

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

RESUMPTION

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Mr. SPEAKER:

This Honourable House is resumed. When the suspension was taken this Honourable House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman, I waited yesterday for a few contributions from the Government so that we can get some clarity on this question of transport policy.

The first point that I want to make, Sir, is that it appears to me that the Minister has not spoken directly to the recommendations, to the best of my knowledge. The recommendations of Members of the Back Bench, some of whom spoke yesterday, that the Government reverts to a situation where it seeks to recover profitability for the Transport Board by going on the shorter routes.

The link of that to the role of the Fair Trade Commission seems to fly in the face of the overall direction which Government has been taking in relation to the role of statutory corporations. Because, on one hand, you have several statutory corporations including the Transport Board Transport Board at one time which was divesting operations which they were saying were better run by the private sector. For example, the mechanical workshop at the Transport Board, the Abattoir in recent times, the Packaging Plant for the BADCO, the Tractor Scheme and all of these other operations which were being divested. Yet now you are having a call by the Government Members on the back bench, and some on the front bench, for Government now to go directly back into competition with the private sector and particularly again, in an area which has emerged in the past 15 to 20 years and an area in which people who previously would not have been involved in such activity now have an ownership state, which the Minister himself has acknowledged.

We all know that to be profitable the Transport Board would have to get back these short routes. The question of profitability in relation to the Transport Board had to be looked at. Is that what we are aiming for? Or are we aiming to have a Transport Board which provides special services including

getting school children to school, providing transport for pensioners and running effectively on those routes which would not be profitable for private operators, which as I understand it is supposed to be the new role of the state.

The Honourable Member for St. James North does not fully grasp the role of fair competition legislation because it is very clear. There are Jamaican decision in relation to the legal profession and there are Jamaican decisions in relation to activities governed by statute in which the legislation specifically excludes them from the operation of the fair competition legislation. You would have a situation where a statutory corporation would have the right to go the Fair Trade Commission to complain about the small operators but the small operators would not have the right under fair competition to go to the Fair Trade Commission to complain about practices which the Transport Board undertakes because the Transport Board is governed by statute.

You have to be very careful and therefore the clarion call made yesterday was wrongly made. If the Government is going to use the Fair Trading Commission in that way it will have a very negative backlash particularly against new areas of economic activity which previously were the preserve of Government operated under statute. You have to be very very careful. The Jamaicans have had these experiences and an application was made to the Fair Trading Commission about the setting of legal fees. The Fair Trading Commission said, that is not our business, that is governed by statute. Likewise, if you still have an element of the transportation system in Barbados in which the corporation is involved in operating under statute, you then have a situation where no one can challenge their involvement but they can challenge the operation of the persons in the private sector. The Honourable Member for St. James North made out a case against the small operators which does not hold water because the Transport Board itself benefits from concessions and has benefitted from concessions down through the years including Government guarantees of its loans, including the sourcing of buses in bulk which gives the cheaper prices, including other benefits.

You even have a situation where the Transport Board previously had its own workshop but not has a private sector run workshop and has an agreement which facilitates the fixing of the Transport Board buses which in itself, gives them an advantage which the ZR, ZM and other private operators do not enjoy. We need to understand these things so that there is no argument for fair competition legislation to come to regulate the private sector operators unless such an argument can also be applied to the practices of the Transport Board as well. I think that is vital. That is why the Government's fair competition policy and whether it is going to apply to operations which are governed by statute, needs to be known. If not the point that Honourable Member for St. James North made yesterday would be totally irrelevant. It would have been a point made in ignorance. I expect that Members of the Cabinet would have an idea as to whether where Government is involved in providing a service, the Fair Trading Commission would have the right to regulate those operations.

As I have said, the transport policy seems to be going in the opposite direction to the direction it was going in a few years ago when the workshop was privatised and other operations were being hived off into the private sector. We are now hearing that the Board should be beefed up and should go back in and start to compete with these private sector operations.

The Minister has a tough task but he has to decide what he is going to do because there can only be a basis on which you can justify an increase in bus fares in Barbados. That is that you are providing a

service, that you will never reach commercial profitability even on \$2 bus fare, therefore, there can be no basis for you to increase bus fares and then also go out there and try to recover those short routes. That is my view because on the question of transport policy there have been several Cabinet papers and several studies done and this has been a long standing debate which has been part of the history of Barbadian politics.

The Minister needs to tell us about the situation in relation to UCAL because having created this entity - and there was a lot of public relations about it how we were giving it to the workers and that it was new economic democracy at work - the arrangement does not seem to be working. Government has been slow in making payments to UCAL. The parts that Government was supposed to provide under the agreement and made available for the fixing of the buses are not being made available and there are a whole range of other problems. To my mind, it seems that at the end of the day it is Government principally that is breaching its obligations to UCAL in relation to the fixing of the buses at the Transport Board. We need a policy position on that to find out exactly what is happening.

On the question of bus routes itself. For the thirteen years that I have been in Parliament I have consistently asked whether the Transport Board can consider putting on a service as an extension to an existing service which would pass in the area of Rose Gate and Guinea in St. John. The buses either turn at that four crossing in Massiah Street.

10:10 a.m.

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

The buses either turn at that four cross at Massiah Street or pass across the main road but we need a

bus which actually covers that area because persons with bags and so on, have to travel long distances to get to their homes and this is something the Transport Board has been offering.

Many years ago, I called the Transport Board and I asked for an opportunity to go and check some of the routes.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

Well, if you do not want to do it, listen, that is for the benefit of the same poor people you were talking about yesterday. I have heard people made supplications in here that people should go home at people to train them, yesterday, that you are going to go home to them and all I am asking for is a bus to pass in front of some residents who live in a tenantry in Barbados, who either due to the failing of previous administrations or for some other reason have not had the service. My own view is that the Minister is sensible enough and reasonable enough to understand that just as we needed an improved service in parts of St. Michael that those people are entitled because they pay taxes too and part of their taxes go towards the development of these kinds of operations.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

You do not listen. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that it is foolishness for the people in Rose Gate and Guinea to accept a bus service then he should get up and be 'man enough' to put it in the record. He should get up and be 'man enough' to say that the agricultural workers at Guinea Plantation, at Moncriefe and at other plantations in St. John should not have a bus service...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

Let us have some order please.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

...and that came from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, Sir.

Let us move on to the question of tenantry roads. Again there has been a lot of back and forth on this. At least we now seem to have a clear policy but there are several tenantry roads which need to be done again in St. John. I have written countless letters to the Rural Development Commission and the Ministry of Public Works. Every year the Chief Technical Officer or some official on his behalf, would write asking you to prioritise roads. This has been a saga that has been going on year after year and nobody ever gets back to you to indicate exactly what roads are likely to be done. Apart from the tenantry roads, there are the major arteries, for example, the Foster Hall road, as I said, is totally impassable. It collapsed in 1994 or so, during some heavy rains. It has made the entire area of Martin's Bay and the western end of Glen Burnie very unstable.

The village of St. Margaret's, a road which was not built to carry buses but which the buses have to use to get down into Glen Burnie. The Glen Burnie bus, for which the turntable at the bottom was provided because most of those buses have difficulty going right down into Glen Burnie because of the gradient in the road. Therefore, the people who live at the bottom of Glen Burnie, virtually have to get

out, walk up a hill and then walk back down, to get their groceries and those kind of things, home.

The hill at the bottom of Bath Village, which is really at the top of the road that leads to the beach is very unstable because of the springs and other movement and that entire area needs attention. Way back in the 1980s, we moved some people from the edge of that cliff up to the development at Clifton Hall and we believe there may be other persons in that area, who because of the movement of the soil and the instability, have been having damage done to their houses and I think attention needs to be paid to that. In any event if you are going to have major development at Bath, as the Government said it is interested in doing, you will have to put in adequate facilities linking that area to other parts of Barbados but right now, to my mind, it is very unsafe.

