environment of Barbados and the Ministry of Agriculture is capable of helping to solve the particular problem that the Minister is telling me there is no relevance in that? When the Minister of Agriculture can save the farmers from total monkey destruction he is telling me that he is throwing his hands in the air and that he will not help the Ministry of the Environment to solve the particular problem.

The problem with the Minister on this particular issue is that he cannot come up with any new ideas and whenever he hears one he strikes it down, but I will forgive him on that particular one. We also have to recognise that the same way that Harrison's Cave has been able to bring revenue to the country that there are many other caves in Barbados that must be explored and exploited.

I think that we are at a stage now, Sir, that Harrison's Cave might be – I don't want to say overused but it is time to add a newness. I think the best way to add that newness is by adding an additional cave. If you ask me, I could recommend one in Fustic in St. Lucy which provides that natural newness that the Ministry of the Environment and NCC might be prepared to develop.

We also need to spend some money on the Animal Flower Cave to bring it back to the state that it used to be previously. There is no doubt that because of its location it adds a difference to the cave at St. Thomas and if it is fully utilised it is not only the floral aspect of it but the view that you get seaward when you have the opportunity to go underground. I think that NCC must recognise that the Animal Flower Cave has something to offer Barbadians and that they do not go in with a heavy hand to take full control of it and deprive those who have developed it.

We might find a situation where the Animal Flower Cave is taken over by the NCC and then the caves of Barbados are given to Caves of Barbados Ltd. I would not like to see that situation because there is a belief in this country that only certain people can develop certain things. Thank you very much, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this is a convenient time to bring an end to the monkey business. I therefore beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. today.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the

affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed.

Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to be supportive of the matter which is before the House. In my judgment, Sir, this is an exceedingly good move for many reasons and I would wish to address a few of them.

Mr. Speaker, the cave, as Harrison's Cave is known in Barbados is a very fragile and wondrous eco-system by itself. It is something which all Barbadians should be encouraged to see. You go there and you are transported and you wonder if you are indeed still in Barbados. It is a little wonder of this country which laid there hidden away for hundreds and thousands of year. We in our generation are privileged that we are able to enjoy the wonder of it.

Indeed, if I go back to the geography which I was taught by the late Lady Adams as a child, Harrison's Cave is really a part of a network of caves to be found mostly in the parish of St. Thomas. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I may have said this in this Chamber before that it goes back to a time when Barbados was, in a manner of speaking, two islands, and not the one that we know today. Those who know anything about the geological formation of Barbados know that on the south and west coast of Barbados there is a series of coral terraces and that is why you get the ledges down the west coast and along the south coast. The east coast is different. The east coast is oceanic upthrust. There was a time when there was a channel of water between the east coast, oceanic upthrust, and the coral terraces of the west coast and that channel is where the St. George Valley, as we know it today, is to be found.

To this day, Mr. Speaker, the coral stone of this island, including that which adorns this venerable Chamber and of which this Chamber is built, is always quarried from that valley because that is where the coral is at its finest and its softest. We call it 'soft stone' but it is not 'soft stone', it is saw stone.

Asides.

Hon. Miss. B. A. MILLER: It is called saw stone because it is so soft, it can be sawed with a mason's saw. It is a wonderful stone to be worked by stone masons.

There is something very wonderful about the coral too, Mr. Speaker. We have a coral cap in Barbados and when the rain falls the rain water virtually strains through this coral cap and sits on the salt water beneath Barbados and because of the difference in density between the salt water and the fresh water, it sits there. It is from that pool of water that

we pump the water that we drink and use in Barbados. All we do is to put a little bit of chlorine gas in it. We go to New York, London and Washington and the water that we bathe with, there is a notice by the tap that says: 'Not for drinking, has been recycled 19 times'. In Barbados we pump it up, put a little chlorine in it and we like to believe that it is the best water in the world. I believe that too, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

When you go down in Harrison's Cave you can see the difference depending on which hall you are in, you can see where the coral stone is, you can see where the oceanic upthrust is and, where that piggery used to be, you can also see the deleterious effect.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that human beings are terrible polluters, just by breathing we pollute. After years of operating the Cave, it began to be noticed that the stalactites and stalagmites were beginning to discolour and we had to have a speleologist come back to Barbados to advise us that it was simply we as humans going into overkill. We never follow nature although we should be guided by nature.

The advice was given that for a certain number of weeks, possibly months in the course of any given year, the Cave would have to be closed to humans in order for it to recuperate, if not, we will end up destroying this treasure of Barbados, which is only ours for the time being, and we have a duty to pass it onto other generations in as good a condition as we have found it. This is why it was so important when the Minister, the Honourable Member for St. James North made the point that the temperature of the Cave has to be kept at a certain constant.

Very few Barbadians know, Mr. Speaker, that there are fish to be found in the rivers and the pools in the Cave because the Cave, like the other caves in Barbados has underground rivers flowing through them of the purest water you could hope for. You know something which is very interesting about those fish, Mr. Speaker, Sir, they are all blind.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Because I have an interest in these matters, I have been following them for years and I have an interest in that aspect of the geology of Barbados. I remember Ole Sorenson and the late Iris Banochie – we need to give Iris Banochie a lot of credit and through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to hope that the Minister would look to find some aspect of the Cave to name after Iris Banochie.

Mr. Speaker, these fish are blind because light never entered Harrison's Cave until we develop it and research needs to be done to observe now, how these fish are going to

evolve in a cave which is lighted for at least half of a twenty-four hour period. It is a most interesting thing. Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We learn something new every day. I learnt it one day, somebody else will learn it today and somebody will learn it tomorrow and another day.

There is something else about the Cave to which I would wish to speak that has to do with the fact that the Cave, as the Honourable Minister has pointed out, is the number one tourist attraction, particularly for cruise visitors to Barbados. I think that everybody in Barbados knows by now that we get more cruise visitors than we get long-stay visitors. A number of long-stay visitors, including visiting nationals to Barbados tend to make the Cave a number one priority. For the information of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, because in his intervention he did not seem to be aware that the Cave is part of an ecotour – a triangular thing, involving Welchman Hall Gully and the Flower Forest – which is offered by most of the cruise ships which call at the Bridgetown Port, the Cave is already seen as part of a fairly extensive botanic area.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians do not realise that Welchman Hall is the botanic garden of this country. Again, they do not go there.
2.30 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. By that triangle relationship that the masses of Barbados are included in that particular...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I never said any such thing. He just interrupting for the sake of interrupting. It is a point of ignorance.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am talking about ignorance in its proper meaning. Not knowing or understanding, or comprehending. When he spoke, he spoke calling for something which is already in existence and which, to my knowledge, the Tourism Authority is working to expand.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am making this point. Indeed, as the late Lawrence Johnson would have put it, I am saying that to say this, and it is this, Sir. The potential of Harrison's Cave is beyond our imagination. It is beyond our horizon of thought. We are giving it away. I do not want the Minister of Tourism to leave the Chamber now, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We are giving it away.

I have toured by cruise ship several times, before I was in Government, while I was in Government, I have done many cruises – always in the Caribbean. I know what people pay in other jurisdictions to visit. I am sure that I told this story in here already. I once cruised and the ship went to a little island called Cozumel, I signed up for this tour to see this temple. We went ashore in a moses or something akin to moses. The people do not have a proper deep water harbour. We got into this mini van to go to this Maya village with a temple. All I saw was green grass and little signs telling me that they thought that this might have been here and that might have been yonder. I said I got ripped off. Come to Barbados and you go down to Harrison's Cave and you will see the real thing. You get your money's worth over and we are giving it away. We can triple what visitors are now being asked to pay at Harrison's Cave and they would still come in droves. It is close to being a wonder of the world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point I want to lead off from that is this one. This debate we are having here is speaking to the National Conservation Commission. The reality is this. Harrison's Cave has been carrying the NCC for years. That is why I am saying that it is a good move to separate Harrison's Cave and, indeed, all the caves of Barbados and put them under one authority. The potential for profit, the potential for attractiveness to Barbados' nature-based tourism is really unbelievable. What other destinations are asking people to pay, I have to say not a fee, because they expect you to go there and use your imagination... You have everything at your disposal to see here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take up where the Honourable Member for St. Lucy left off – that the National Conservation Commission will now recognise that it has to make the other assets within its portfolio profitable and it can do so.

There was a time the predecessor of the National Conservation Commission used to be known as Parks and Beaches. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. They gave a lot of attention to parks but less to beaches. I want to say a word, Sir, about the beaches. The beach that I live on, you walk down the beach any day and look to where the reef comes into the shore, you can see the white line going out to sea. By that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can count the number of households throwing their household and kitchen waste directly onto the beach. You can even see rice grains on the beach.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is a very, very bad practice. The public health inspector came to my house and I told him to stop peeping into my plant saucers. I try to care the earth, you are not going to find anything that should not be in my plant saucers there. Why don't you look to see what is going on, on the beach? His answer to me is, 'that is not in my jurisdiction'. I hope that the relevant Ministers are listening

because the beaches are part of our protection.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not supporting the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I am supporting Barbados. I am giving him credit for saying something useful for once in a very long time.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am going to give him credit for that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious problem because Parks and Beaches, now known as NCC, will tell you that their responsibility ends at the high water mark.

Now we have something in Barbados called the Coastal Zone Management Unit, and from the high water mark out as far as our coastal waters are concerned fall into the jurisdiction of Coastal Zone. We are fortunate in Barbados, in that we have a man heading that unit, Dr. Leonard Nurse, who is a world-acclaimed expert on climate change and who has the right attitude, not only to coastal but to the entire environment of this little island which is ours. What happens on the beaches is critical, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to what happens to the rest of us. I hope that the NCC, together with the Coastal Zone Unit will look to do what has to be done for the further protection of our beaches.

Let me give you an illustration that came home to me in the most cruel fashion in this year of our Lord. The *Nation* newspaper, I have to give them credit, Mr. Speaker, Sir, organised a clean-up earlier this year. At 6 o'clock in the morning, like all those who were interested, I went out there and picked up garbage off Browne's Beach and along Bay Street. I went back home and decided to go to Fitts Village, which is just down the road from my house, where the Honourable Minister of the Environment was engaged in a tree-planting exercise. It is very beautiful there now, across from Jordans Supermarket. A wonderful window to the sea has been created and I give NCC credit for that, but I do not give NCC credit for the fact, again through ignorance, that they destroyed a turtle crawl and turtle nest.

Now turtles go to the same place to nest for thousands and thousands of years. Only God can create that but human kind can destroy it in a morning with a bulldozer. The turtles are important. I too learn something every day. It was only a few months ago that the Chief Town Planner of Barbados explained to me that turtles are the only creatures on this earth whose systems can digest silicone. Turtles play an important role in the eco-system. Because NCC does not know any better it goes and bulldozes this turtle nest. The turtle crawl had to be reconstructed. It is like the corals

out in the sea where anchors are dragged and the use of spear guns and dynamite destroy them. I know what I am speaking about. I have a nephew who is a marine biologist. He goes hundreds of feet down repairing coral. That is his job.

It is a serious thing, Mr. Speaker. Without the reef and without the beach Barbados would not exist. It is the reef and the beach that protect us from the big ocean.

2.40 p.m.

More than half of the reefs around Barbados are dead. Coral reefs need rock and light to survive. The coral is a living creature and that is why the reefs on the east coast are dead because the wash-off from the Scotland District clouds the water and the light cannot get through. On the west coast and the south coast, we are doing everything we can to destroy the reefs and that is why the south coast has to be seweraged. All the hotels and guest houses have little potted plants breaking up every other day putting raw sewerage straight onto the reefs. Even a little individual in the little kitchen, once you are using soap, squeeze and all these other detergents all the nitrates are going straight onto the reef and destroying the reef that is protecting us.

We think that because we have been spared for all these years that we are special people. It is not that we are special people, we are willful and wicked and the Lord is merciful unto us. But I was brought up to understand that the Lord helps those who help themselves, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and we are not helping ourselves when we willfully destroy the environment upon which we depend for our very existence. What I am saying here, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that the NCC and the Caves Authority need to be very aware of the large responsibility which is given to them as authorities to manage that aspect of our environment.

I want to make a final point arising out of this. I wish that I could speak to many other points but this one I must speak to before I sit down, with your permission, Mr. Speaker. This limited liability company, the Caves of Barbados, is one of several companies in the past several years, Mr. Speaker, Sir, established in Barbados. I think that it is a very enlightened and worthy move – this again is part of the excellence of this move – that by Statute this company should be required to put an annual plan and/or report before this Parliament and an audited statement of accounts.

We have formed many other companies. There is Southern Golf, there is the Barbados Tourism, Inc., there is the one that runs Sherbourne, there is the Needham's Point Development, there are many other companies and they have to be made accountable. I hope that we will see other legislation coming before this House to make those companies accountable in the way that the Caves of Barbados is going to be made accountable by this legislation and that is a very important aspect of it. It is something I have been calling for time and again and I will continue to call for it. I give credit to

the Attorney General and to the Minister of the Environment that they have seen fit to make it a feature of this legislation and nothing could be more important.

If I have any more time left to me, Mr. Speaker, my closing point now would be to the expansion of the Cave. Some while ago, the NCC brought before the Planning and Priorities Committee – which is an executive subcommittee of the Cabinet meeting on a monthly basis looking at monitoring the Government's capital works – brought a proposal and a plan for the expansion of Harrison's Cave. They even brought a model and this model showed us a wonderful rooftop restaurant which would have had a spectacular view across St. Thomas and other parishes of Barbados which would have seen the further exploration and the development of other caverns. We were told that it is entirely possible and I heard the Honourable Minister make the point that Harrison's Cave can be part of a network which possibly joins up with the Jack-in-the-Box Gully, and you can possibly go underground from Harrison's Cave virtually into Speightstown but that is a possibility.