Ministers of Government from time to time have spoken to this issue of the number of cars using our roads. When the Minister spoke yesterday about the re-routing of traffic and so on, I could just imagine what it is going to be like in the area of Black Rock as you undertake these developments. The point is that it is clear that even in areas where you are not doing work, for example the area of Six Roads, St. Philip to Bridgetown, years ago, you could have travelled on that road, 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and not had any heavy traffic nowadays, it is bumper to bumper and all of our major road arteries are plagued by the same problems. When the Four Square road, Woodbourne and so on was out of use into St. Patrick, that would have put more pressure on the highway.

The point is that the Government needs to indicate whether it is going to be able to undertake the kind of investment on our road infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of vehicles or whether it is going to adopt a policy to reduce or restrict the number of new vehicles which are in use on the roads in Barbados. I think we need a policy statement on the direction that that is going to be taking, which brings us to the issue of the 'Jambuster'.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is right. I think the Minister was premature in responding to the criticism that was made. The 'Jambuster', as it presently operates, has the potential to generate some very serious accidents. It is just that I think people are by and large cautious but as a new generation of drivers comes up in Barbados, you will start to see even more problems.

Tourists use roundabouts in a particular way as the countries from which they come, which means that they go in the outer lane if they are keeping straight and go in the inner lane if they are bearing to the right, they tend to use the roundabouts wrong according to the rules that we in Barbados have been publishing. Each of the roundabouts seem to have a different system. I think it would be a good idea if the Government would basically rationalise the system, either similar to whatever happens at the Collymore Rock roundabout or some other arrangement, which would make it clear to people using our roads because it is not only Barbadians who are using our roads.

The tourists who come to Barbados are aging and therefore they themselves are using the roads in a manner to which they would be accustomed, from whence they came.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has got one minute to conclude.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

And one must be certain about the procedures that are going to be in place.

I think the Minister in relation to the capital works programme for road works to be done in St. Michael and so on, is extremely ambitious that that project would be completed by the year 2003. We have had past experience with these matters including the phasing of land acquisitions and the relocation of persons. I believe that you have to be extremely realistic about the manner in which these projects are going to be executed but I hope that during the course of this debate that we would have a clear policy statement from you in the directions that we would be taking in the areas in which I had spoken on.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. John raised concerns about statements allegedly made by me here last night. Being that I am not in the habit of a pure wild way of jumping up every moment on points of order to set off Honourable Members, I permitted the Honourable Member to speak as he was speaking and reserved my right to get up now and clarify precisely what I was saying last night.

Let us begin with the strongest aspect of the contribution made by the Honourable Member for St. John. In the first three minutes of his submission, he suggested that he seemed to be seeing mixed signals in relation to a number of matters in this country and he isolated a number of entities which, according to him, were supposedly to be driven by the so-called small man or the small persons. He had concerns that in a situation where we both appeared to be encouraging the small man that in the context of public transportation, implied in what the Honourable Member was saying, was that we seem to be breaking for a special case for the Barbados Transport Board.

The reason why I say that that was the strongest aspect of the contribution made by the Honourable Member is that so long as all Honourable Members, and he is one of us, can sit down and look to see what challenges there are facing the small businesses, then perhaps in a way transcending political boundaries, we might be able to evolve the perfect plan of action to stimulate small business in Barbados.

As far as I can remember, Mr. Chairman, last night when I spoke to this whole question, the Honourable Member was not in his seat and if you assume that he got the contribution that I made second hand, then he as a lawyer must know that sometimes when people relate information to you, they put their own interpretation and their own version and by the time it reaches you, once you did not hear directly and was not a participant or witness to proceedings, then you might very well end up falling victim to hearsay.

10:20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Last night the principal thrust to my contribution was very much an invitation to all Honourable Members of this Committee to look at page 172 of the Estimates for 2000-2001 and to refer to Code 37517529, Object Classification Grants to Public Institutions. The main thrust of what I was saying had to do with the proposed Barbados Public Transport Authority. I interpret the intervention by the Honourable Member for St. John as an encouragement to cast this debate at a particular level in a way where Honourable Members can both be frank and at the same time make suggestions in relation to a burning national issue. Before I look at the proposed Public Transport Authority, let us look at the Transport Board.

The Honourable Member for St. John was right when he said that the Transport Board is the creature of statute. I believe the Transport Board Act, if it is called that, would have been passed some time between 1956 and 1959 or thereabout. It is an Act worthy of examination. I will not be looking at every provision in that Act today but we as politicians might some time in the future have to look at it very closely, not necessarily because of its contents but because of its omissions.

I will continue, Mr. Chairman, if you look at the Barbados Transport Board, it represents an institution within public transport that has been firmly entrenched into the transport culture of this country for more than 40 years. It is an institution which is blamed first when people have problems getting to and from a place. It is an institution that has been so targeted as being the principal mover and shaker that there was a time between 1976 and 1980 in this country when there was agitation to sweep the Elite Bus Company, the Rocklyn, and others under the Transport Board to nationalise public transport and without again going in to this whole question of the experiment at nationalisation, suffice it to say that even those who were agitating for nationalisation found out afterwards that the proposal for nationalisation did not produce the type of transported utopia that was foreseen.

I want to say that it is clear based on what is happening in Barbados now that all things considered, the Barbados Transport Board is very much owned by the people of Barbados financed by the people of Barbados. The reality that confronts this country now is that if you take into account all that is happening in public transport, a legitimate question would be is not the Barbados Transport Board carrying a disproportionately high responsibility in public transport? Bearing in mind it is the people's transport, bearing in mind it is the creature of statute, bearing in mind the many challenges facing the Transport Board.

I referred members of this Honourable Committee to the proposed Barbados Transport Authority and my submission was that this thing should look at regulating all forms of public transport and I was careful to mention taxis, ZRs, buses, private buses etc. I said that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was very much the champion Minister for the consumer. I said that the Minister of Commerce had mentioned in his submission earlier in this debate, the whole question of unfair advantage. I said that in the context of unfair advantage that we have to wonder, where unfair advantage really accommodates some players in transport better than others. The inference by me was clear. We have to wonder whether this Barbados Public Transport Authority should not provide regulation and should not set the tone for greater equity. That was the thrust of what I was saying, Mr. Chairman, as

you would no doubt recall.

Thinking about the whole issue of some carrying a disproportionately heavy burden. I mean that the Transport Board is carrying a disproportionately heavy

burden, and some being rapid beneficiaries, if you want to call it that. I really believe that part of this mandate that we see here proposed at page 172, would be to rationalise public transport. I was saying so, would be to order public transport.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation, the point I was making which I want to be clear is that fair competition legislation normally excludes regulated industry. If the Government is establishing a Transport Authority to undertake the full regulation of the Transport sector, then the fair competition legislation, to my mind, would not be relevant to a regulated industry like that. If it is not, and it is putting the public transport sector under the jurisdiction of the Fair Trade Commission, under the jurisdiction of the fair competition, say so. What would have to happen is that all of the sectors which are either being subsidised or have unfair advantages, you would have to remove those unfair advantages, including guaranteed loans and all of the other benefits that the Transport Board gets.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Chairman, I heard what the Honourable Member said. Let us look at where we are right now in the year 2000 and what is happening around us. We have come to a situation where there is no great support anywhere now for monopolies and cartels. We are in to an era of competition. What we have to ask ourselves as Members of Parliament is whether considering what the Honourable Member for St. John said. I believe that there is an inference that once there is a statute setting up an entity then statute regulates. I rather suspect that the Barbados Transport Board Act will not regulate but more enable in terms of setting up the Transport Board. I don't think it really regulates in the way it enables. I said earlier that the Transport Board Act is notorious for its omissions.