In my recollection it was agreed that this was to be high priority and that we needed to move with this as a project.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, it speaks for itself. If the Cave had been a separate authority as is now proposed, five or seven years ago, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it would have been able to help, at least, to finance its own expansion programme. But, it goes back to the point that I made earlier that it had been carrying the NCC.

Sir, anybody who is a business person will tell you that if you have three or four business concerns, you cannot have one living out of the till of another. That is bad business. A business has to be viable – unless it is going to be a loss leader and you admit that from the beginning – and has to be able to stand up on its own two feet and finance itself. But, I suppose you have to say better late than never, and all credit has to be given to those who have conceptualised it and brought it here.

Suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, it is well brought. I commend it to Honourable Members and the sooner the Caves of Barbados embarks upon its expansion programme, the better because the Caves of Barbados has been in existence for almost a year, perhaps even a little more than a year. This should now be the incentive for the Caves of Barbados to be getting on with the business of the expansion of that Cave. We know it is the number one tourist attraction and it can continue to be so. It has tremendous potential, far beyond anything that we could imagine here today and it will give, I believe because I want to be an optimist on this, the NCC the opportunity to show Barbadians that it can

manage its affairs. It can enhance the physical environment of Barbados and it can possibly develop other tourist attractions in a way that it has not had time to do.

Mr. Speaker, the one word if I had to leave it with National Conservation Commission would be 'training'. It needs to invest in training. It needs to have somebody on staff who is a specialist on the beach and the near shore waters of Barbados. It needs somebody on its staff who is a specialist in landscape design.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is pitiful. I see it here in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, a whole punch of potted plants, thousands of dollars worth, indoors and they are dying as the set before them died because they are not for indoors. Unless you are going to keep them outdoors and only bring them indoors on Sitting days but they are dying. I observed them at lunch time just now – leaves falling off, leaves turning yellow, leaves brown.

All you need there is education.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not criticising for the sake of it. There are workers in the NCC who would love to be trained. Do you know how much of the taxpayers' money goes down the drain? Only last night I was making the point. I drove in from the airport and saw a row of palm trees. They are all dying. They are not well planted and they are dying. They planted them on rock with no wind guards and hundreds and thousands of dollars have gone down the drain. You do not have to be a Solomon to know what you have to plant there, the national flower of Barbados, the Barbados Pride that is what they should be planting there. It is what grows in four inches of soil and can take any soil conditions and flower and give colour and look good. People have to be trained. They have to be trained about the management of soil and the conditions of soil. They have to be trained about how to prune things and make things grow well. They have to be trained in design. Whenever they are going to do something and they need a design, they have to bring in somebody from the outside.

Look at Government Headquarters, a private sector person had to be brought in to do the design. After all of these years, the NCC should have a few trained people on their staff who could do that kind of thing. There is a plan for the beautification of Barbados. It was supposed to be a millennium project. I am still looking forward to it because the millennium has not ended yet and the new one is not beginning until January so I am still looking forward to it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I really do wish to give my full support to this legislation which is before us and hope that it will bring

very quickly to fruition an expansion of not only Harrison's Cave but other caves of Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke, *en passant*, of the Animal Flower Cave. He has a way of doing that about things in St. Lucy. He has only talked about them in passing. He cannot get past the Judge Gap. He is always calling for an airport up there. You do not hear him calling for housing so I will say a few words about the Animal Flower Cave. Do not get up now. You are too late.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member, as usual, is misleading the House. I have taken the Minister of Housing through St. Lucy and showed him 11 locations where I would like some house spots, not houses because I believe that houses should be built by the people and not houses built for the people.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Animal Flower Cave: When we were children and you went to the Animal Flower Cave, it was something to see.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ...but at least a long time ago there was something to see. There were Sea Anemones down there, beautiful flowers which opened and closed, a rare, rare thing. Now when you go to the Animal Flower Cave it is blocked up with old pieces of wood. It is a terrible thing but all you see there now is a sign telling you how many thousand miles to New Zealand.

Asides.

That is what you see down there. There is a rip-off. A tour of the Animal Flower Cave now that is what you are seeing and that needs to be redeveloped. It is a beautiful beach cave.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ...because a private person owns it, it does not mean anything. In all the years when I went there a private person could have had an interest in it too. You have a company now, let them do a joint venture with the private person. The private person cannot live down in the Animal Flower Cave, nothing can exist down there except Sea Anemones and I would hope that now the Caves of Barbados would look to rehabilitate the Animal Flower Cave. That is a wonderful attraction.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, you are looking there and you are looking straight out to sea to Africa and we have to let it go down to nothing and it is a horrible thing. It

really is not a nice place to visit. You visit it for the ozone. You visit it for the beautiful bay there and...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ...that is neither here nor there. Why is everybody telling me that? I know it is owned by a local person but the company that is the Caves now can look to do business with the local person and both can stand to benefit so I hope that the Animal Flower Cave will be resurrected. You have two existing Caves and there are a number of caves yet still to be developed in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.
2.50 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition will be giving support to this Resolution but my colleague has raised some concerns as the substantive shadow minister responsible about the Bill as it stands. I wish to start in this particular regard particularly in relation to the Bill by saying that the Opposition has consistently called, over the past five or so years, for the Government to introduce measures to ensure that companies incorporated under the Companies Act and owned by the Government be required to file or rather to have laid in Parliament, financial and audited statements of their operations particularly those for which Parliament offers guarantees in terms of borrowing.

I noticed in this regard that the Government has taken on board the recommendations of the Opposition and that in this piece of legislation, stipulation has been made that the company under Clause 7 of the Act should be required to present the Minister not less than three months after the end of the financial year with audited statements and that the Minister as soon as practicable thereafter would have to bring those statements and lay them in Parliament.

That is very important because the Public Accounts Committee and Parliament as a whole has lost sight over the expenditure of millions of dollars because a large number of Government-owned companies are undertaking investments and are basically running areas of activity that previously were under the preserve of the Government.

I remember in 1993 when we established the two private companies to run the sugar industry, concerns were raised about this and the Attorney-General's office was asked to come up with a formula to ensure that those companies lay those reports. Now, the way the Government has done it in this particular case is by way of legislation but I think Government should also bring a generic law reform Bill which would require all of those companies in which Government has 100 per cent shares to lay audited financial statements. So I support that and I compliment the Government for taking the idea to this extent.

However, there are some concerns that come about when you move from a statutory corporation and enter now into a scenario where a Government-owned company incorporated under the Companies Act is undertaking investments or running an aspect of Government's business. I think the Attorney General needs to look at the extent to which where you have a private company owned by Government undertaking these kinds of activities, the Minister by legislation should still have the right to give the entity directions on policy.

I believe that those Company Law purists — I assume the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is still one — would have to wonder whether a Minister could give directors of a company, directions on policy. I think you will also have to question whether the Minister would still retain powers to approve and not approve decisions of the board of directors in relation to things like the level of fees to be charged etc., because directors have duties under the Companies Act which one assumes in some cases may very well conflict with the area of authority which a Minister had been able to retain in relation to statutory corporations and which are now being introduced by way of this legislation.

It is a point to look at because if you appoint a director of a company and you tell him that under the Companies Act he has certain responsibilities to the shareholder and also to the company as a corporate personality — I do not think that it makes sense to develop a situation where under legislation like this, the Minister still has power to give directions. I do not think that the Minister should retain power to give approval.

There are ways in which Ministers representing the shareholder can get the shareholder's view across to the company both at an informal level and also if necessary formally. Therefore, I do not think it is necessary to include it in the legislation because there are some people who will take this to the ultimate extreme and believe that it gives them power to direct the affairs of the board.

If you look at Section 5:

"The Minister may give directions to the Company relating to matters of policy, and the Company shall give effect to those directions."

There are some directors or potential directors who you would appoint who are not going to agree that their discretion and their rights as directors should be fettered in this way by a Minister giving direction. I would be one; you will have to give me an indemnity immediately in respect of any duties I would have to perform as a director of a company like that.

So you have to watch that and I am saying even though we are asking for sight of the audited statement I still

think that you have to be careful in going overboard and still giving a Minister power to, I do not want to use the word 'meddle' but it amounts to that, in the operations of the board of directors of what now becomes a personality under the Companies Act by way of incorporation.

I think the Attorney General should look at that but I would say that I compliment the Government for taking on board the idea of moving with it. As I understand it, and maybe the Minister can tell me since I do not know the facts on it, but I understand that there was the issue of one time of royalty in respect of Harrison's Cave to persons who were either owners of land in the area or owners of land under which the Cave passes. I want to find out whether royalties have in fact been paid at all under any Government to these persons who are the owners of land in those areas or whether the matter has just been left in abeyance since the Cave was opened as a public attraction.
3.00 p.m.

There are a couple of other things that I wanted to raise, Mr. Speaker, which the Attorney General should look at also in relation to the way this legislation has been designed. You do not want a situation where you are mixing up the remedies that a person has against a Minister of Government under the Administrative Justice Act and the remedies a person may have against a company owned by Government.

Therefore, with legislation like this, you may very well create a hybrid situation where a decision that is taken influenced by directions given by a Minister may not be reviewable because the proper party to sue is not the Minister but in fact the corporate entity which Government has established. I think these need to be looked at. I am interested in the audited statements of these companies being made available to Parliament. I am not interested in meddling into their operations. I think that what we are looking for when we establish a corporation like this is efficiency and return from the investment. Those are things that the directors should be concerned about. Government has other ways in which it can influence the policy of those companies without putting that in the legislation. If Government is the shareholder at shareholders' meetings, Government can essentially determine the direction that that company takes. As soon as you come to a situation where the Minister has the power to give those companies directions, to my mind, you are crossing a threshold that I think should be avoided at any cost.

The second point that needs to be raised about this is that the Honourable Member for St. James North must not believe that simply because you move Harrison's Cave from under the operations of the NCC into a private company that automatically it will be better run. The point is that it is also important for you to ensure the quality of the directors that you appoint to these private companies and also that the direction that the company is to take in terms of the investments is very,

very clear.

There is no magic to having a statutory corporation. There are statutory corporations that are well run. ICB is a statutory corporation. It has been well run and there are other statutory corporations that down through the years have been well run. When you establish a company, it is to ensure flexibility in a number of areas such as your employment practices. It allows you greater flexibility in terms of decision-making.

One of the reasons why we established companies in the sugar sector in those days was precisely that reason so that the board could make effective decisions without the Minister intervening in those scenarios and without the Cabinet intervening and confusing people. Because the people with whom the chief executive was negotiating would know that he has full authority of his board to make those decisions without interference and meddling from any other quarter. That is what you want so that efficiency can be generated. If we continue to perceive Government-owned companies in Barbados in the same light as the statutory corporations, then we are going to be doing them a great disservice.

There are some people who had experience in Government who look at it that way. Just because a company is Government-owned there still are certain things that a company is supposed to do and not to do. Therefore, in seeking to realize the benefits to the taxpayers, those companies do not always rise to the highest level of efficiency that is desirable. The only way that we can tell if these entities are performing is by the laying of audited financial statements and reports. As a shareholder, the Minister then becomes accountable to Parliament to respond to the issues relative to the company's function and operations.

I think that the Honourable Member for St. James North commented on the performance of staff in the commercial section of NCC and on some other areas of the National Conservation Commission. He spoke about odious practices. In fact, I think the word he used was "wicked" practices by previous Governments and this present Government. He said "Governments" which would include this Government in relation to the hiring of persons in these statutory corporations. I got the impression that his comments were targeted towards the average worker, the thirty people who came to him not looking for jobs in management, accountants or office workers. His remarks seemed only to be targeted at those people at the bottom.

There are people who are placed by their political party in management positions at statutory corporations that by one act alone do ten times more damage than those persons at the bottom who are simply looking for a weekly wage and

some kind of security. Some of them may be giving problems. But I am also saying that it is not only at that level that you should be looking to see whether persons are performing in their functions.

The NCC has had its own history of odious practices. I am interested in the mere fact that this statutory corporation cannot produce a report. I am very interested to see that it was a Mr. Edmund Hinkson, Mr. Speaker, who signed the last letter of transmittal of a report. He has written volumes in the newspaper about integrity and morality. Money went missing from NCC when he was chairman. Oh yes! You check the record and you will see to this date the public of this country has not been told by the Board of the National Conservation Commission either directly or indirectly what happened to that money that went missing from NCC, whether there had been investigation into it, or anything like that.

The report which he signed onto is the report which basically ended the period that the Democratic Labour Party was responsible for the affairs of the National Conservation Commission. This report goes to March 31, 1995 and the Democratic Labour Party demitted office in September 1994. Therefore, the report covered the entire period. I am very glad about that. I remember when this Government came to office the Honourable Member for St. Peter was jumping up and down in here week after week and saying that he is not going to tolerate a situation where statutory corporations refuse to lay audited financial statements and reports of their operation in this Chamber. The Public Accounts Committee will be meeting next week Wednesday and I hope by then we can get a final update.

There are several statutory corporations which since September 6, 1994 have not yet filed statements, financial or otherwise, of their operations. Therefore, the apology by the Honourable Member for St. James North though taken in the context of somebody who is on the ropes, I hope that Honourable Members on that Side will see it as an admonition of the negligence, because it is ultimately the responsibility of the Minister to ensure that these reports are filed in Parliament. The Public Accounts Committee cannot carry out its work until those reports are actually filed. We spent the whole of the last Session of Parliament, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South can tell you, and the others who are on the Public Accounts Committee, just trying to find out which of the statutory corporations were delinquent in terms of not filing their audited financial statements and their annual reports. There are several of them.

3.10 p.m.

I believe that the National Conservation Commission, if it wants to be taken seriously, along with the Transport Board, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and all of these other stakeholder enterprises which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said would not be operating on "business as

usual" but consequent on his election would be filing reports every week in this House on an up-to-date basis, would take heed to the warning that in a sense had been issued by the Honourable Member for the City in saying that she supported the idea of the private companies filing as well. It is an idea which I hope this collective House would send out to those who are responsible for filing those annual reports because this is a national disgrace.