However, if we are moving to a competitive economy, a competitive ethic, a competitive environment, and we are saying that Acts of Parliament, statutes, should inherently and directly regulate, we have to raise the question whether in an era where you want to encourage fair competition, where the statutes as they are not sufficiently regulatory and fair, whether there should not be some superior system to deal with them. The Barbados Chamber of Commerce was set up by statute.

Suppose the Barbados Chamber of Commerce steps out of line and operates in an anti-competitive framework, it will need a more powerful statute to whip it in line. Similarly, there are other institutions, I am sure, the creatures of statute, which will need be whipped in line either because the enabling statutes setting them up did not go far enough or because the enabling statutes were set up at a time when there was no foresight of what the world economy would come to. For example, the Nation Petroleum Corporation Act was set up in a era when the whole question of Fair Trade and a Fair Trading Commission had not yet been dreamt of. Do you want to tell me Mr. Chairman, that the National Petroleum Corporation would not come under the Fair Trading Commission's activity? Clearly it would. I am sure that those big telecommunication giants and the Barbados Light and Power, even though they are private sector operated and owned for the most part, are very often enabled to operate by statute.

The Honourable Member for St. John, as a lawyer, should know that very often the statute that enables is not the very thing that regulates. Should a statute setting up an institution have inherently defined powers to regulate, which the principal role is to enable? The reason I am asking this, Mr. Chairman, is that very often that statute which sets up an institution may very well bring the institution into being but you need an independent entity, not with an interest in that, to look at it from a detached perspective and get things right.

Mr. Chairman, I really want to provoke discussion last night on this whole question of the need for us to order public transport.

10:30 a.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

I still feel that a private entrepreneur with 15 ZR vans, operating on short haul routes and making a lot of money, although he is making a contribution to public transport, is not in the same position as an institution cash-strapped and cash-trapped for years with higher operating cost, which is compelled to carry our people from here in Bridgetown to Venture, Featherbed Lane, Chapel, Sergeants Street and such places where the cost of operation is greater and where the Barbados Transport Board clearly is assuming a greater social responsibility and social contribution by more or less subsidising the activities of an entity that is more interested in profits than interested in serving the community.

My whole submission last night was a submission based on the need to be fair in all of this. The whole thing has a history in which the Honourable Minister no doubt will look at. How can we expect the Barbados Transport Board to bear enormous cost and make a great contribution in the interest of moving people from Hope Road, Connell Town or Pie Corner in St. Lucy, when there are those who

owned ZR vans who are not going to those places, who are not even operating at a schedule time ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the most reliable transport system we have in St. Lucy right now is provided by the ZR vans.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has got one minute to conclude his speech.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Sir, there was no deliberate attempt to mislead the House but yesterday and this morning I did not see the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in Doreen Griffith's house where I was this morning, the house in which he grew up. He grew up in a woman named Doreen Griffith's house. I was there this morning and I did not see him there.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. The house he refers to happens to be my grandmother's house and she was Lottie Griffith. My other grandmother happens to be Doreen Griffith and she happens to be a step grandmother ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I would prefer the Honourable Members to stick to the subject matter.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

The telephone number is 439-6174. I was around that area of Checker Hall both yesterday and this morning. There were people at the bus stop in St. Lucy from 630 a.m. to 730 a.m. waiting for public transport. I do not think that we should politicize the issue ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I believe the Honourable Member will have to come again to clarify his point.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

This is a serious national issue Mr. Chairman, if I have to come back, I will do so ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

That is the reason why you should come back and clarify yourself.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution on this Head in relation to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

First of all, in acknowledging from the perspective of someone who has been involved in matters in relation to business and the economy for the majority of my adult life, the critical importance which

ready and available public transportation and the ability of people to move freely around the island has played in the development of this nation, the critical component in relation to this ability of Barbadians to move all around and in fact unlike what has happened in other islands where for several reasons it is not so easy to move around, Barbados has been able to draw on the talent of its people wherever they may happen to reside so that they may attend to productive and other social activity. The availability of a good road network and public as well as private transportation has been very important to our national development.

Sir, in my estimation, we are blest to have on an island 21 miles long and 14 miles wide, over 1000 miles of paved roads, that is a remarkable record, that record in itself, though, ends up being one of the things that puts the Ministry of Public Works and Transport under stress and strain. Maintenance of the primary, secondary and local roads, obviously becomes an issue.

Although, we have this proud record of over 1000 miles of paved road, the reality is that there are still people in Barbados who have to walk in mud, marl, rocks and sand and who do not have the benefit of a paved road within their local community. The challenge for Government then is to strike that necessary balance between the maintenance of the over 1 000 miles of existing paved roads, building new, wider, more easily traversed highways for the future as well as bringing along those communities where people are not as yet able even in the year 2000 to leave home in the pair of shoes that they would use at church, at work, at school or at play.

Even in my constituency, there are still a few communities where one has to cover the shoes in plastic bags if it rains in order to be able to make it onto the main road or they walk in their boots or their old shoes out to the front and leave them by a neighbour at the front and then put on their dress shoes when they take the bus. That is challenge which we are prepared to meet.

In fact, in this regard, I very strongly support the institutional mechanisms which have been created by way of the establishment of the Rural and Urban Development Commissions. Included in their mandate is a focus on those roads in communities because the reality is, if you step back and look at it dispassionately, how could it have been possible for a single entity - the Ministry of Public Work and Transport - to be looking after the 1000 miles of paved roads, build new highways for the future and still be able to focus on the hundreds of communities in Barbados, something must suffer.

Between the lobby which you would get from the motorists about the potholes on the main roads, about the traffic congestion and the small still voice of the communities, you will tend to know which will get the better attention. So that the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and the Rural Development Commission (RDC) are able to focus on the communities.

In fact, in that regard, I am very thankful for the work which the Rural Development Commission has done by way of providing roads within a few communities in Christ Church East and I look forward to their continued work in that particular area. Sir, the reality is that our road network is also under stress from heavy usage. The reality is that much of the framework of the existing network has been in place for many years, much of it evolved from tracks and transportation of canes and other agricultural produce and roads in the communities.

When one considers that today Barbados has over 72 000 motor vehicles licensed to travel on its roads

of which somewhere in the region of 58 000 to 60 000 are private motor vehicles compared to just around 10 000 in the early 1960s, one will understand the tremendous expansion which has occurred. In fact, much of the congestion which also occurs is not just the simple matter of the number of vehicles but Barbados is a busy place. People are working all over the island. People are members of two or three or four social groups. People go to church. People go to funerals. People are doing things.

To be honest with you, Sir, I take a very sober perspective on the congestion. I leave home earlier, I plan my journeys better and the likes. The reality is that at midnight you can have a traffic jam on St. Lawrence Main Road because people are trying to get into St. Lawrence Gap, which is a Mecca for entertainment and leisure activity in Barbados, and you end up with a back up of traffic on the main road.

On Sunday afternoons, you can end up with a traffic jam on the ABC Highway going in one or both directions. People are going or coming from picnic activities, meetings and so on. Sir, in reality, it is not just the size of the roads or the number of vehicles but the fact that people are doing things.

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Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

What is important, and the challenge the Ministry faces, is the need to look at the traffic intersections. From the road that I take on mornings, I have the greatest difficulty getting from Mapp Hill onto Two Mile Hill crossing the ABC Highway at Bussa Roundabout. It is at the point of the intersections where the congestion occurs.

Sir, I want to draw attention in this first intervention to one or two matters. First of all, the Ministry is to be applauded and I believe the Government is to be commended for the commitment of resources to meet the challenge of road rehabilitation and maintenance, \$47 million on road maintenance and construction and another \$6.3 million for rehabilitation. I must make the point that we cannot pretend, as though we dropped out of the sky today, that the roads are suddenly bad today.

The Democratic Labour Party in its term of office did not commit resources of this magnitude to the maintenance of the existing road network. It is documented that even when they were participants in a World Bank funding programme for the building of major highways that there was an agreement and as part of that World Bank Loan Agreement, Barbados agreed to pave a certain amount of road network per year. They reneged on that agreement so that the final part of the World Bank loan financing programme was in jeopardy because Barbados did not meet its commitment to the paving of the agreed

amount of roads per year.

The Bank could simply say, how are you going to borrow money from us to do new roads when by your own example you do not maintain the road infrastructure that is already there? That is documented, Sir.

This Government has risen manfully to the task of rescuing, rehabilitating and putting back into good shape the network that was abandoned by the Dems.

The roads did not become bad overnight. We are taking it as an interest and we are fixing them. In that regard, Sir, I want to make the point that in the constituency of Christ Church East we are very pleased that the work on Highway 6 is coming to completion, with just the roundabout at St. Patricks to be completed.

We also want to thank the Ministry in advance for their commitment to the fixing of the road through Leadvale, Fairview and Lowther's Hill. The situation often occurs when in the process of construction of a major highway that traffic is diverted onto secondary roads which were never intended for that heavy traffic. As you would know, Mr. Chairman, as we are bordering constituencies on that road, the roads in that area have deteriorated more rapidly since the diversion of heavy traffic through them.

The constituents of those areas have been extremely patient. They have endured dust, additional noise and disruption to which they were never accustomed, and I want to thank the Ministry in advance for their commitment to the repaving, reinstatement and general improvement of the roads through Leadvale, Fairview and Lowther's Hill which will allow public and private transportation to move along more speedily.

Sir, I want before I close to speak to the issue of coordination of work between the Ministry of Public Works and other utility companies. The Minister has indicated that much of the challenge we face is because of the digging up of the road by utility companies, an essential part of building for the future, whether it be by way of our telephone infrastructure underground, natural gas or water.

Sir, there is no high science required to put the roads back into the shape in which they previously existed and the private contractors who have been hired by those utility companies have failed us but not only they have failed us. The reality is that the Ministry of Public Works is charged by law to supervise and administer the reinstatement process and to make sure that the roads are put back to their original condition. I want to urge them to rise to that challenge.

Through Silver Sands, through St. Christopher, through Chancery Lane, the recent installation of natural gas has resulted in the reinstatement of the roads to a condition which has made them worse. You now have a roller coaster experience along certain stretches of that road and that problem is replicated.

I also want to urge the Ministry to remember its commitment to the paving of Ealing Park South where that road which was to be paved had a delay in 1997-98 because of the lack of asphalt. It was delayed by the installation of natural gas during 1999, and now that all of that is finished, the residents and their Member of Parliament, your humble servant, Sir, will be happy when all of us are able to drive that road

in comfort.

Sir, the matter of road safety is also one about which we have to be concerned. There are two components to road safety: the quality of the driving which has deteriorated substantially in Barbados as well as any obstructions which are there in the road system. Between those two factors, the reality is that we have, as a nation, to stop the carnage on the road. There is too much carnage on the roads of Barbados. Roads are not supposed to be high risk areas. You should be able to leave your home freely and comfortably and feel a little more comfortable when you get to your destination than we do now.

Drivers in Barbados these days seem to have more accidents on straight roads than on corners. It would suggest that there needs to be greater care in the use of these roads. The fact that the roads are broader and smoother is not an excuse for speeding.

Sir, we have to look at the cost. A 1994 study on transportation in Barbados indicated that the economic cost of road accidents was high. Accidents with hospitalisation cost an average \$8 248 per person in 1994, between hospital care and so on. Notwithstanding that the victim may not be paying for this but the country as a whole. Where there was non-hospitalised injury the cost was \$2 426 per person. Even where there were no injuries where it was just vehicle damage it was \$2 205 per accident. Where there was a fatality, the economic cost overall with all that was involved was \$143 620. Apart from that, Sir, it is the pain, the loss of a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, the empty chair at the dining table that is the real cost.

I want, Sir, to take the opportunity of this debate to urge all of us on the road to be more considerate, to remember that we are not challenging vehicles on the road but we are challenging people. People's lives are at stake.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr Chairman, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for that particular speech. I must admit he is finally sounding like a politician for the masses in this country. Within Barbados we have been having particular problems that I would like to see the Ministry of Public Works correcting. When the Sandy Lane Hotel was refurbishing or reconstructing, the travelling public from the North found themselves in a situation where they had to wait until they got to Sandy Lane to recognise what was happening with the roads.

As far as I know, previously, when works like that were being carried out there were always published details of the necessary detours and so on. Sandy Lane is nearly a straight road and I think it is unfair for the public to be driving on a particular road then to be caught up in a situation where they see a sign and all of a sudden have to adjust speed to accommodate the work of some rich and famous group who they feel that they are investing large sums in Barbados and they do not necessarily have to go through the right channels.

We also have a situation in St. Lawrence Gap where every Friday evening a particular section of the road is closed off and I have not read anything in any newspaper telling me that that is going to happen and I am saying that Government entities must understand even more so than private entities that they have a right to inform the public. It is the public that supports the activities of those particular entities and they have a right to let people know what they are doing.

People in St. Lawrence might not mind the GEMS of Barbados closing the road but if they informed the people of what they would be doing between five and ten o'clock every Friday evening then there might be a better relationship between themselves and the public of Barbados.

10:50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

We also have another situation where we have another road at Shermans in St. Lucy and because some rich group from England feel that they are going to set up villas in St. Lucy that they have a right to now come and put side walks on both sides of the road and reduce the size of the road.

I am asking the public servants who are being paid by the citizens of Barbados to make sure that these matters are investigated and corrected measures put in place. I am also seeing another ridiculous situation in Shermans where the fishermen in that particular area have a particular piece of land, during the hurricane season, they were able to use that piece of land to make sure that their boats were hauled up on that piece of land, and now some rich group from England have come and taken over the land and the fishermen do not have any place to put their boats.

I am asking if this is a situation now where the masses must continue to suffer, while the rich and famous could hop on a plane, come to Barbados and get every single thing they want. We also have another disgraceful thing in this country where the ZR people are being told they cannot compete with the Transport Board, but yet still the rich and famous in this country can feel that every single tourist that lands in this country belongs to them and when they do not have enough buses to transport the people, they feel they have the right to use the Transport Board against the masses.

Tell me what nonsense we are talking about in this country because people will come in here and complain about a black man owning 15 ZRs, but one man, because he is white, he can own all the BT buses, set up large companies and it is not a problem, what are we talking about in Parliament these days? Are we becoming Mafia children because we can only see one side of the coin but we cannot see the other, what is going on? It hurts. It creates stress.

The coming of Parliament that is supposed to be black and everybody feels they have a right to put a case for people once they have money, but we must pass laws to destroy the black underprivileged in this country. The ZR owners have a right to own ZR buses. They have a right to make profits. The same way a company could send all of their buses down in the Port and they can tell everybody in any ship, to come in their buses first and when they are finished, they can then turn around and hire the Transport Board buses for them, not realising that there are many taxi drivers who have to pay MTW every year a fee to operate a taxi but they cannot get one single tourist to travel in their buses because a particular group in Barbados believe that tourism belongs to them.