The only thing worse than this is the fact that the Government does not answer Parliamentary Questions. The only thing worse than the fact that we do not have up-to-date, audited, financial statements or reports and in some cases have not had any for five years from some statutory corporations is the fact that this Government has not answered a single Parliamentary Question since the first Question was put on the Order Paper some time in 1999. Not a single Parliamentary Question has been answered.

I keep saying that at the end of the day it will be our generation that would have run this Parliament so low and into the ground because of our negligence in ensuring that the traditions which lend to accountability are observed. I am only accepting an apology because I know that the Honourable Member very regrettably suffered a period of illness and therefore that may be a valid excuse for him not getting onto the backs of the people of the National Conservation Commission. Besides that, maybe he does not deserve at this stage the pressure that he should be under.

None of the others can be excused. No more apologies can be acceptable. You are bringing new legislation to put in place a new corporate entity which essentially would be governed by the directions of the Minister. The old one was governed by the directions of the Minister and could not and has not reported since the Democratic Labour Party left office and yet the Government would expect that you can usher in this legislation with kid gloves and phrasing, lauding the achievements of the Government in passing new legislation which would permit the financial statements to be filed.

If the record of Caves of Barbados comes anything close to the National Conservation Commission's then we, this Parliament, should have power in here, to send auditors into those enterprises and have audited financial statements or an audit report or something like that undertaken to see whether those entities are compliant.

It is quite possible that this Government would have come into office and demitted office and the National Conservation Commission, were it not for the apology of the Honourable Member for St. James North today, and all of these statutory entities, may never have reported and no-body seems to think that that is an issue that is worthy of

the attention of a Parliament that is over 300 years old. It is a disgrace and we need to claim back for this Parliament the rights in relation to accountability that are so very critical.

When I look at the last Annual Report of the National Conservation Commission even in relation to the caves there were issues that were raised that nobody will ever know whether those issues have been resolved. The revenue then was \$2.5 million. I have not heard any statistics today in relation to revenue. I only heard about the number of Barbadian visitors but I think the Government also owes it to us, and I hope the Minister will find the statistics to tell us what is the gross revenue of the Cave and if it can be segregated from the rest of information in relation to NCC. I suspect, and I would not doubt, that ways and means have been found to mix up all of those finances to give the impression that the NCC is able to meet its expenditure when, as the Honourable Member for the City said, the bulk of the revenue from its commercial operations is coming exclusively from Harrison's Cave.

The Minister needs to demand a clear picture because it does not make sense starting fresh with a new company, with new legislation, without having an idea of what the slate looks like. Is it a clean slate? Are you transferring some debt in relation to the old Harrison's Cave operation? What is the level of revenue so that we can compare it over the years? What is the level of expenditure? What is the condition of the capital equipment in the Cave? What are the estimated annual recurrent expenditures? What is it likely to be? What is required capital expenditure? Do you anticipate that you will be coming here to get Government to guarantee borrowing? That is another matter.

A lot of these private companies owned by Government, aside from what Government guarantees, have also been going to the banks in Bridgetown and have been borrowing money, not like NHC, because the NHC is scrambling around all over Barbados trying to pick up a few million dollars to pay monthly salaries. I understand that they carried all the deeds they have at one of the banks in this country to try to get \$15 million just to pay salaries, to show you the condition the NHC is in, and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said he would pay special attention to it. Since the Estimates debate, the National Housing Corporation is now in worse condition, as I speak in the middle of July, than it was during the course of the Estimates debate when the Minister was asked to implement the decisions of the special audit and the Prime Minister said that he was making arrangements to stem the problems at the National Housing Corporation.

It is in a worse position now. They are scrambling around all over the place trying to get money. They are hounding down people who do not have money to pay because they are either occupying lots as a result of a welfare arrangement or may have been given some concession by the

Corporation in the past and they are now writing the people and telling them they are giving them 15 days in which to pay off all the money that they owe.

I will move back to National Conservation Commission and the new company. Likewise, we need to be clear that they are not going to the bankers in Bridgetown seeking further accommodation which Parliament either has no knowledge of, or in seeking to move on with the new company, creates a burden to the operations of that new company. I think that that is something that the Honourable Member for St. James North needs to deal with.

There were matters back then and problems that had occurred in relation to the trams which were raised in that Report and Parliament has not been given a full update on the issues in relation to the trams. I see that all of these facilities, Barclays Park, Bath, Farley Hill, Hastings Rocks, King George V Memorial, Marine Museum, Pelican, Queen's Park and Hometown are and can be income-generating entities.

I think that the Minister, in dealing with the second Bill or when he responds, needs to tell us what the financial position of the National Conservation Commission is at this time. While it is true that the NCC has done some good work around Barbados they were once doing a lot of work in the area of Bath in St. John. Bath is still a popular Barbadian beach resort. It is one of those beaches that is visited by very few tourists and large numbers of Barbadians from St. George, St. Thomas, St. Joseph and all parts of this country visit Bath with regularity.

I believe that the National Conservation Commission needs to take another look at Bath because there is a lot of work that needs to be done. There is the problem with the roads and also the other facilities clearly need a face-lift. There was a waterfall that was once maintained. There was a footpath and all kinds of other attractions in that area and it seems that many of those attractions have either now been covered over by bush or are entirely dilapidated. I urge the Honourable Member for St. James North to include Bath and of course when the new fishing facilities at Consett Bay are finished, to carry out a beautification programme in those areas because there is enough land around that fish market and owned by Government — Skeetes Bay in St. Philip and Consett Bay in St. John. I think those areas are still areas that Barbadians would like to visit and the facilities in those areas are presently inadequate, both the roads leading to them and also the physical facilities for picnicking and other basic recreation.

3.20 p.m.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister in his reply would respond and give us a clear picture of the way forward for the new company which Government has established.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my contribution by saying that I fully appreciate the establishment of a corporate entity, Caves of Barbados Limited to manage the caves throughout this country. Mr. Speaker where Harrison's Cave is concerned, I believe that if you establish a new regime specifically for that cave, that the cave will no longer be seen as just another one of those things which the NCC has to supervise. It will not be just an appendage to the National Conservation Commission (NCC) receiving a fraction of NCC's funds and a fraction of NCC's attention because that original type of NCC set up could never be the ideal thing for what is really and truly our premiere tourist attraction. Under that system it could very well get lost amongst the myriad responsibilities which NCC has and, as a result, an entity like the cave could very well suffer as a result of that system.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, if you have a distinct body, Caves of Barbados Limited to manage the cave, then the tourist attraction becomes unclouded and it becomes a lot better defined as to what it has to do and where it has to go. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, funds will be specifically voted for the cave and people at the cave cannot say any longer that the money did not come to them or that the NCC used that money for something else. The Caves of Barbados Limited from now on, will now have to account for all of the losses and all of the profits of the cave in a manner that they did not have to do previously. The Caves of Barbados Limited should know from today that they will be held responsible for the profits or the losses of the cave.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is a sound policy and that any time you have an agency which can make money, that it should be taken out of that NCC blanket, that type of situation where it could be disadvantaged and that it should be put in a position where it can create its own sources of revenue. Sir, I am thinking in terms of other entities such as the Gymnasium, the Port Authority and ICB. When you have those types of agencies which can make money, I think it is best to let them stand on their own two feet, generate their own revenues and look after their own expenses and so on. Mr. Speaker, in a way, this is a very classic case of facilitating and promoting genuine and true entrepreneurship. I am advised, and I believe that this will give the Caves of Barbados Limited an opportunity for greater efficiency, greater transparency and accountability. There will now be more a businesslike approach to all matters relating to the cave. Mr. Speaker, I must say that I welcome this.

As was said by the Honourable Member for St. John, as well as the Honourable Member for St. James North, putting the caves under the Caves of Barbados Limited is not going to be the end-all. A former employee of the cave, Mr. Speaker, told me just over a year ago, when he was leaving the cave to take up another post, that the cave is an excellent attraction but that it would make millions of dollars more if it were under private enterprise. Mr. Speaker, that statement has stuck with

me from then until now.

In this regard, I was very pleased about six weeks ago when the Honourable Member for St. James North, and as he did today again, spoke very forcefully about the whole question of work ethics, in particular work ethics in relation to people at NCC. It seems to be something which is virtually all pervasive these days where at Government agencies such as the Harrison's Cave, you find persons who have their own attitudes and want to tell people who have sent them there that they cannot move them. I believe that almost all of us who have Ministries can point to agencies where that type of attitude exists and where the work ethics leave a lot to be desired.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be a hypocrite ever. I know that politicians will always try their best to find job placement for their constituents. I know, Mr. Speaker, that that particular level of political patronage is not going to disappear overnight but I do believe that there are occasions when we as politicians, have to be a lot firmer than we are and that we have to tell even the very constituents that we find jobs for, that we are not going to condone their bad attitudes and their bad behaviour.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The point I am making is that even when the cave goes under Caves of Barbados Limited and that work attitude continues to prevail that we are going to be back to square one. The point I am making, Sir, is that occasionally a politician will find a job placement for someone but I do think that it is the duty of that person, once that job has been found, to do nothing which will embarrass himself or herself, as well as the politician who has found the job for him or her. Indeed, Sir, I was very pleased yesterday to listen to an executive from Sandy Lane. They were interviewing people for jobs at Sherbourne. When he was asked what he was looking for most in those persons who came seeking jobs, his reply was attitude. This sends a message, I believe, to a lot of them it is not just a matter of going and saying that I can cook or I have this skill or whatever it is, but it is your attitude to your work. Therefore, Sir, when we put the caves under this authority we have to ensure that those persons who are there are productive and they do not create a lot of the controversy and so on which we associate with NCC from time to time.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I belong to the old school. I know that there is technology. The whole question of language is something which I want to touch on. I remember the last time we spoke about the caves in this Assembly the point was made that a lot of the tour guides only spoke English. I am not looking, Sir, for a situation where we have what we can call interpreters, everybody can speak language

fluently. I am speaking about where you should be able to speak, perhaps, conversational French or Spanish. That situation should exist, Mr. Speaker, at the Cave.

I believe, Sir, that even though there is technology now where you can push a button and select what language you want, I believe, Sir, that nothing beats it than when you have someone who face to face can tell a person, a cup of coffee or whatever you want to tell them. Ask them a question and answer a question – personalise the whole thing. You may have a situation where you only have French tourists on board going to the Cave.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The point I am making, Sir, that you can have a situation where you ask them if they are all French or Spanish. In this regard I do not think that the Cave is as user-friendly as it should be. I believe that particular aspect is surely lacking. The truth is we can lose tourists if we are not professional.

Sir, in this day and age we have to maintain the edge on cheaper destinations, and we can only do this, Mr. Speaker, by offering a better service than the other destinations are offering. I think there used to be film on the Cave up front. I also think that too can be done in a different language. It is all well and good to have people who speak both English and French. You can give them the film and everything is in English.

The question of the other foreign language has touched me, Mr. Speaker, because in this day and age it seems as though that being bilingual is a positive and if you are not it is a real drawback. Through the Ministry of Labour, Royal Caribbean, quite recently, interviewed some people for jobs as seamen, chefs and so on. Would you believe that the actual interview was done in Spanish? I am of the view, Sir, that all hotel workers, especially those who work at the Front Office, I believe that the time has come when they should be able to speak not only English but at least some other language or a smattering of another language. That is my view, Sir.

We did a crash programme quite recently, Sir, where we sent some of our people to the United States of America to work. We thought it absolutely necessary before they left Barbados to take them through a training course. As part of the training course we insisted that they had to do Spanish. Obviously not Spanish at O-level but they had to do conversational Spanish. I am sure, Sir, that the ones who have gone off there have on more than one occasion had to use some of the very conversational Spanish which we have taught them. In this day and age almost any part of the United States you go to work Spanish is almost absolutely necessary.

If I were able to take the argument a bit further, I would encourage all of our taxi-men to see if they can do a little

conversational French or Spanish. Even the beach vendors too can think about it.

Mr. Speaker, the other aspect which I want to touch on concerns the whole question of safety at the Cave. The Labour Ministry is responsible for safety at the workplace and it is therefore an interest of mine. The service which is rendered at the cave is about public carriage of people. I think that emphasis should therefore be placed on safety.

I want to begin, Sir, under this Head by commending the technical and the administrative staff at the Cave for the seemingly simple, it would appear to be some very simple things that they do, but they are significantly helpful when it comes to taking safety precautions that they have put in place for those who use the Cave. I have to say that there has always been an emphasis on the protection of patrons by those who work at the Cave, and the Cave Authority must continue to emphasise this.

The question of the wearing of helmets. It may appear to be simple, common-place, and, perhaps, you may even say why are you mentioning that. Mr. Speaker, I know why I am making this point. I want to suggest to them that even when visitors complain that the helmets give them headaches and that the helmets ruffle up their hair, they should insist that the helmets be worn or else they are not going to allow them to go to the Cave. I know why I say that.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, another simple thing. When you go there and the tour guide gets in, they always tell you to keep your arms and legs inside the tram because you are travelling a lot closer to the solid rock than you imagine. With your foot or arm outside could cause injury, even though it is simple, it is a very practical safety tip and safety measure which is always used. People want to touch the rocks, people want to touch the formations and so on and push their hands outside.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, every stop which is made in the cave is not, as far as I remember, what I would call a getting-off stop and the job of the security person who rides in the tram is to ensure that people do not disembark where they should not.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The driver is way up the road in the tram and things can happen at the back that the driver may not be aware of and sometimes you stop just to view, not to get off and people may want to get off when the driver could be pulling off and so on. As I said, I am

looking at it strictly from safety in the workplace, a good measurement used is to have that security person travelling with them and his presence means a lot to the safety of the patrons. I was extremely pleased too when the Cabinet paper came sometime in 1998 around May I think it was – no, I think it was earlier, because they closed the cave in April 1998, for a couple of months so as to give it a breathing space which was spoken about earlier but also it afforded them the opportunity to also take other safety precautions and safety measures which were absolutely necessary when the Cave reopened.