They are also doing it with the hotels too so we have to ask ourselves, what are we talking about in here. We should be discussing the upliftment of the masses not trying to use the transport system and the taxpayers money to destroy the same people who are paying the money into the system. We, as a Parliament, must be prepared to subsidise the Transport Board and if it means that the masses are gaining because the Transport Board happens to be losing, come in here and get some more money for the Transport Board and I will support it.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I will not approve bringing a situation where I am asked to come in Parliament and fight against the same people that we are supposed to be uplifting.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Of course, I will support that for you too. When I was on the Board, I told the Board not to increase the rental charges at the National Housing Corporation that what they should do is sell land to get the additional money to subsidise those people. I would not allow you to sidetrack me on this particular issue.

I am also saying to the Constitution Amendment Commission, which we should discuss sometime, that there is no need for local Government. I am saying that every time the Government comes to this Parliament at Estimates time for money to construct roads, I am not prepared just to come in here and vote for a Head, when I do not know how that Head is going to be divided.

I am calling the necessary people to understand if there are 28 constituencies that the money should be divided. I am not saying equally, but at the end of the Estimates, I should know how much of that money is going to be spent on roads in St. Lucy. I have been in here since 1994, voting for Estimates, calling for roads, writing Government departments and not one single road has been constructed in St. Lucy and you want to tell me that this is fairness. It cannot be fairness and I will not keep quiet on this.

I am telling the civil servants this now, stop writing me asking me about roads because it is a waste of time. You write them, they ask you to prioritise roads and it means nothing to them. I am saying that previously I was told that it was the duty of the civil servants to say which roads are to be repaired and which roads will be built. All I was telling you is that the civil servants do not know that this is their duty now. It has to be the duty of a Minister.

I do not feel in an independent country like this that I feel I should have to beg a Minister for roads when the people of St. Lucy are taxpayers just like anybody else. I feel that when asked as a Parliamentarian to submit a list, which I have submitted for 48 roads, and it is a waste of time asking me for more because when you complete the 48, I will send you another 37.

I am not expecting 48 to be done but if you asked me for the number of roads, I have to give you a full list. I am saying that if parliamentarians in here do not want the ZRs, I want all of you to get up in this

Parliament and tell me who do not want the ZRs to operate in their constituencies. I am quite prepared to accept them in mine because they are doing a good job in St. Lucy and I would like some more.

Now all of those who feel that they do not need them, anybody who have them in Eden Lodge and in Wavell Avenue and do not want them, send them to St. Lucy. We will accept them down there because it is the best form of transportation. If you want to issue some more permits, I can find some people in St. Lucy who are willing to go on the long routes in St. Lucy.

I am saying, Sir, that Parliament must be the place where fairness is seen to be done and must be done. Parliament cannot be a place where, when we are on the political platform we say one thing but as soon as we get in Parliament, we do something quite differently. The BT owners must understand that if they want to compete with the ZR people, then buy some buses and compete with them. If you want to be in competition, compete with everybody.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Do not scale down your road building, put it over to the Rural Development Commission, because the Rural Development Commission would then have to pass it on to the private contractor who can brag about building roads all through the Caribbean and make money all through the Caribbean, but when it comes to the small man in this country, you want to compete. Yet still, on the other hand, you are giving up large contracts and large sums of money to the rich and famous in this country but when it comes to poor people, you feel you do not have a right to look after their interests.

I am telling you that sometimes you need to look at the Human Development Report for 1999. If the Government Members read that, they will understand that there is a relationship between workers and capital because you cannot operate capital unless you have workers.

In this country, the Government is behaving as if once you have money that is the be-all and end-all of everything. I am saying that you need workers. I am also warning the Minister of Public Works that he also has to watch people who are prepared to come and tell him they are prepared to reduce the cost of water. They are smart business people in this world who sometimes tap into the veins that come from St. Michael and might tell you that they are giving you desalinated water but experts from Canada will tell you that it cannot be desalinated water, it has to be recycled water. It has to be recycled water because all they have done is to tap into the veins coming from St. Michael South and recycling it and sending it back through the system.

I want to know if that is not true, how come the plant in Barbados has been built at a particular cost and the one in Trinidad that is really dealing with desalinated water, the cost of that is so high and the cost of the one in Barbados is so low? I want that question answered, Sir, because we must make sure that smart businessmen who want a water system for their golf course that they do not ride on the backs of the taxpayers to achieve what they want.

11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21,2000

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

I am telling you there is a Canadian study that was done.

Aside:

Mr. Chairman: Now you are catching your breath I want to inform you that you have two minutes.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Thank you. I am saying that I feel that the civil servants in Barbados should be given the right to do the job that the Constitution of Barbados asks them to do. I feel within myself that the civil servants have a right to go out in the constituencies, look at the roads that are in need of repair and they should do their job and stop waiting on Ministers to tell them which roads are to be repaired.

I feel if it continues like this, then some constitutional matters will have to be raised in court on behalf of the people of St. Lucy, to tell the constituents of St. Lucy how come the Constitution calls for fairness and yet they are not getting fairness. I am serious about this matter. If it continues something will have to be done. I will have to evoke certain powers within St. Lucy to make sure that particular policy is implemented. A word to the wise is enough. Six years is too long. It is too long. I cannot continue to wait on this Parliament to provide roads. We want you to know all we need to do in St. Lucy is block off four roads. If we decide we want to block off four roads the whole game is finished. I want you to know that. Block four roads and this show is finished. You might have to buy cement at a higher price too.

Talking about that Mr. Chairman, I am saying that a survey needs to be done in this country to find out the areas in Barbados where we have particular problems, and instead of just taking marl and putting in the roads when you are repairing and rebuilding them, you might need to go to the Cement Plant, negotiate with the Cement Plant, use some steel and build a base so that you can have a proper foundation. I am not telling you to finish the road in concrete but there are certain sections in Barbados that you need to build a proper base to stop slippance and all of those things. You need to make sure that the Arawak Cement Plant contributes to the economy of Barbados in a larger process by making sure you use some of the materials from the Arawak Cement Plant before you decide to import the stuff from

St. Lucia, just because a large contractor wants you to do that. I thank you.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Chairman, a combination of the rules that govern proceedings in this Honourable Committee and the intervention from the Member for St. Lucy when I was last on my feet, prevented me from concluding what I had proposed to say under this Head.

Mr. Chairman, we are looking at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. It is a Ministry that almost every Barbadian looks to for something or the other. It is a ministry which is now positioned in a very interesting situation where more than ever this Ministry is now looking at the concept of eliminating wastage and of increasing efficiency.

This is Ministry which 30 years ago was unfortunately nicknamed the 'Ministry of Confusion and Waste' when it was MCW, no fault of any of the officials who are here present, because even if any of them had been there, they would have been so junior as not to be able to dictate policy. You had that unfortunate culture thirty years ago when a Minister for personal popularity encouraged staff to frolic between 8:00 a.m. and 400 p.m. - and then to work after 400 p.m. and bated by fish, the Minister used to fish and bring fish and buy some liquor and then everybody settled not just for the fish and liquor but for some overtime. That contributed to substantial waste, overtime, constrained the activities of the Ministry. I am talking about thirty years ago when nobody in here had any part of that wasteful culture.

I was saying, Mr. Chairman, that in relation to your question of public transport, the time has clearly come for a serious rationalisation. We need to agree in a non-partisan way to a system of public transport where we emphasise political concerns and where we look at the interest of the broad public. I am going to say where we behave pro bono publico, in the interest of the public, Mr. Chairman, the reality is this. In respect of public transport, there are stakeholders, competing stakeholders. They serve a serious public function, but they are competing stakeholders, unequally endowed. The Transport Board, as it said, is expected to carry a disproportionately heavy burden. It is owned by the public, financed by the public to serve the public, some of these other stakeowners came over through the trickle-down type thing and are helping the public up to a point but they are in for a profit.

The Transport Board needs to be assisted, Mr. Speaker, to go out there and compete on an even playing ground with the others. As I said, there are those who were permitted to operate the short routes. They more or less eliminated the Transport Board from the short routes. The short routes proved to be lucrative, but these people - and I am using people in the corporate sense - who lead these businesses. They really operate for profit. The Transport Board as much as it would wants a profit, finds itself having to carry very high costs, and having to serve routes which are unattractive to private interests.

I was about to mention that in the context of what my colleague, the Honourable Minister is proposing, the whole notion of a Transport Authority. A Transport Authority will seek to bring order, order from a legal perspective also order from a perspective of what is fair.

We need to agree in this country that we must have proper scheduling. In a situation where Jamaica

privatised public transport many years ago, scheduling suffered and chaos reigned supreme. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows that years ago Jamaica, I don't want to say took the bold step, took the wide and uninformed step to privatise public transport in such a way that even though I am not Jamaican, I went to a place called Mandeville and tried to leave Mandeville 6:00 o'clock one Saturday afternoon and could not leave. I went looking at bauxite country, looking to get fresh gear and such like and could not get back, because of their making no scheduling.

Mr. Chairman, we need also to have a system that is affordable to the travelling public. We boast of having close to 50,000 plus private cars owned by private individuals in Barbados. Notwithstanding that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy says that things are in order in St. Lucy, yesterday between half past six and half past seven, although the Honourable Member for I saw droves and droves of people at bus stops and had to help out a few with a lift, although I am not the MP for St. Lucy. He was not there. I understand he does not even go there.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James North is misleading the public when he said that I said the transportation system in St. Lucy is perfect. Further than that I said that there is a need for more Zrs because the public transport is not providing the service that it is supposed to provide.

11:10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is a small businessman who is an entrepreneur and I believe that when he makes up a case for the ZR owners that he does so in his capacity as a small businessman. I cannot accuse him of making self-serving statements.

Nonetheless, I am citing the Democratic Labour Party's (DLP) Manifesto of 1986 which I believe is already a document of this Honourable House. It says in reference to public transport that a Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Government would:

Introduce measures to improve efficiency in public transport;

Reduce subsidies to the Barbados Transport Board; and

Introduce continuous review procedures to improve public transport.

In the context of the clear need to improve public transport, I welcome the proposed Barbados Transport Authority which has clearly to deal with scheduling, pricing and route rationalisation. At the same time it has to deal with the whole question of how fair and equitable the playing field is laid where you might get one entrepreneur, sometimes not even a driver or conductor but a professional like a lawyer, who invests in a fleet of 12 or 15 ZR vans. If he has 15 vans, 14 of them travels from Bridgetown to Rendezvous and he does not send the 15th from Bridgetown to Chapel in St. Philip.

At the same time we have to be imaginative. Under a Barbados Labour Party (BLP) administration, we have seen more routes come into existence reflecting a fact that buses have locks and gasoline. I remember years ago in the days of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) where St. John used to get a bus at 6:00 a.m., 1200 noon and at 300 p.m. and St. John was represented by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP).

We in the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) have taken into account that buses have locks and petrol and therefore they can go to a lot of different places. I have heard small people in Barbados not only welcoming the very imaginatively introduced City Circle route but also proposing that buses go up and down hills and vales in situations where there is a demand for their services but where not even the Barbados Transport Board is available.

I am disturbed that those private sector operators of the so-called private service vehicles have their own notions of up-times and down-times which may not be congruent to the notions of the Barbados Transport Board, but expect the Barbados Transport Board to take on the sacrifice of serving routes that they are unwilling to service at certain times and then the Barbados Transport Board because they are being constrained is not available either so that there can be instances where people are left stranded, where they cannot afford to buy a car or to pay taxi fares and such like.

Speaking on the whole question of taxis. When the taxis, be there ordinary cars, maxi taxis or ZRs, we have to look at a regime - and I believe this is what the proposed Transport Authority is all about - to govern them not only as far as pricing is concerned but also in relation to ethics onboard and who should qualify for what licences and things like that. These are funny times.

There are people involved in transport - even transport at sea - who may be abusing the terms of their licences by transporting the wrong people and in the context of transporting drugs, the wrong substances. It cannot be fair that a responsible agency involved in public transportation can arrogates to itself rights to transport drugs and in the process offer the drugs to innocent school children onboard that can only adversely affect them, other school children, the school, parents and society. All of these things I am sure will be addressed by the proposed Barbados Transport Authority.

My understanding of the proposed Barbados Transport Authority is that it is not some monopoly nationalising every unit and component within public transport but an authority with a legal regulatory function ensuring that the wider interests of the public are served and that where there are competing interest among those who provide the service that rationalisation should so occur that one group or one agency is not treated unfairly and another agency allowed to profit.

I do not want to talk politics because I am asking for a non-partisan approach to public transport but there has been a time in this country when although there were problems then, some Government took a step to more or less give the shorter routes to private sector interest not realising that in a matter of five or six years, it would have a severe impact on the Barbados Transport Board and on the community. That happened in this country where some Government - and it certainly was not this Government - decided to give away the short haul routes to private sector interest in circumstances where these private sector interests then decide that short routes were the way to go for private people leaving the burden to the Barbados Transport Board to go into St. John, St. Philip and Eastern Christ Church and such like.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I will now ask the Honourable Member to conclude.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am very supportive of everything under this Head. I welcome the approach by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to this whole exercise. I see efficiencies emerging. I see wastage being controlled. I call on all Barbadians to ensure that although a lot of agencies within this Head are fundamentally important like the Barbados Water Authority, the Barbados Transport Board and others that Barbadians should not only make use of their services and appreciate what is being given but should also be made to pay for them.

I am alarmed and horrified that so much money is owed to the Barbados Water Authority in a situation where those debtors would dare not owe the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

The Honourable Member for of St James North in his presentation yesterday evening asked that when I come back to the House today if I could give the House a clear indication of what are the functions of the proposed Barbados Transport Authority.

The draft paper here states that the function of the Authority shall be to:

Advise the Minister on all matters related to the transport system in Barbados;

Undertake planning for the needs of public transport;

Monitor and regulate the operations of the public transport system;

Publish current information on public transport services;

Perform such acts as the Minister determines and to report to the Minister at such times as he requires on matters to which the Act relates;

Acquire lands solely by the way of lease to affect the business of the authority;

Provide, maintain, operate and develop the terminals and facilities in Barbados as it considers necessary or desirable in relation to the exercise of any of its functions; and

Generally carry out the functions of the Act and to do all other things which in the opinion of the Board are necessary to facilitate the proper discharge of the business of the authority.

Without prejudice to that section, the authority shall:

Promote the use of public transport;

Develop standards in respect of public service vehicles;

Approve all routes, permits and licences;

Prepare and publish routes and schedules; and

Maintain a computerised public transport data base.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Transport Board at the present moment is having some serious losses. Serious to the extent that the Barbados Transport Board recorded operating losses of \$12.5 million in 1995 - 1996; \$11.9 million in 1996 - 1997; \$18.2 million in 1998 - 1999. Subsidies given to the Barbados Transport Board by the Government were: \$1 million in 1995 - 1996; \$25.8 million in 1996 - 1997; \$10 million in 1997 - 1998; and in 1999 - 2000 they have requested a subsidy of \$24 million.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister said to the Barbados Transport Board that before any other monies are given to them they have to show a new policy position on the organisation.

11:20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

At this present moment, we are looking at the restructuring of the complete Transport Board.

The Honourable Member for St. John in his presentation talked about the Transport Board and Government subsidising the Transport Board and also about UCAL. I want to say that some time last year the Transport Board had owed UCAL a large amount of money but the Transport Board managed to secure a loan from the Barbados National Bank to clear off that outstanding loan.