Occasionally, Mr. Speaker, something will go wrong with a tram. Something will go wrong with your car, Sir, something will go wrong with my car – mine is an old one. But, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that they are only mechanical devices and things will happen to them. Now what we have to be aware of, is that there are a lot of patrons who become very claustrophobic when you are underground and when a tram breaks down or something and people want to get back to top quickly. Here again, you can touch another device which is a pager system that they have in place at the Cave. There is a pager system installed at various points in the Cave. For instance, when a driver is in trouble, he can page the workshop and they will decide whether to send the mechanic down or to send another tram, as the case might be. I know they have recently installed portable radios as well in the buses and the drivers can use them to radio out.

The point I am making, Sir, is that the Cave has been proactive with the implementation of labour standards and I think that other businesses in Barbados should take that approach. I just want to pause here, Sir, and say that even now, when we are doing our best to promote the whole question of small businesses that there are a lot of people who are going into small businesses some of which are dangerous and there are not really and truly living up to the health and safety standards which are required. A lot of people who are in a small business look at the profit line only and they pay very scant attention to the whole question of safety. I am impressed with the things which have been happening at the Cave and I think, Sir, it speaks well for Harrison's Cave that in almost 20 years of existence, nothing of a major accident has ever occurred. It is a very good example of how compliance to labour responsibilities and labour requirements can bring positive benefits.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, sometimes we do not appreciate the massive importance of safety and health and we are speaking here about a cave and a cave is almost a quirk of nature. It is really and truly a hole in the earth and virtually anything can happen to you when you are there. Thankfully, they have not had to pay out any massive compensation for injury and so on.

Looking after these things helps the profit line because you do not have to take up your profits and use to pay compensation. Sir, I am of the view that one major accident at

the Cave can ruin the reputation of that Cave forever. I would urge them, Sir, to continue to take all of the safety measures which they can to make the Cave safe for tourists as well as for locals. So safety has to remain a priority at the Cave and I think that I said somewhere before that the best sign of a good business is its compliance with safe labour standards because safety will go a long way towards making that entity a much more marketable service.

I think, Sir, that it would perhaps be worth our while to do a complete safety analysis and one of the first things that the authority should do is a complete safety analysis of the measures enforced at the Cave and where they fall short, let us not beat about the bush and let us spend money to improve them. I believe, Sir, that as a Government we cannot expect to espouse the whole doctrine of safety and health and not support it with the relevant resources.

Mr. Speaker, I close as I began by saying that I welcome this piece of legislation. I believe, Sir, that the establishment of Caves of Barbados to manage the caves is indeed a good thing because it would put the Cave more in focus and they will not be seen as just another one of the many things that National Conservation Commission has to look after.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to lend my comments to this debate on the Caves of Barbados. Sir, I certainly endorse most of what the last speaker had to say but I would like to lend my word of congratulations to the Honourable Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, this Cave that we are speaking about in Barbados is not any subterranean cavern. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East behind me is saying, "It is a Paradise," the words of the famous calypsonian, "Culture Man." Sir, I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, before lunch, really did a disservice to this beautiful, natural, geological gem, when as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East came in he seemed off struck to find out what he was speaking about. He said,

"What monkey Wup Wam is he singing or talking about?"

That was a rhythm that we came up with as little boys, 12 and 13 years old. He spent 30 minutes, Sir, giving a dissertation of simian praedial behaviour when he had the opportunity to speak – not quite as eloquently as his Honourable Member on the bench on the Other Side – positively about a gem of Barbados.
3.50 p.m.

But, Sir, he had an opportunity to speak positively about a real gem of Barbados.

Sir, as I said, this Cave is not about any old subterranean cavity. It is not about a political football and although we welcome it being run by a Board I would like to send a word of warning fairly early that when speaking about profits, the Board should not automatically think about expanding, but rather to do what the facility is naturally geared to do and to improve on it and to improve on certain features such as energy supply and maintaining the natural environment. Once you improve on that, then the profits will come.

Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Minister who piloted this Bill said, it is a very fragile and vulnerable eco-system. Sir, it is nestled in a densely populated small island and hence the greatest possibility of over consumption being a real problem with the cave.

Sir, the ultimate goal with respect to this wonder is about preservation. It is about sustainability. It is about diversity and it is about the application of state of the art technology. I am surprised to see so much work has gone on at that cave and we have not come and highlighted it on television. I well remember the very first video about Mr. Sorenson back in the 80's and I think it is high time now that we see part two to show the young people the serious work that has gone on in making that cave a better place.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North was speaking about the safety measures but way above that is the geophysical imaging, a technique which was used I think it was, by researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who came down to Barbados, and who because of recent technology, can tell you the exact width of the great hall and other areas which could be very vulnerable and which could give you a good idea about its tensile strength *et cetera*.

Therefore, Sir, there are these techniques and no one can gainsay the expense or the expenses incurred in bringing this wonder up to the state which it now stands.

Asides.

Mr. D. T. GILL: It is a gem of Barbados without second thought.

Sir, the old maxim 'efficiency enables sufficiency' could best describe the way in which this cave is run with respect to energy consumption. I do not know how many of us know that at the cave they have been using sunlight trapped at the roof which is referred to as photovoltaic. Mr. Speaker, these are techniques which any modern system, be it a new building, a new synthesis, a new process, a new manufacturing... Sir, there are certain achievements, certain levels and certain principles which modern buildings and modern techniques must adhere to. Things like conservation of energy, alternative energy sources and respect for the environment.

We heard about the environmental impact studies and the related reports which must be forwarded three months after every period.

Sir, these are hallmarks which should be obtained and which should be achieved. I am sure that this is the sort of position which the Caves of Barbados, the Harrison's Cave in particular, would be aiming for. Therefore, seeing that its business is about underground beauty, about natural formation, about preservation of its stalagmites and its stalactites and its watercourse, I think that these should be the guiding lights for the new Board as it goes about its business.

Sir, the period of time that the operations of the Cave were down should be a learning lesson to other departments particularly departments like the Barbados Transport Board and the Barbados Fire Service – entities which have to import vehicles and equipments.

Sir, if you do not have a source which can give you a regular supply after purchasing the equipment and you cannot be satisfied about the adaptability of parts and have the technical knowledge and know-how to service the vehicles or equipment after, that is indeed a big problem. Sir, that problem did obtain at the cave. It seems now as if they have gotten over that problem but that should stand as a real lesson for other departments who depend wholly and solely on the importation of technology.

Mr. Speaker, there are positive things that you can speak to about this cave. As I said earlier on, alternative energy sourcing. In bringing this cave up to scratch, it involves a transfer of knowledge from areas as far-flung as Texas and Australia. Sir, this puts Barbados on the map not only because this cave in itself is not a dry cave but it is one of the few wet caves to be found the world over. Not only that, the sort of technology that has gone into it in bringing it up to the level that it is, makes it a centre and a place for knowledge for any research for any other cave of its kind in any part of the world.

Sir, it has set up strong bonds between other institutions. It has set up not only academic bonds but filial bonds. Sir, like the type of bonds we know which exist between the McGill University and the Belair Institute. Sir, Harrison's Cave in itself is not only a tourist destination but it can serve as an institution for learning and research the world over.

Sir, there is the technique as I have said of using the sunlight to help with the energy supply at the Cave. Sometime ago, this technique was attempted at the new Graeme Hall building but it did not work as anticipated. I know they are currently getting ready to have a new arrivals hall at the airport and I would wish that that hall be cooled

using solar energy. It is clean and it is a lot cheaper. Sir, it is exciting and it is the way for a modern 21st century developing island like Barbados to go.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, I have addressed certain areas and objectives which should be achieved. We heard quite a lot about closing the cave for a period of time – and that area has been well gone over – for it to regenerate. This is part, Sir, of what we call the carrying capacity. This should be one of the guiding lights as to how a fragile eco-system like the Harrison's Cave or any other cave for that matter should be run. We know that it can carry "x" amount of persons per year and no more. Just rest the tram and let it regenerate and let it sort of heal itself.

For the first time the public must know these things and they must not only see it, Sir, as potentially a loss or an area in which lots of money has been spent. For the first time in 18 years the cave has passed an electrical inspection. In other words, nothing was done in 18 years. Can you understand, Sir, that we talk glowingly about the thousands of people who are in and out of the cave? We must take into account the amount of money which is invested in that underground. It could be an underground trap. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip North sort of hinted of a possible catastrophe should things go amiss.

Sir, we must congratulate the Implementation Unit that has been carrying out a lot of the work there. As small as it may look, the fitting of the bearings to the side of the cave makes a lot of difference, Sir. If you could reduce things like the frictional loss of energy as the trams make their way down, again, Sir, that could be another plus and another way of increasing the profit margin. Profit margins are not only about sending home people. Profit margins are about making something like that more efficient in energy as well as your human resources.

Therefore, I endorse what the Honourable Member for the City said about training the people. It is a very delicate area. I walked that area after about seven days of its original opening. I went down by the tram and during the period that it was down I walked virtually the entire length. If you do not train the people with respect to the damage which noise levels can have and the actual contamination from touching, then all the amount of money which you would have spent would not really be realized.

Sir, as I said, innovation. Our young people should know the kind of work that has gone down. They should know that through the same system that I referred to they are able to see something like 17.5 kilo volts multiplied by a thousand which actually go into the grip to help with the cooling and the actual running of the trams.

Therefore, there are areas like this that could be improved. Who knows? In another five years that might be able to power the entire tram once the technology is fully explored, captured and implemented.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with respect to our underwater supply, this gives us a great insight into where we get our water and how long it takes. Again, we are in an area by ourselves. Lots of us have traveled the world over and have drunk from the natural springs, but none can be as natural as ours once it has gone through that filtration process for years and hundreds of years.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I remember when I was in the Other Place we came to Parliament with respect to contamination of the immediate environs of the cave. This can show us what actually obtained then and it can be a lesson to us about our natural springs and water resources. There is the area of Three Houses and I think that we have to do a lot more monitoring about the contamination at Three Houses. Recently, Sir, this area has been discovered by thousands of Barbadians who are going to Three Houses Springs. I know that it falls under the purview of the NCC, but a word of warning is that I wish that it would be policed and monitored and that the actual testing for bacteria in those springs and other springs will be done on a regular basis.

Sir, it does not take a life-time for your natural resources to become contaminated. Recently, we saw in England or Florida where they have been using organic fertilizers. Everybody wants their vegetables to be organically grown, but there is a little drawback there. Mr. Speaker, that regular bacteria – "e-coli" found in sewerage has actually leaked into the system and has found its way onto the supermarket shelves. We actually saw the same thing happen at a dairy in Japan. We must be wary and respect the natural resources and we must cherish them. We must look after them as yet another crown jewel.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so much for the cave and I would like to spend a few minutes with the NCC. Sir, some of the workers at the NCC have taken a beating. I had my stint there and I can go on record as being one of the only people who relieved oneself of a duty and then was relieved of the duty by a Minister. I fired myself first by saying it is now the silly season and it is not decent and right. An election is around the corner and I fired myself. Then after a month on nomination day I got a second firing. I have a good idea of what goes on at the NCC.

Sir, now that the Cave would have been relieved of the NCC they certainly have to go a bout being a profitable entity. I said it sometime ago and I will continue to say it. I think that the NCC can go to the Minister of Finance with a good plan and say, "Sir, we are looking for something like \$60 000 to purchase plant material of indigenous ferns found throughout the Caribbean. Year two, Sir, is like arithmetic

progression. Year two they can go back for \$30 000 which is \$90 000. Year three they can go back for half of that, \$15 000 and they will have \$105 000, Sir. They have the biggest nursery in Barbados. They can have enough plant material to service the entire Barbados. It is located in one of the coolest parts of the island with a good rainfall. They have absolutely no problem with propagating and establishing their plants, none whatsoever.

4.10 p.m.

Sir, they can become a viable entity but you cannot be a viable entity when you are yourself into a plant nursery and for many of the contracts won you have then to go on the outside and purchase the plant material. That is one of the areas that first of all they have to get around.

On the other point, I would like to join with the Honourable Member for the City, the Deputy Prime Minister, or whoever it was, in saying, let the NCC staff do what they are best at, preservation and conservation. If they do not have the know-how then get it.

I know there was an old guy there called Mr. Tim Hoyte. I would talk with him many an afternoon when he came for board meetings. Sir, it is unfortunate that Mr. Hoyte is now in his twilight hours but I do not know if he has had opportunity to write. I do not know if people have been able to capture any of his knowledge about the local fauna and flora of Barbados but if we have not, it is a wonderful opportunity that has gone by.

When I was there for my short month, Sir, I would always tell them to teach those people out there who use the weed whackers and who use the sharp implements about preserving the actual top core of the soil and the grass *et cetera*. Let them go and learn about pruning. Let them go and learn about budding and grafting.

It is hard, Sir, to take a young person, and we talk a lot about it, without certification, someone who was unfortunate and spent some of his or her formative years in Glendairy... I make no apologies for it. If you were unfortunate and you come to your representative, he or she and your representative can get you into an establishment where you are best suited, you have amended your ways, I have no problem with that, but have that person trained so that he or she could make a living and a livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to speak to making the systems too top heavy. There are lots of studies which are done in some of these departments. As one Minister refers to it, sometimes you have a study of a study that has already been studied. You have, Sir, to sit up and be vigilant.