Right now the Transport Board is paying on a weekly basis the monies to UCAL. I would say we probably have an outstanding amount for them but we hope that with any restructuring of the Transport Board we would be able to clear off this amount that is owed to UCAL. How the arrangement is at the present moment with UCAL and the Transport Board, we are not happy with everything that is happening but we have said under any restructuring that will be taken care of also.

The Transport Board has ordered some 110 buses. Out of that 90 buses are coming out of Brazil and the other 15 smaller buses are being built by ACME Manufacturing Company in Barbados.

Last month we received 40 buses for the Transport Board and of those 40 buses I think nine of them were deployed to the Transport Board's most popular route, the Speightstown to Oistins route. Another nine or ten were deployed on the Bayfield route and the Sam Lord's Castle route. Early next month the Transport Board should have the full number of buses that are coming out of Brazil.

Aside.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

The Manager of the Transport Board has just sent a note to me that the remaining buses are now being offloaded at the Port so the Transport Board will be in a position, very shortly, to have the required amount of buses to service the country.

Now, the member for St. Lucy talked about the Transport Board as opposed to ZRs. Now, we know that the private service vehicles have a role to play in the transport system in Barbados but, at the same time, they have to function in a decent and orderly manner in the way they operate.

We have complaints day by day about the way these drivers, I am not saying the owners, function but when the owner of a vehicle can give a bus to a driver to operate and say to the driver of the bus, "I want \$300 out of this per day and the rest is for you," the driver of that bus is going to do all kinds of things on the road. He does not care who he runs over in order to make his money. Until they can get themselves together, they will have no more recognition from the Ministry. As I said today, I am not happy with the way they are behaving. I do hope that when the new authority comes in force that something would be done about them.

The other matter I wanted to mention is this. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy talking about concrete roads. Yes, the Prime Minister of Barbados some time late last year around November/December made a presentation at the Arawak Cement Plant in St. Lucy. He did say that he was offered a package from the management down there of financing as well as being in a position to supply enough concrete to put some concrete roads in Barbados.

We have a subcommittee formed involving the Minister of Social Transformation, the Minister of Agriculture and myself to look at the possibility of having concrete roads in Barbados. We are also looking at having a pilot project in the tenantry areas to start building these concrete roads in the tenantry areas. We decided that would be the best place to put them because the tenantry roads are just mud tracks and if we are putting roads in there we can experiment with the concrete roads and see how these concrete roads go.

Now, I want to touch on another matter raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I can remember when I was sitting on the Back Bench that I received a letter from the Chief Technical Officer, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, asking to submit names of roads in the constituency that I would like to have done. I can safely say that since I became Minister that a similar letter has been sent out to all members of Parliament, no matter what side of the fence they sit on, asking to submit a list of roads.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy saying that he is not going to submit any list to have any roads fixed in his constituency.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I said that from the time I was a Member of Parliament, since 1994, that I have been getting a letter every year. I have been responding and up to now nothing has happened.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I am hearing now that they never received it. How come the depot in St. Lucy has a copy of the letter and I never sent it to them but yet still the Ministry never received it. The problem is, Mr. Chairman, that the Ministers took the letters and used them for their personal businesses and the technocrats within the Ministry have not been allowed to function. Now I understand what is happening.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that as long as he submits his list of roads that we will not be able to offer him all at one time but we will make sure that some kinds of roads will be done for him.

The Honourable Member is talking about having roads fixed but when the present Attorney General was in Opposition and the Democratic Labour Party was in power, he did not have one single road done in his constituency in the seven or eight years.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy also spoke about the asphalt and the emulsion. What happened in the past, when Mobil was in Barbados, they were in a position where they produced the asphalt, the bitumen and also the emulsion that were used in the roads. I want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that when we started to get the asphalt from Trinidad, it was of a different grade and when it came into Barbados then it was clogging up the machine that was being used there and we had to invite the personnel from Trinidad to come and sort out the matter. That has been sorted out and we have no problems now with that and are able to continue our programme.

Now the other matter I want to touch on what the Honourable Member for St. John raised as the 'jambusting' situation. It is sad to say that we used the word 'jambusting' but I suppose everybody knows and calls it the jambuster. Before it was introduced, we had people from all sides of the fence sitting on it. We had members of the Police Force and other advisors. We sat together at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and looked at the possibility and the why and wherefores the positive and the negative sides of it. A Paper was sent to Cabinet and when it was introduced the roundabouts on the Highway were using one method of flow of traffic and the other roundabouts were using another method.

11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

The method on the ABC Highway is that when traffic is going straight, when it gets to the roundabout, there are two lanes. The left lane can go straight or turn left and the right lane will turn right or go straight. The roundabout at Collymore Rock, when you are coming straight from Bridgetown you take the left lane and you can go straight or you can go left. You use the right lane for going right only. As I said, that roundabout is the only one that has that method and the ABC is used left or right, going straight or turning right as the case may be.

It is sad that recently we had some pronouncement from a police official who talked about the jam-buster and that something should be done about it. As I said earlier, the police had a representative on the committee and I do not believe that Mr. Brereton was the representative at the time. I do believe that the statements that he has made recently has been made on his own volition and not as being part of that committee.

Mr. Chairman, I want to go back a little now to the work that we are doing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

You only have one minute to go back.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I will sit now and come back and start that section. Thank you.

Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to debate on this very important Head. Since my short time in elective politics I have learnt that a few things rank among the highest priorities on the minds of constituents. Roads rank perhaps at the top followed by housing and by employment. I, myself, have inherited a constituency that has been neglected in a big way by the Democratic Labour Party and one of the things that I find myself having to deal with is the poor state of the roads which characterises the constituency of St. Philip South.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to have a Ministry of Public Works and Transport over the last year and a half or so responding to the numerous requests by my constituents directly and, in some cases, by myself on behalf of my constituents to come to the rescue, so to speak, and to improve that aspect of our infrastructure.

I think I should take this opportunity to thank publicly the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and also the local team at the depot at Six Cross Roads. The guys there have been doing some very good work for the constituency.

We are fortunate in the road overlay programme to have two major stretches of road being looked after

in the constituency. One such stretch runs from Six Roads to Woodbourne as part of the package from Six Roads to Searles and it is a lovely piece of road. The second stretch of road which is under rehabilitation at the moment runs from the Crane to Rock Hall.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party administration has taken a very important step in trying to deal with the deteriorated state of the roads in Barbados. These Estimates reflect the level of priority which has been accorded to the road programme. If you look at 510 under Highway Construction and Maintenance Services the allocation for Structures is \$14 million in the next financial year and that is an increase on the amount for the current financial year which stood at \$7.75 million.

When we turn attention to the Residential Road Construction and Maintenance Service programme we also see an increase there at the tune of about \$500 000. Also included in the Estimates this year is a special highway rehab project in which about 20 or so stretches of road will be rehabilitated and an amount of \$5 million has been allocated for that purpose.

Mr. Chairman, I must applaud the Minister of Public Works at this time again because in two of these programmes he has once again responded in the affirmative to the requests of the constituents of St. Philip South. I have been told that within the residential road programme, an area in the constituency that is very dear to my heart which was totally neglected by the Democratic Labour Party will gain the benefit. It is an area that until my entry into elective politics there were little or no street lights. It was part of the dark ages. The main road running through Gemswick remained in a terrible state of disrepair and the Minister of Public Works, recognising the plight of those loyal folks in Gemswick, has decided to include the main road in Gemswick in his residential road programme. I want to hold him to his word and I would like to see action on that very important stretch of road in Gemswick during the next financial year.

I must also add that repairing the road in Gemswick will not only be good for the folks of Gemswick themselves but since the Minister of Transport has just told us about the hundred odd new buses which have been procured by the Transport Board and some of those new buses go into the Gemswick area it would place less pressure on those new buses in the form of wear and tear.