I know, Sir, when I went down there, they had several studies on Hastings Rocks as well as Bay Street running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Each person who came in would ask for another study. I read so many studies I told the

Board there was no way I wanted another study. Let us use what resources we have and move on them.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning, this Harrison's Cave is one of its own. It does not have many relatives. It does not have many look-a-likes. I do not know how it is marketed overseas but the best way of marketing this is a high-powered, high technique way showing it has been improved, explored and safeguarded using the greatest and best means of technology. It has been at the cutting edge of geological technology, that is, it is one which is consistent with the hallmarks and those factors which tend to capture the true nature of an entity such as the Harrison's Cave, things like energy conservation *et cetera*, and living within the confines of good environmental and ecological practices.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am obviously glad to see you back in your seat and glad for the opportunity to welcome you back now that I am now on my feet.

I also want, Sir, to offer congratulations to the Minister for bringing this Bill to Parliament today. Obviously the Cave and its operations are vital to tourism development.

The point that the Cave is the No. 1 tourist attraction of Barbados easily means that this debate takes on a little bit wider scope and also engages in the concept of how we develop in Barbados a really sustainable tourism industry and particularly through the expanded use of our attractions.

Sir, the mere fact that the Cave has attracted almost 200 000 visitors last in 1998 is significant enough for us to understand that we need to focus a lot more on being able to create a much more holistic approach to how we look at the development of our tourism industry.

Now, Sir, there are many areas of tourism development. We have focussed over the years in looking mostly at the marketing side of our tourism industry without really being able to explore the whole concept of capacity building in the industry, and particularly as it relates to two important areas: product development and human resource development. Too little emphasis has been placed over the years in terms of capacity building and not enough of product development and human resource development. We do not get very high marks in those areas at all because Barbados has been presented as a very sedate destination over the years.

We have had good success in the past, but, fundamental to anything we do in the future must be a deliberate effort to reform. In that regard, there must be the encouragement of greater product development like the Cave that encourages greater entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, particularly as it relates to the small business sector in tourism.

Now, Sir, at the Barbados Tourism Authority, we have just recently formed an entrepreneurial committee which has never existed at the BTA in the past. The reason for that is that we need to get more small businesses and more people encouraged to participate more effectively in tourism development.

Now the Cave and its surroundings are in a rural area. The Cave has been able, after the study, to create a lot of other entrepreneurial activity around it. There is a project going on there called "The Heart of Barbados Project." This project has come out of the mere fact that the Cave is in that particular region. What has been happening every year is that the community in and around the Cave has been creating a day tour in which tourists and other locals are being bussed to that area. For an entire weekend they are taken to the three or four attractions in and around the Cave. What has been happening in that area is that people have been creating stalls and there has been an encouragement of entertainment. There are a number of other complaints which grew out of the surroundings of the Cave.
4.20 p.m.

Sir, we are clear that the project has a tourism development, community angle because community involvement is fundamental to the success of the project. Also, community involvement is fundamental to any tourism development for Barbados in the future. What has been the focus in Barbados has been an industry that has grown up with the perception that it is an 'us' and 'them' industry. If we are to reform tourism in Barbados, if we are to take tourism to the next level, there must be both population acceptance at a higher level than it has ever been and there must be community involvement with the tourism sector much more than there has been in the past.

One of the fall-outs of the tourism sector in terms of the gross population and in terms of the locals is that of anti-social behaviour and some planning for the anti-social behaviour that we are experiencing. Sir, it is fundamental to us that we understand that if our tourism industry is to grow and in a way that is in keeping with what Barbados wants, what the host population wants, we can no longer continue on this trend. That is why, Sir, I gave my full endorsement to the concept of creating a better economic base and a more stable base to the development of the Cave.

This is the kind of project and the kind of initiative that we all must endorse, but also it brings along with it a lot more of what is happening. Because of its proximity to a community it should also energise that community in a way that it has never been energised before and it should create additional entrepreneurial activities.

We, in Barbados, do not have a clear definitive carrier

capacity study of this country. The last one we had is about 20 years old and therefore we are not very clear as to how many people Barbados actually can hold as a tourist destination. People have bandied about a lot of figures and there are a lot of numbers going around. Generally speaking, how much space does a man or woman need on a beach? How can putting 250 000, twice the population of this island, between December and April impact on the conduct and how we dispose of our solid waste or water resources? All these issues are fundamental.

The disciplinary forces, our health services, our traffic congestion situation, these are the areas that are fundamental and even though we do not have the numbers, one of the things that these inland and rural projects do, apart from getting the communities involved in a more significant way in terms of tourism development, is that it brings or draws a lot of people away from the traditional areas in which tourism developed. This is one of the fundamental issues as it relates to projects like this. People are now being drawn off the beaches. People are not only seeing Barbados as a destination to which they must come, even though we continue to be a sun, sea and sand destination. The concept is that we must continue to create additional products and services for tourism if we are to survive. This particular project creates a much more enabling environment for people to participate in tourism.

In terms of the marketing of the Cave, I do not believe that we are going to go very far if we continue on the same trek that we have been going in terms of how we promote the Cave, both for local consumption and for the consumption of visitors. I do not think that there has been a deliberate plan and a deliberate marketing plan within the tourism sector to create a basis for marketing the Cave effectively in Barbados. I am encouraging the Minister to see that this is a project that must involve as well the overall marketing of Barbados as a tourism destination, twinning it with the Barbados Tourism Authority to create a much more significant marketing thrust overseas for Barbados and the Cave.

I think the Honourable Member for the City has made the point that when you go to other destinations and they tell you about the products and services being offered and that none of them compare in any way to Harrison's Cave. None of them that I have ever visited or I have ever seen compare in any way to Harrison's Cave. I went to Mexico which has all this history and I really was trying to figure out what it was they were trying to show me because I could not figure out at all what it was about. I know from feedback that we have gotten on the ground in the sector that whenever a visitor visits Harrison's Cave the reports have always been positive. I have never heard any adverse reports on the Cave.

As a matter of fact, if you ever went on a promotional tour with the Barbados Tourism Authority you would see that one of the major points on which hoteliers sell

Barbados and which other ancillary members sell Barbados is the whole concept of Harrison's Cave as a serious tourism attraction for Barbados.

The other area, Sir, is that I do not think that the Cave has been marketed even locally as well as it should because there is significant participation that can be derived from the locals in Barbados in terms of visitors to the Cave. I do not think that a lot of that has been pioneered. I know that the Minister has spoken about his plans to create a much better marketing focus for the Cave, but it is also important that we, the locals of Barbados, see and understand how the Cave is contributing to our own development.

In terms of the sustainable development of tourism we have also looked more widely. There must be a much more holistic view of how tourism must develop and that is why the participation of stakeholders at all levels is important in this sector. Partnership among public and private sectors and an integrated approach to the planning of tourism as it relates to preservation and conservation of our natural, cultural, heritage and community resources are prerequisites for quality tourism.

As long as we can create through initiatives like this, the type of environment which is in concert with what the eco-systems of Barbados desire, we would create for Barbados in the future a sustainable tourism product that not only is focussed upon natural heritage but also the big heritage of Barbados. It is important that projects like this proceed, projects which would create for Barbados entrepreneurial opportunities, host population acceptance, community involvement and much more varied products and services for Barbados.

Sir, on a wider note, our beaches and our reefs are all that we have in terms of our tourism product. We do not even seem to understand that. I think that we believe that they just come out of the blue but I do not believe that we have done as much as we can. We can still do more. I believe that the NCC in terms of what they have been doing to help conserve our beaches, whether or not it has been carried by the Cave, have contributed significantly over the years to the maintenance of those beaches.

I think, Sir, that it is important not only in terms of the maintenance of the beaches but also the welfare of the people on the beaches. We can talk about all the political slants that we need and the creation of jobs and everything else but the fact is that the NCC in its present form, even though it needs more work, has contributed significantly to the guarding of our beaches and to the development of our beaches and has aided substantially to the development of our tourism industry. They need to do more and be better trained and they obviously need to be better able to undertake what they are doing but, at

the end of the day, they have made a significant contribution thus far to the development of tourism.

Therefore, Sir, with those words, I also add my endorsement to this Bill.
4.30 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the debate any more but, of course, Harrison's Cave is in the parish of St. Thomas but not in my constituency, it is in the constituency of St. Joseph.

Sir, I wish to say that the people of St. Thomas are very proud of the development of the Cave and what it has contributed to that geographical area. Sir, I do not think that today is the time for me to speak about how I would like to see the Cave developed except to say that in any external development of the Cave there should be adequate provisions made for the people from the area to have an opportunity to sell their wares and products, whatever they develop and to do small manufacturing.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about that, Sir, I wish to assure the House that there was no collaboration at all. This is something that the people of St. Thomas have asked me about. I know that there are plans for the development of the area and I have been telling them, from time to time, that in due course, these facilities will be developed for their enterprise.

Sir, the only reason that I have risen to speak on this Bill is because that the Leader of the Opposition raised a nice jurisprudential point as to whether it is appropriate in legislation of this kind, which really is setting up a kind of regulatory framework within which a company registered under the Companies Act should operate, whether in those circumstances it is appropriate for the Minister to give directions.

It is a matter that I would not wish to be dogmatic about at this stage as it requires further study and a lot of thought. Section 58 of the Companies Act says that the Directors will be responsible for the management of the company and Section 95 sets out, as a code, the traditional common law and equitable duties that attend directorships. One can easily think of a situation where the Directors of a company may wish to borrow money from a commercial bank for a certain purpose. They may genuinely resolve that, and they may think that it is in the best interest of the company as a whole but the Minister may know that an equivalent amount of funds could be obtainable at better rates, let us say, from the CDB. I think in those circumstances the Minister will be entitled to say that he is going to give a direction to negotiate with the CDB for the loan. I have said, Sir, that there are scenarios that

one can conjure up that may show a role for the Minister, in terms of policy. The only addition I would have made to the existing section was to say, 'give general directions'. This one just says 'directions' but the usual form of words is 'general directions' in regard to policy. I have assured the Leader of the Opposition that the point he has raised really does merit deep and careful consideration. It may lead to an improvement in our drafting and, indeed, in our concept of creating a regulatory framework for these types of companies. I wish to assure the House that I will have some work done on it within the Chambers to see what is the opinion that is going to be recommended.

I will not speak any further because there is a Bill coming up on Rock Hall and if I have anything to say about St. Thomas, I will say it then.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of deep gratitude that I rise to compliment all Honourable Members who took part in this debate. Each Honourable Member addressed the issue from a different perspective, the Honourable Member for the City took a certain line, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy another line, the Honourable Member for St. John took another line. Each Honourable Member each took a different perspective and I was very much impressed by all of this. I have noted the observations of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

In winding up, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that as regards to the last point that the Attorney General made, it is true that the Bill sets out to enable the Minister to give directions to the Board. The Honourable Member for St. John wondered whether that was appropriate in the light of the fact that we are not dealing here with a statutory body – neither a statutory authority nor a statutory corporation – but what is, to all intents and purposes, a company. Of note is that the Bill requires the laying of particular information to the Minister and, of course, also to Parliament.

Clause 7 requires the company as soon as possible after the end of each year, not later than three months from the end of the year, to submit to the Minister a report with the accounts and such like. Then the Minister must lay such a report before Parliament. If the Minister is ultimately answerable to Parliament then the Minister bears some responsibility to ensure that the affairs of the company are conducted along very serious lines. Suppose for example, Mr. Speaker, the company proposes, having heard about some great foreign entity that supplies trams, that this entity could supply trams at the cost of \$600 000 but then also heard of another company with not such a strong reputation but that was efficient, and that was local, supplying trams at \$300 000. The differential of \$300 000 is an enormous amount of money and at that point the question becomes, should the Minister who is answerable to Parliament for the expenditure anyhow

really not intervene to promote the public's interest as being the interest that is paramount? Or...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. First of all the Minister is not answerable to Parliament for that expenditure because it is a private company. If the source of its revenue is its operation then the Minister is not answerable. The second point that needs to be made is that if Government is the principal shareholder then in most cases, you are still going to end up having the required level of influence on the decisions of the Board. When we set up the Sugar Board, the people ask for indemnities. We had never given directions but obviously they were going to refer back to the Minister because the shareholder invariably in companies like this is going to have to be responsible for raising the capital and that is why we had so many Resolutions coming here to guarantee the raising of capital by these private companies because that is where you have your influence. At the end of the day they are still going to come back to you and it is at that point that you can then design the general strategy of the company because you are going to be giving the guarantee.

I do not think it necessarily helps the development of corporate law if you have a hybrid situation of a private company where the directors are not answerable to the shareholders as shareholders in their corporate sense but are also answerable to the Minister as Minister and gives the Minister a super-board power to impose directions on the board. I am saying that the Minister would have that influence anyway and I do not think you need to express it. If we go down this road, what will happen is that Barbados will have the unique situation where we will be one of the first countries in the world to create what will be a hybrid. We probably will have to legislate for a special company in which Government has 100% of the shareholding and in which the corporate identity and structure of that company would be completely different to a normal private company incorporated under the Companies Act.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. John raised the question of guarantee. Suppose in the event that there is a company in which the Government is the sole shareholder and having found itself minded to have to raise money guaranteed by Government, suppose then, that the Minister in scrutinising the day-to-day activities of that particular company had some concerns, then, especially in a situation where the Government is the sole shareholder, and effectively the Minister speaks for that shareholder, then the whole question even assumes a higher jurisprudential position.

I am happy that the Attorney General has given the assurance that he is going to check it out. The other thing is this. Where the Minister is duty-bound to lay in a situation where Parliamentary questions can come from out of the laid report and these Parliamentary questions are asked of the Minister, then to what degree is the Minister permitted to

to allow *laissez faire* when it comes to Board regulations and still has to answer based on a report that he presented. Again that belies the jurisprudence of the situation.
3.40 p.m.

In respect, Mr. Speaker, of a few other issues, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown had also indicated that she felt it was prudent to have these reports laid before Parliament, and she had preceded the Honourable Member on this matter.

In seeking to close off, the Honourable Member for St. John asked whether any royalties are due. At no point did that matter ever arise. The reason being that there are only two property owners who can lay any freehold claim to lands that the Cave runs through. They willingly agreed to lease their lands to NCC. They accepted \$120 per annum by their own arrangement and their own consent over time. Even though we in here might wonder whether that is a reasonable sum, the question is that they can always renegotiate an agreement that would more suit their interests.

As far as the actual finances which the Honourable Member for St. John was concerned about, things went, as far as NCC is concerned, rather awry around 1996. That is the year that is creating headaches as far as reconciling the accounts of the National Conservation Commission is concerned. We do know that actual revenue in 1995 earned by NCC was \$3 269 325. In 1996 something went wrong. I do not even have proper indications as to the Government subvention for that year. I am sure that is the year that has thrown a spanner in the works in respect of the other years – 1997, 1998 and 1999.

We know that in 1997 the total revenue earned by the NCC was \$3 833 533 of which the Cave earned in excess of \$2.6 million. We also know that for the year 1998 the total revenue of NCC was just over \$4.031 million of which the Cave earned \$2 556 000. We know that for 1999, a year when the Cave was actually closed, the total revenue earnings came to \$2 646 037, the total revenue of which the Cave contributed \$1 495 110 even though closed for much of that year. The general indication is that up to now the Cave has been earning 67 per cent of all the revenues of the National Conservation Commission.

Perhaps I should say two things. I should say that for this financial year in anticipation of the fact that the Cave was going to be severed from NCC, provision was made so that both the Cave, as a new entity, and NCC would have enough funding. The second observation that I would make is that we are really looking at ways and means by which the potential revenue centres for the NCC can be strengthened to earn revenue. Notwithstanding the fact many of the activities of the NCC do not really yield revenue, at least not directly.

When people clean the beaches and tourists come there is gain to Barbados – the tourists come, they might go to the beaches. The presence of clean beaches is an inducement to the tourists to go on the beaches. That money comes into Barbados but yet NCC itself, except if they use the wages spent, has no way to really indicate the true profit. Even if they use the wages spent, they would come up with a monetary investment without properly knowing the return. This does not mean that NCC must be excused and must be allowed to say that most of what it does is not revenue-earning. There are still centres that it has. Its garden shop can, and its very lovely nursery can earn revenue. We have put in systems by which we are looking to market those areas within NCC that can bear revenue as best as we can.

We are really determined to give NCC a new focus. So much so that I referred, without being offensive, to changing the culture at NCC to let the people know that there is value in what they are doing and they should see themselves as having some contribution to make. What I do not like is that NCC, like some other Government agencies, is targeted by people who have ability and who can undergo training, as a place with easy work where their marginal product, as far as they are concerned, does not really matter and their contribution to national development does not really matter once they are employed.

I am in the process of talking to youngsters and encouraging them to make the best possible use of the opportunities for education and training. All types of opportunities for education and training exist in Barbados. Some are modelled with a new focus. If you take the activities of the Israel Lovell Foundation when it comes to education and training, there is a special focus there that can benefit people and help them to develop a progressive attitude to life. We have to break the culture of absolute dependency on places seen as a centre for people whose whole self-esteem has been depleted.

I know brilliant young girls, some of whom have five six, and seven 'O' levels, who would willingly take a job permanently as a ranger, not for a year or two until they can get something better to do by studying, but who just feel that is the place for them based on how they perceive themselves. The Ministry of Social Transformation is going to have to work with existing agencies to help address this whole question of low self-esteem starting in the ordinary school system, and which prevents a lot of young people from having the proper focus. There is a young lady from the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, she is about 36 now, who works around the Bussa area. She has six 'O' levels. The Parliamentarian of the day, in 1984/1985, for St. Michael East, panicked when he had to get a job for her. Rather than sit and guide the young lady, who had real ability, he just took this low involvement job, threw her there, without any counselling, and she at 36 years now has no inclination to want to really further herself. She is a brilliant girl from all reports. The current

Honourable Member for St. Michael East knows that individual and obviously feels a sense of empathy for her. But he himself will never be able to persuade her back to the classroom, not even back to the Israel Lovell Foundation so long as she has collected what she has deemed to be earnings which the State provides. Another thing that we have to provide in this country is to let more young people know that the Government is not the sole and absolute employer and there are always opportunities in the private sector. Too many youngsters feel that the only job of worth is a Government job. Even if notions of security, Mr. Speaker, enter the minds of those who want work, you can have a secured job in the private sector and I am determined to work with the NCC as they push their educational programmes to try to change the culture as far as we can.

4.50 p.m.

Insofar as other matters to do with the Caves Bill are concerned, Mr. Speaker, I am heartened that the spirit and the attempt behind the Bill have won the acclaim of all Honourable Members. The Honourable Member for St. John said that we should be realistically cautious to know that the mere movement by itself may not achieve the results in the absence of control, in the absence of regulation, in the absence of proper policy, in the absence of steering the energy properly and I would want those responsible for the administration and policy matters to do with the caves recognise that this is an opportunity. In the same way that other companies have been able to use their stature and organisation to promote themselves and be commercially viable, this is an opportunity for the caves to assert itself as a commercially-viable entity.

With these closing remarks, insofar as the Caves Act, 2000, is concerned, I ask you respectfully, Mr. Speaker, to allow this Bill to be read the second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 12 were called and passed.

On motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Caves Act of Barbados, 2000.

ORDER NO. 8 – THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2000

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, insofar as this particular Bill really flows from the Bill just passed and insofar as Honourable Members by agreement decided that the speeches representing in the debate would have been all done at one time and have now expired, I am going to ask leave that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 4 were called and passed.

Clause 5 was called.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, in Clause 5(a), I beg to move that the letter 's' be deleted from the word, 'words'. It says: 'the words "cave"'. It should be singular, just delete the 's'.

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

5.00 p.m.

Clauses 6 – 10 inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill with one amendment in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the National Conservation Commission (Amendment) Act, 2000.

ORDER NO. 9 – THE ROCK HALL
(VESTING) BILL, 2000

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the matter before this House is the Rock Hall (Vesting) Bill, 2000 which pertains to vesting 7 272.9 square metres of land at Rock Hall, St. Thomas in the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, since 1997, Cabinet had agreed to vest all the vacant lands on the ABC Highway, former baths as well as lands that were not in use. The District 'D' Police Station was one of the properties that was to be vested to the National Housing Corporation. However, it was found that this property at District 'D' did not have a clear title. The property was not really owned by the Crown for all the years. It is important to note that the Ministry, therefore, could not vest the property in the National Housing Corporation because it did not really own the property.

After this impasse, the Ministry of Housing and Lands published in both the *Advocate* and the *Daily Nation* newspapers, on three consecutive dates, notices to all those persons who had a claim, lien or charge against this said property and no one responded to those notices. Therefore, the Ministry went back to Cabinet to seek parliamentary permission to vest this land in the Crown. The Attorney General has certified this draft Bill to be in order.

With those remarks, I beg to move that this Bill to vest the land at Rock Hall in the Crown, be read a second time.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we will support this particular Bill for the simple reason that there is a dire need in Barbados for the Government to acquire large parcels of lands because of the land need. As I have said already in this House, the problem within Barbados is not the lack of housing but the lack of proper house spots.

I think the Government of Barbados should quickly make a major decision to acquire the necessary land lots so that every Barbadian, if possible, can stand the chance of having a house lot in Barbados. We are in a strange situation in Barbados where on one hand because of foreign investment, there is a great demand and a high price being paid by foreigners for land in Barbados. It is rather important to see Government through the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, taking this piece of land and turning it over to the National Housing Corporation.

I would also like Government to recognise that there is also land elsewhere in Barbados and they should move with the same speed to ensure that the National Housing Corporation is in control of those parcels of land whether they be at Lowlands in St. Lucy or anywhere else in Barbados where house lots can be made available to the citizens of Barbados.

I would also like Government to recognise that they also have an obligation to the citizens of Barbados who they have previously made commitments to. That is, we have a strange situation in Barbados where the Government makes an arrangement with the parent of a person to allow that person to be resited from a piece of land in Barbados and as soon as the mother departs this land, the decision of the National Housing Corporation has changed.

Mr. Speaker, I think you would agree with me that it is rather difficult for the Government to tell someone that they are going to resite them from a piece of land and locate them from the west coast of Barbados to somewhere in St. Michael and then the child of the owner of that land cannot get the same promise that has been given to the parent.

I think that persons like ourselves who happen to be Parliamentarians representing the interest of the masses in this country, must recognise that it is rather unfair for anybody who has been living on a piece of land on the west coast – and I think it might be better if I might be specific about this – who find themselves living on a piece of land between the fish market at Weston and John Moore's Bar and receiving letters from the attorney for the NHC every-day and having phone calls requesting that they remove themselves from that piece of land when they have already been given a commitment by Government that they will be resited elsewhere...without challenging Government on that particular matter, they have agreed to be resited. Now that they have accepted the offer made by Government, it is now breaching its position and asking that person to be removed from that piece of land.
5.10 p.m.

On the agreement with Government, they took out all of their utilities and services from the house. Now the stupid argument that is being used is that the person is not living in the house. If someone writes you, Mr. Speaker, and asks you to remove yourself from a piece of land, you accept the request, now you are hearing that you are not living on the land and you have complied with the rules and regulations, Sir. What would you do in this particular case? I hope that we do not get a situation in Rock Hall where people are given the permission and the rights to live on the land in Rock Hall and, as soon as they accept the agreement with Government to live in Rock Hall, somebody else comes along and say to them that they cannot live in Rock Hall.

I am saying, Sir, that the interests of the country must be served and the Government must also understand that it has the right to look after the underprivileged persons in this country. It does not make sense to enter into an arrangement with people and, as soon as people accept you by your word, you breach that arrangement with the particular person. I am hoping, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. George North will speak on this particular matter.

Sir, you are aware that one year ago, I spoke about this same case in this House when I said that the lady should be accorded the same privileges as the owner of John Moore's Bar. If I supported the move by Government with the owner of John Moore's Bar, I would have expected and considering that I also challenged the approach of Government, I said that I was quite prepared if they were going to do that for the owner of John Moore's Bar that they should have done the same thing for the lady. The truth is that at the time I did not recognize that the landlord was the Government of Barbados. It is rather strange, Sir, that in the same location you can have law for one and another law for the other person.

I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. James North for speaking on the lady's behalf. I thought that since the Honourable Member for St. James North penned a letter to the National Housing Corporation on behalf of the lady that this case would have been solved and we would not be finding ourselves in a situation where the lady is now being harassed to remove the house from the site when already there is an agreement between the NHC and the lady to resite the house in the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East's constituency.

Sir, I am asking the National Housing Corporation to continue with the contract that they have entered into with the family. In my opinion, it is a breach of contract. I will say, Sir, that we will support this particular Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I apologize but I did not hear the full explanation by the Minister of Housing for the Government going the route of the Bill...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, a few years ago after the Government in 1994... it was realized that the District 'D' Police Station at Rock Hall was in a very dilapidated condition and it could not be repaired. You would recall, Sir, that prior to 1994 the station had been allowed to become dilapidated to the extent that the previous Government had to move the police from there and locate them at Holder's Hill.

By 1995/96 we realized, Sir, that the condition of the station was leading to infestation from rats and all kinds of vermin. I invited the Minister of Housing one day to have a look at this location and determine what should happen to it. The station could not be rebuilt there. All the best advice was that we should not rebuild any station at Rock Hall because it was badly sited in the first place. It was down a long narrow gap that if you ever had any problems of social unrest in the country people could block off that gap and maroon the police down inside.

As the building was collapsing, we decided the best

thing was to do something about it. We decided to convert the land into useful housing. We knew that there was a Sergeant's quarters below the present Magistrate's Court and the Sergeant's quarters and the old police station would have been Crown land. But they could not find any deeds delineating the boundaries and identifying the ownership in the Crown. The advice that was given then was that we should have the Government's surveyor do a survey of the area bearing in mind that on the northwestern boundary and on the western boundary there are private properties.

My advice when it was sought, Sir, was that we should advertise for any claims to any parts of the land. Those advertisements were run and I believe they ran for almost a year. There were no claims. The question was then how would we vest the land? We wanted to give it to National Housing Corporation, but under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 the advice was that we should vest it first in the Crown by an Act of Parliament in which we set out the title in a Schedule. The Bill now says that all that part and parcel according to the new survey of the Chief Surveyor. The land is now in the Crown.

In the meantime, it had been agreed that we could have 16 lots on the site. I think there are eight houses on eight open lots. National Housing Corporation went ahead and constructed 8 lots. They now wish to convey title but they have no title. After the passage of this Act, the Crown will have a title.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no. It is behind the Magistrate's Court. All the services have been put in and houses have been constructed and they now want to give title. What will follow this is a Resolution to vest this land in the National Housing Corporation so they can transfer properly. The problem arose because the Crown did not have a proper title. The Crown had been using and occupying the lands for donkey's years, as long as any of us can remember. They could not find a title so we had to give it a title first. You cannot go straight to National Housing. That is why we have to run the two stages.

5.20 p.m.

Sir, I am grateful that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has given me some small mercies, but they have to answer me about what is happening at Redman's Village where we identified another 16 lots just above the MPW depot.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I would like to know when they propose, because I know that offers had been made to persons to purchase some lots, another 16 or 18 at

the Redman's Village/Bagatelle area, and that is moving a little bit too slowly. I hope that this year another and more substantial development will start. Government is constructing a fire station at Arch Hall. Those works should be completed by November unless we get exceptionally inclement weather between now and then which may delay the works. We are going to get bad weather but, assuming that we do not have too many days lost, the fire station should be ready, according to the information I got last week, by November.

West of the fire station is an area of land which has been demarcated into 46 lots by the people at National Housing. I have the actual plan. The Ministry of Public Works has been reluctant to do necessary road repairs – and I want this clearly understood, Sir – in Arch Hall in anticipation of the opening up of these lands for housing below the fire station. It has been represented that if you have heavy vehicles coming through there frequently that if you repair the road, barbed green it, you will damage it.

The people of Arch Hall have been very patient but I wish the Minister of Housing to know that he has to move swiftly now to put in the roads, water and light for those 46 lots at Arch Hall. It is important because not only will the existing road at Arch Hall need to be upgraded but there is a road running beside the fire station and the housing development to come which runs straight past Carlisle Greaves to Bennetts so we will have a proper linkage of the Arch Hall/Bennetts Village with two properly paved roads so it is critical to the overall development of that area that we get this housing project started at Arch Hall.

Sir, at Cane Garden there is every intention by the Government to restore and bring back to St. Thomas the police station. The previous Government had looked at Welchman Hall but because of the Cave we were advised by the Town Planner not to do any further development in Welchman Hall. The land that has been found is at Cane Garden slightly in a bend and immediately contiguous with the plantation house on that side, just before you straighten up to go to the pavilion, the land on the right. Government acquired two years ago three acres of land there for the construction of a police station, a small court and a library facility. This library facility is going to include Internet. In the last year, the architects have been designing this project for Cane Garden. It is almost ready to go to Planning and Priorities Committee. Certainly, it cannot go up for Friday but it will be ready to go by the September meeting of the Planning and Priorities Committee for approval. I cannot say what it is going to cost. It would be wrong to say that because it has to go out to tender. It is not going to be a very costly project. It is going to be reasonable and it is going to look nice and to add value to that part.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Since the Honourable Member has been following the works of my Ministry very closely let us put it in the record again. In this financial year, work is being done to establish a new substation at the Pine, Wildey, that is, at lands below Pearson Pharmacy, the old Pine Plantation property that runs right back down to Coopers and Lybrand. The Barbados National Bank is building that facility for us. The last I heard on that was yesterday. That will give greater police coverage to the Pine, Wildey, Highgate, Clapham area and it will take a lot of the strain off District 'A'.

In addition to that is Dover, above and behind the pavilion at Dover. The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated is building a new station there to replace Worthing. At Speightstown, the same Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. is constructing a new police station at Speightstown. What we have to do now is to complete the design work. There is an existing building there that was built by MPW and has never been used, so we have to put in floors. That is going to be converted into a police station and the existing District 'E' on the hill will go to the BTII as part of their assets.

By the end of October this year, we should be in a position to open a new police post in St. George at the Glebe above Charles Rowe Bridge and below the existing post office in St. George. There is a whole complex going there. There will be a community centre, a library, post office and police. That work is very well advanced and the best advice I got in a recent meeting is that that should be completed by the end of October.

We are planning to do District 'D', Cane Garden Police Station, the new one, in the next financial year. All of the design work is going to be completed by the time of the Planning and Priorities meeting in September. We can plan, budget, and get the money allocated for next year's Estimates, do the contract award and early next financial year that work can start.
5.30 p.m.

There is a whole programme for the modernisation for the physical structures for the police and also to locate police substations within communities to allow the police to better carry out their community policing strategy which is the key strategy in the police force plan of the year 2000.

If I may also mention, without straying too far, Sir, that I expect the first large shipment of police vehicles to arrive between August 7th and August 10th.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They should be leaving London now or may have left already because the date I was given is August 7th and I am saying that between August 7th and August 10th, we should have those vehicles which are the first part of the large package that we voted for in the Estimates.

In regards to the lights at Rock Hall, the Rural Development Commission is being asked to put in the lights in that area, Sir.

Subject to those comments, Mr. Speaker, I wish to support this Bill very strongly and I hope that Members now understand why we had to do it in a two-step procedure of a Bill and then a Resolution.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will not be long. The point I wanted to make is that I was hoping that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would have followed what I assume was our general agreement that we should not waste anymore money building courts in rural areas. District 'C' has moved down to St. Matthias and I have not heard a single complaint but when it was up in Station House Hill in St. Philip, people who lived in Sherbourne and Four Roads found it more difficult to get to District 'C' than now that it is in St. Matthias.

I do not think we should waste anymore money since I think it is a waste of lawyers' time, I think it is a waste of the Prisons' time trying to get the prisoners there and I think it is a waste of everybody's time building Magistrates Courts...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You also said a small court and I am saying that I would abandon that. I am saying that I think you can have three or four locations and it would be much more efficient and better in every sense of the word. You are also transporting a larger number of criminals now and let us face it, it is something that we need to look at.

Sir, that is not what I rose principally to speak on because I hope that the Minister of Housing who moved the Resolution, since the Bill and the Resolution have a lot to do with the National Housing Corporation, that the Honourable Member will take the opportunity to assure this House that the measures which were to be put in place at National Housing Corporation since March of this year have been bearing fruit because the National Housing Corporation, according to our information is in fact, in a worst position now than it was when the Honourable Member delivered his grandiose speech and was supported by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who gave the impression that he had ordered a special audit and that he took immediate action to arrest the decline of the financial situation at the National Housing Corporation and

also the major problems that the corporation has been having.

This is a corporation that owes contractors millions of dollars and cannot pay it. This is a corporation which has a headquarters' project at Warrens.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If what I have just said is not true, let us hear about the headquarters' project, let us hear about the cost overruns so far and tell us about the choice verbs that the Prime Minister had to use at a meeting recently in relation to that project at Warrens.

Every time we talk about the National Housing Corporation instead of the Minister of Housing coming clean and saying what the situation is, he compounds the situation by misleading this Chamber and filling it with a lot of nonsense about the National Housing Corporation. Either somebody is fooling the Honourable Member for St. George North or he is fabricating information and making it available both to the public of Barbados outside and inside of this Chamber. I am asking him to cut that history loose and tell us what the position is with the National Housing Corporation because we all know...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think you are going to have to withdraw those words about the Honourable Member fabricating information.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I withdraw that the Honourable Member is fabricating and I will say that somebody is misleading the Honourable Member, and the Honourable Member is taking that information and using that misleading information to give this House the impression that the National Housing Corporation is not facing major financial problems and that all of the projects which the National Housing Corporation has undertaken, the funds have identified for them, they are running smoothly. In the last debate we had the Honourable Member read out the entire list of all the projects from Mount Brevitor in the north to Gall Hill in St. John in the south.

We have had houses at Gall Hill for two years which were completed. I went to cricket there two Saturdays ago and about four or five people have moved in under a new arrangement which the National Housing Corporation has facilitated where they would let them pay some kind of rent or something but there are still a large number of people who have been allocated houses who are not yet occupying them and those houses are remaining empty.

The Honourable Member for St. George North, as I have said, is not getting adequate information on these things. There are differences in relation to the initial houses that Government....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not want to get into Briar Hall at all because I have asked somebody to go and measure the slave huts in St. Lucy and take the same tape measure to Briar Hall and see what the Government of Barbados, in the year 2000 is building for people on lots that you can barely add one bedroom and still walk around the house when it is finished and they are talking about starter homes. You cannot build a starter home on a lot that can barely accommodate a two-bedroom house.

Somebody is fooling the Government of Barbados because millions of dollars were given to the National Housing Corporation three years ago and between 1998 and the year 2000, this Government encouraged everybody to borrow money from the National Housing Corporation even people who could not pay it back. They went into National Housing Corporation, accessed loans and two years later, either when their financial circumstances had changed or the National Housing Corporation itself could not come up with the funds, they then were not able to complete the transactions.

The National Housing Corporation is inundated with problems in getting the conveyances out, completing the legal work on the transaction and lending people money. The Honourable Member for St. George North, as I have said, is not acting as if there is a crisis situation in the National Housing Corporation. The Honourable Member comes in here and every time the Opposition raises concerns about all aspects of housing policy including the prices of the houses that are being built....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The last debate that we had the Honourable Member told the House that the houses built at Gall Hill in St. John had concrete foundations. He then discovered, even though he and I went inside the houses and he said to the workmen, these floors need propping, in my presence; he then discovered that the floors were wooden and came back to the House and corrected the information. They then sent letters to the people and told them that the price had been revised because there was not a concrete floor but a wooden floor.
5.40 p.m.

This level of incompetence has persisted with the National Housing Corporation, both in relation to its larger capital projects; in relation to its housing programme; in relation to its sites and services programme; in relation to the management of the money which this Parliament guaranteed to the National Housing Corporation and in relation to almost every aspect of its operations.

As I say, the Honourable Member will come up with some "Nancy" story this afternoon to confuse what I can see with my own eyes; what people lining up every week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the National Housing Corporation tell you; what people going for loans tell you; what the loans officer, when you call the National Housing Corporation tells you; what the legal department at the National Housing Corporation tells you. I am supposed to believe that because that is the official line which is trotted out in this Parliament.

I have to put the Honourable Member for St. George North under pressure because I am saying that he is not levelling with this Chamber. The reason why it annoys me is because there are still hundreds of people in my constituency who are looking for either house spots or houses. Three years ago we identified housing as the most critical need, and some of those people, as I say, have found their conditions worsen since then and would never qualify now for either a loan, a house spot or to build a house in this country. The Government heralded its housing policy and housing programme as a major achievement. I say that everything is pointing in the opposite direction.

A lot of houses are cropping up all over the place, remaining unoccupied for long periods of time and are very haphazard approaches to the question of housing. I urge the Minister to get a grip. I said that I do not wish any "Anancy" story this afternoon, so if you can rewrite the script that has been given to you and return another evening or another day and tell us what is happening with the National Housing Corporation, then we can wait. I am not believing it and I know that the press in Barbados cannot believe, and in fact the people, as I say, who line up every day at National Housing Corporation would not believe what has been trotted out constantly by the Government in relation to the National Housing Corporation.

I urge any attorney-at-law, particularly those working with people buying the land in Rock Hall, to check carefully when they are doing their requisitions to find out whether the National Housing Corporation has deposited title deeds at and any major commercial bank in this country in recent times to get money to pay its basic and ongoing obligations, to make sure that the deposit of title deeds are released and that people do not end up buying properties over which there are existing mortgages granted by the National Housing Corporation.

That is what I said because it is a financial mayhem at the National Housing Corporation. I believe that it is about time that the Minister got a grip of what was happening because far too many people will end up losing out if something is not done to reverse that situation.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am, indeed, glad that we were able today to provide title to the land at

District "D", because for years this land was occupied by Government and the land did not have clear title.

On other relating matters I did not wish to use this opportunity to look at National Housing Corporation reorganisation, but since the Honourable Member for St. John has raised the point, I will want to put the record straight.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John does not really go to St. John. In fact, I will say that I know St. John better than the Honourable Member. It is a parish that I lived in for a number of years and I was in St. John only last weekend. The Honourable Member is, indeed, misleading this House. As far as I know only one house at Gall Hill, St. John is not occupied. I went there on Saturday, I checked the houses myself and all of the houses had up curtains and so on. I do not understand where the Member is getting his information from. It is really misleading. He does not know St. John.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. If the Honourable Member would check, he would also see that 90 per cent of the persons purchasing those houses retain my legal services, on a legal aid basis. If I do not know ...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As long as my constituents need legal assistance I will offer that legal assistance. I have run a legal aid clinic in the parish of St. John...

Aside.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I am on a point of order.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am on a point of order too.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have run a legal aid clinic from July 1987 in my constituency in St. John, and the National Housing Corporation knows, because they send the deeds to St. John to my constituency office. I do not have a legal office. Therefore I say that the Honourable Member for St. George North, the Minister of Housing, is therefore not in a position to say that those houses are occupied. I can tell him chapter and verse including the five persons who are actually in occupation of the houses, on that basis.

Something has to be wrong. It must mean that either people are squatting in the houses, which is another matter that may need investigation and we have to do that, or what the Minister is doing, Sir, is mixing up the facts that there are some people who came from other parts of Barbados – there

is one guy from Lead Vale, one person from St. James, and put houses on spots that had been allocated and those houses are therefore presently occupied. I cannot account for them.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is really misleading the House and he does not know his own constituency. I am saying that there is only one house that has not been occupied by National Housing Corporation that has been relocated at Clifton Hall. There is only one and he is aware of this.

I am also saying, Mr. Speaker, that all the houses at Clifton Hall have been allocated and I would like the Press to go and check to ensure that all the houses have been allocated.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. If the Honourable Member is now on the allocation of houses that is a different matter. I said occupied. I never said allocated. Those houses were allocated since two years ago and could not be occupied because the persons have not yet accepted the money from the mortgage company to buy them, and only five of them have been permitted to occupy them under a new arrangement. So do not mix up occupied and allocated.

The second point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: What part of your point of order?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He just said that only one house has been sited there in addition to those the National Housing Corporation has built. There is a gentleman from Lead Vale, Christ Church who has been sited there. He is waiting for a well to be dug, and there is a lady from Glenburnie, St. John who just two weeks ago was in the process of siting her house. She was a critical case in which the landlord had put her off the premises and the NHC very kindly allocated the lot for her. The Honourable Member does not know that. Do not tell me about what is happening up there because every weekend I go and check.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point.
5.50 p.m.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that as far as I am aware all of the houses at Clifton Hall have been allocated and there are only about two where the people have not moved in. The majority of houses have curtains and the Honourable Member says only five have been allocated. I am saying, no. Mr. Speaker...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House if he says that I said only five houses were allocated. I said five are occupied. All 20 houses, in fact all of the lots at Gall Hill had been allocated a long time ago. It is the houses that were built by the National Housing Corporation that I am talking about and I am not talking about those which are occupied and I made that statement from the outset.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the Chair to understand that both Honourable Members are talking about the same area?

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: We are talking about the same area, but Mr. Speaker, I am saying, categorically that there are more than five houses occupied at Gall Hill. I went there on Sunday and there could not be more than one or two houses that are not occupied.

I must say also, Mr. Speaker, that persons have made down payments on all of the lots at Gall Hill. We have allowed them to move in, pending the permission of the mortgage company and persons have only moved in the houses when the mortgage company has given National Housing Corporation the assurance that the person will get the mortgage and that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on to a more substantive point because the Honourable Member today made a point that National Housing Corporation's finances are in disarray.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I am very happy that over the last year or so, we have been able to restructure, to some extent the finances of the National Housing Corporation and National Housing Corporation has started once again to provide loans.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because in March when we said on this Side that the National Housing Corporation had stopped lending, the Honourable Member for St. George North said that is not true that the National Housing Corporation had never stopped lending. One of the key allegations we made during the Estimates debate was that people had been given approvals and the National Housing Corporation had no money to lend them and had stopped lending.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just make your point of order, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Now in this debate we are hearing that the National Housing Corporation has started back lending money to people. That means, Mr. Speaker, Sir,

that the Honourable Member misled the House in March.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I continue to say during my presentation that over the years that the National Housing Corporation had over-lent a lot of money and they could not pay it. This is one of the reasons why we had gone to the National Insurance Scheme for the \$10 million bond.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: ...a loan from National Insurance and it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that this money we got from the National Insurance Scheme was to be used to pay the outstanding loans which we had over the years. Sir, it is not true to say that we are not lending. We over-committed ourselves during the last two or three years but the National Housing Corporation is once again offering loans up to \$15 000.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, they had stopped early in the year and they have started once again to lend out money across Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: ...as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and we do not have a problem at this time. The National Housing Corporation has restructured itself. We have a new Board in place, a new Financial Controller in place and I am convinced that the Corporation is on the right path.

Mr. Speaker, it is not true to say that we have lots all across Barbados and we are not occupying these lots. Most of the lands and lots across the island that we have developed are now occupied. We are waiting on the money from the banks on a number of lots. More than 95 percent of all persons who have been allocated lots, have paid the down payment and we are just waiting on the final certificate of compliance from the Town Planner in order to provide the title deeds.

Mr. Speaker, it is not true to say that these houses are too small. The Honourable Member is saying that the lot sizes at Gall Hill, Rock Hall and Briar Hall are too small. The lot sizes at Briar Hall are approximately 3 500 square feet and they are the same sizes that the previous Governments built and developed. All Governments in the past and today have developed lot sizes of 3 500 to 4 000 square feet for starter houses. So that the allegation that we are not providing large houses is not true. The sizes of the houses that we are building at Briar Hall, Rock Hall and at Clifton Hall are in keeping with a programme that was started by the previous Government. The sizes are still the same – 600 square feet on lot sizes of 3 500 square feet.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. John is getting his facts mixed up. Obviously, I have heard him say today that the Corporation's finances are in disarray. It is not true, we are paying out bills and all the contractors have been paid. The large contractors like Rayside Construction and C.O. Williams have been paid. They have started back working in St. Joseph. They are working on projects in St. George. They are completing projects at Mount Brevitor in St. Peter and, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. John is trying to tell this House that the National Housing Corporation is not doing the job that we were...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I do not wish to mix up the Honourable Member. He started by saying all of the contractors have been paid. Then, he started to talk about large contractors. I want the Honourable Member to be clear in what he says because I do not wish the record of this House to be unclear. I want to know whether he is telling this Chamber that as of the 18th day of July that all of the...

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure that the Honourable Member would know from his experience that a point of order cannot be in the form of question.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am challenging the Honourable Member to say that on the 18th of July, 2000 all of the contractors that the National Housing Corporation has money for have been paid.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have been in touch with the Chairman and the Financial Comptroller on a daily basis and I am saying that all of the contractors whose claims could be verified have been paid. I am also saying that we do not owe contractors money if the claim has been verified.

Sir, I am convinced that the National Housing Corporation is trying to collect its funds. Today, the Honourable Member for St. John made the point that we are trying to collect money from welfare people. He also said in another debate that we are collecting money from persons who have previously had accommodation by the Welfare Department. That is not true. It is important for the National Housing Corporation to collect its funds. We have cases where the Democratic Labour Party put people in houses over the years...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Obviously, he is not listening that is why he is tripping himself up in reply. I said persons who were put on lots on the basis of their welfare situation. In other words, there are people, not who the Welfare Department put but the National Housing Corporation in some cases because of hardship permitted

them to put a house on lots, on the understanding that they could not pay cash for the lots. They are now being demanded by the National Housing Corporation to pay the full amount for the lots on which the houses are located. That is all I said. 6.00 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Corporation must collect this fund. It must collect money from persons who are renting. We are not asking persons who are on welfare to pay. Persons who are on welfare can get a house through the Welfare Department. Persons who are pensioners can get their accommodation but persons who are working should pay their rent. Why is the Honourable Member for St. John trying to encourage tenants not to pay their rent?

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. No one said that. We did not say people who are working. Something is going wrong here. The Honourable Member does not understand. These are people, who, because of their welfare circumstances, the National Housing Corporation permitted them to occupy a lot on the understanding that as funds permitted they would try to get off the lot. They are not working and therefore they cannot pay the rent. That is why the National Housing Corporation had to put them on those lots.

What I am saying is, that rather than following the arrangement that they had put in place, the NHC is now sending them letters demanding the full amount for the value of the lot. I can point out the cases to him afterwards if he wants it.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: This is what the National Housing Corporation is doing at this time. All those persons who had lots previously and have not occupied those lots, we are asking those persons to occupy the lots or give them up. That is the first thing.

The second case is that persons who owe in excess of \$1 000, the National Housing Corporation is sending them reminders that this money must be paid or should be paid or they should make arrangements how this money can be paid. This is what we are doing.

I do not see why the Honourable Member is saying that Government is trying to put out welfare cases and persons who are disadvantaged in the society out of their homes

or off their lots. We are not doing so. All we are saying is that persons who are working have a right to pay their rent or buy the property.

We are further saying that persons who cannot pay, the National Assistance Board will pay for them or they can get accommodation from the Ministry of Social Transformation. I think that this is the approach that the National Housing Corporation will have to take. We cannot afford to allow people who can pay their rent and who can buy their property to live free on Government. It is unfair. Those persons who cannot pay, those persons who are not working, will be accommodated.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. G. A. CLARKE, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 2 inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. G. A. CLARKE, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as The Rock Hall (Vesting) Act, 2000.

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 OF LAND NOW BY VIRTUE OF THE ROCK HALL (VESTING) ACT, 2000, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT ROCK HALL, ST. THOMAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution which arises from the last Bill vesting 7 272.9 square metres of land at Rock Hall, St. Thomas in the

National Housing Corporation do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO THE HEART FOUNDATION OF BARBADOS INC. OF LAND AT LADYMEADE GARDENS, SAINT MICHAEL

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution before this House seeks permission to lease approximately 1 172 square metres of land at Railway Road No. 3, Ladymeade Gardens, St. Michael to the Heart Foundation of Barbados.

This property includes a three-bedroom stone house which was formally used as a doctor's residence and is part of approximately three acres or 12 138 square metres of land at Ladymeade Gardens.
6.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Heart Foundation is a non-profit organization. It is also a voluntary organization which was incorporated in April 1995 through the initiatives of members of the Cardiac Unit of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Lions Club of Barbados South. This organization comprises of lay persons and health care providers who are members of this organization.

Mr. Speaker, the objective of this organization is basically to provide opportunities for persons who have heart disease and conditions. Also, it is important to note that the Foundation seeks to provide educational programmes to the public, assimilate information about heart problems and heart conditions and how these conditions can be controlled. It is also important to note that one of the objectives is to provide and to secure funding for the Foundation and provide programmes which would help in the programmes.

Mr. Speaker, the project of the Heart Foundation is very enlightening. Over the years the Heart Foundation of Barbados has provided a number of opportunities for Barbadians. It has set up an emergency Cardiac Care Programme. It has also set up a Cardiac Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation Programme which has three phases. Basically, these three phases seek to rehabilitate, encourage the use of preventative methods and aid in the recuperation of members who have had a problem with heart disease.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that over the years the Heart Foundation usually has their annual Healthy Life-Style Extravaganza which is hosted by the Nation Publishing Company along with other media houses in Barbados. This programme has helped to enlighten Barbadians as to how they can live healthy. In fact, the motto of the Heart Foundation is "Everyone has a heart". It is very important, Mr. Speaker, to encourage Members to

get involved in the programmes of the Heart Foundation since this Foundation does not ask Government for any major funding but seeks to raise funding on its own.

Mr. Speaker, it is also very important to note that most of the cases now involving heart disease can be attended to right here in Barbados. I believe that the Crown should undertake to lease land to persons and organizations like the Heart Foundation. Within the next two or three months, the Ministry of Housing will be bringing to this House other leases. We have a lease from the Cancer Society and leases from other organizations across Barbados which we will bring to the House.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution has been examined by the Attorney General and certified and with those remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the new Minister of Health for moving this Resolution. I would like to ask some questions. When will the Cancer Support Society be treated the same way as the Cancer Society? It is clear to me that when these two organizations make requests that the Cancer Society...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you know there is a rule relating to anticipation. Let us concentrate on this Resolution that is here.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I heard about the Cancer Society.

Mr. SPEAKER: Wait. The Honourable Member mentioned that a Resolution will come before the House from the Cancer Society. That does not mean that you are entitled to debate it.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not speaking about leasing, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question that you are about to ask relates to the Cancer Society. The House will not allow that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no. I am general. I want to know if they will be accorded the same services as the other. It is clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are certain organizations in Barbados who are more privileged than others. I would like to see that the same benefits that are given to the Cancer Society be given to the other organizations...

Mr. SPEAKER: To the Heart Foundation, is that what you mean? The same benefits given to...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:... the Cancer Society and the Heart Foundation, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But nothing has been given to the Cancer Society as yet.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Like duty-free concessions and so on.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not talking about that now so that cannot be part of our discussion.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Anyhow, Sir, I would like to compliment the Heart Foundation on the work that it is doing and for the wonderful work that it is doing in Barbados. Mr. Speaker is a living example of it. I hope that those persons who have to rely on the Cancer Support Association will recognize that they also play a very vital role in Barbados. They should be accorded the same privileges, Sir, as the other organization. In Barbados, everyone has a heart and should behave in that way.

We have a situation where it seems, Sir, that some organizations are more privileged than others. Also, I am hoping that the document used by the Minister will be made a document of the House. I am asking you, Sir, to make sure that document which was quoted from be made a document of the House. That provided some very vital information, Sir, for the Minister when he was presenting his speech here this afternoon.

I would like to say that we on this Side support this particular Resolution. We would expect that the Minister of Housing would not deprive the Honourable Minister of Health who sits in the Other Place from a policy statement as he did this evening. We are still waiting for the Minister of Health to deliver the policy which was delivered by the Minister of Housing in this Parliament today. I thank you.

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission, we will recommit to Government Notices.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of a parcel of land at Workmans, St. George to assist the National Housing Corporation with its capital works programme.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.
6.20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, that concludes Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until Tuesday, July 25, 2000 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, July 04, 2000.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE
SPEAKER 2

Mr. Speaker announced the he had received from
the Honourable the Senate a Message dated 28th
June, 2000 appointing the following to the Joint
Select Committee of both Houses on the Fair
Trading Bill, 2000 and the Utilities Regulation
Bill, 2000.

Senator D. D. Marshall
Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds
Senator Sir John Goddard
Senator C. A. Mascoll
Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments
(Exemption) (Credit Suisse First Boston
(Europe) Limited) Order, 2000.
5. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment
Fund for the quarter ended March 31, 2000.
3. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the
National Housing Corporation for the
Financial Year 1998 to 1999.
4. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the
Barbados Tourism Authority for the year April
1, 1997 to March 31, 1998.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND 2

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the
National Petroleum Corporation for the Financial
Year ended March 31, 1997.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2, 45

Resolution to approve the vesting in the National
Housing Corporation of a parcel of land at
Workmans, St. George.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

1. The Rock Hall (Vesting) Bill, 2000.
2. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES 2

Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 2; Mr. D. Carter, 2; Mr.
D. J. H. Thompson, 2.

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN STANDING
ORDERS**Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS** 3

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 7 – BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE
CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF CAVES
AND RELATED MATTERS 3

Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 3, 33; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 12; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 3, 32; Hon.
Miss B. A. Miller, 16; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 21;
Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 25, 26; Mr. D. T. Gill, 27,
28; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 30.

ORDER NO. 8 – BILL TO AMEND THE NATIONAL
CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACT 35

Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 35.

ORDER NO. 9 – BILL TO VEST A PARCEL OF
LAND SITUATE AT ROCK HALL, SAINT
THOMAS 36

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 36, 40, 42, 43; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 36; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 37, 38; Mr.
D. J. H. Thompson, 39, 40, 41.

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING
CORPORATION OF THE PARCEL OF LAND
SITUATE AT ROCK HALL, SAINT THOMAS
FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT 44

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 44.

ORDER NO. 6– RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
LEASE TO THE HEART FOUNDATION OF
BARBADOS INC. THE PARCEL OF LAND
MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE
FIRST SCHEDULE HERETO ON THE TERMS
AND CONDITIONS SET OUT IN THE
SECOND SCHEDULE FOR THE ERECTION
OF A NATIONAL CARDIAC DISEASE AND
REHABILITATION CENTRE AND FOR THE
USE OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AS A
HEADQUARTERS BASE 44

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 44; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 45.

SUSPENSION 16

ADJOURNMENT 46

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 46.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CARTER, Mr. D. (Christ Church East Central)
CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)
GILL, Mr. D. T. (St. Michael South Central)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)
MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)