Mr. Chairman, as I have just said, the depot in my constituency, and it lies at the centre of economic activity in the constituency, has been servicing both the constituency of St. Philip North and South very well. I must make a case for the depot at Six Roads because while they are willing to perform much better, their efforts have been thwarted at the moment by the lack of equipment. I would want the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, as it seeks to perform more efficiently to make more equipment available to all the depots so that we could have the staff complement at these depots a bit more active.

There are a number of concerns I have, nevertheless, even though the public works depots have been performing well. One such concern was raised yesterday. It has to do with the slow pace at which the grass, once the weeding is completed, is removed from the streets. I have been visiting areas in my constituency in recent times like Ruby and Union Developments and some of the workers there have been able to allow the residents in those areas to benefit from a widening of the street as a result of the weeding work which has been done in those areas.

11:40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000.

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, it is most unfortunate that after three weeks or so that work has not been completed. Up to this morning I was in that area and the grass still remains. They have weeded the grass and it really needs to be removed.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Of course that would not have been a problem years ago, as the Honourable Member for the City is saying. There was a time when we had the donkey carts and the donkey carts would go and the grass would be removed in quick time.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to encourage the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to pay attention to what might appear to be a small matter. It has to do with the signage in the country. We have a situation with signage where some of them are falling off, some of them have fallen off and some of them are turned up side down. I really think the Ministry of Public Works and Transport should take some time and check the state of the signage in the country.

I would also want to encourage the senior officials at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to seek public opinion in the localised areas before they come to a determination as to whether or not a roundabout is fitting for that area. We had the situation where on the stretch of road running from Crane to Rock Hall, a roundabout was planned for the Gemswick Junction and to facilitate that roundabout it required the removal of about 50 mahogany trees.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Yes, it is the Oldbury Woods that I am talking about. That area is a prime area for us to reserve in its natural state. It is an area which I have identified to be developed as a popular recreational area. We need to have it retain for a public park and that being the case a number of my constituents when hearing

about the wanton destruction of 50 mahogany trees, asked me to make contact with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport so as to have an aversion of that particular plan. We had a Town Hall meeting and there was general acceptance, even by the senior officials in the Ministry of Public Works, that the character of the corner should not be changed to facilitate any roundabout and what was required was just the removal of one mahogany tree to take some of the sharpness out of the bend and let us retain the wooded area so as to obtain our public park.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Yes, they have abandoned the plan for the roundabout. Mr. Chairman, I would just want to encourage the Ministry of Public Works senior officials to pay some attention to public opinion in the localised area so that all plans can proceed with the approval of all those concerns especially those who stand to benefit most from these things.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I would ask the Honourable Member to conclude.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, I must say a word about Government's policy of letting the two Commissions concentrate on the tenantry roads and free the Ministry of Public Works and Transport up so that they can get on with the rehabilitation of the main highways. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy mentioned yesterday that this might be an attempt to retard the progress which we are looking to make in dealing with the tenant's roads in the rural constituencies. Mr. Chairman, I would want to say at this point in time that quite to the contrary. This is the Government's response...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House once again. I said yesterday, Sir, that now that MTW do not have to build tenantry roads that there should not be a problem in this country with potholes. That is the point I made, I never said anything else.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy seems to be suffering from a bout of amnesia. Mr. Chairman, I was about to say that I think it is a step in the right direction to relieve the Ministry of Public Works from that type of work so that the tenantry roads can be looked after at a faster pace but what concerns me is when I look at the allocation coming to Rural Development Commission is that we have been asked to take on more responsibility but what is required for us to fulfill that mandate in a meaningful way would be more funds and I do not see the funding coming to Rural Development Commission for its road programmes which would allow it to fulfill its role in that respect in an efficient way.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for allowing me to make this intervention.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for recognising me at this time. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport over the years have been doing a reasonably good job. I believe that my four years spent at Transport and Works was very exciting and it is my belief that officers who work at that Ministry do perform a very creditable service.

Mr. Chairman, however, there are a number of challenges facing that Ministry which I would want to deal with at this time. The first challenge that faces the Ministry of Public Works and Transport is the challenge of inheriting for years, bad structure of roads. There are a number of roads in Barbados that were developed over time without proper structure. There were cart roads and these roads have to be developed as time goes on. Most of the roads in Barbados, because of a historical perspective, cannot accommodate the large vehicles that we now have on our streets. They cannot accommodate the wide vehicles or these fast vehicles and therefore, the challenge facing the Ministry of Public Works and Transport is to make better roads. That is why in this year's Estimates the Prime Minister has insisted that the Ministry looks primarily at the maintenance of roads and allow new roads in the tenancies to be handled by the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

Another challenge facing the Minister is that of drainage. There are still problems in drainage although a drainage unit has been set up. Every year we have drainage and especially in the wet months we find that there is a lot of flooding in the low area. I believe that the Drainage Unit at this time, having been in operation more than three years now should by now put forward a comprehensive review of those areas that Government will have to relocate. I am not sure that the Drainage Unit has provided us with a full comprehensive review.

11:50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

I am not sure that the drainage units have provided us with a full comprehensive review of those areas that need to be relocated. For example, I speak of Gills Road in St. Peter. I speak of Charles Rowe Bridge in St. George or the City area. My feeling is that something has to be done with drainage. For example, in some part of the City, St. Michael area, you find that water is lying all over the place and there is no rain, so something has to be done.

I think the chief technical officer should be empowered to prosecute those persons who put water from their homes onto the streets. It is a bad thing. I know traditionally that has been the thing in the St. Michael area, but persons must control the water coming from their homes onto the streets and that is a problem that has been inherited. We have to look at it.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the greatest challenge facing that Ministry is one of traffic management. I believe firmly there are too many cars on the roads. I know this is a modern society and everybody wants to have a car. Let us analyse this whole thing. Right now in stock at the garages: Simpson Motors, Detco, Quality Motors and all the others, there are over 1 000 cars and if you go to the Port you have another 500 in stock. Where are we going to put all these cars? You have another 2 000 that should be coming on the road, plus the reconditioned cars and vehicles on the road.

In some societies like Bermuda there is one car per family and the others have to drive a scooter. Something has to be done. I believe, that the Traffic Management Division of that Ministry needs to look carefully at our Manifesto.

Our Manifesto commits the Government to a four-lane Highway and also an overpass at the Lears Junction as a means of starting the programme. One cannot get to work today in Barbados unless you start out by 6:00 a.m. if you want to get to work at 800 a.m. During the day, you cannot come into the City, so we need a comprehensive review on how we will manage not only the 'Jambuster' because we have heard a lot about that. We need to say how we are going to manage the cars and the heavy vehicles into the City.

In some developed societies, Mr. Chairman, sometimes during the day some vehicles are prohibited from going certain parts within the City areas or the town centre area. For example, in Canada you cannot travel on the bus lane between 4:00 p.m. and 600 p.m. or between 800 a.m. and 900 a.m. I am saying that the Traffic Management Division of the Transport and Works Ministry needs to come up with innovative programmes. I am not sure that it is as innovative as it should be, but we need more programmes coming out as to how we are going to manage traffic in Bridgetown and in Barbados in general.

There are some people who are of the view that we should have more parking areas in the greater Bridgetown. For example, some people believe there should be a great parking area at the Norman Niles roundabout or at Wildey where persons will park their cars and then shuttle into Bridgetown, that may be a possibility but it is very expensive because it means you will have to reintroduce trains or introduce large buses into Bridgetown. We have to be innovative. We may very well have to stop cars coming into Bridgetown. For Example between Collymore Rock and Bridgetown, you cannot pass anymore. The Minister may very well have to look at a one way lane in that area.

Mr. Chairman, I also feel that another challenge that is facing that Ministry is the Licencing Authority. In today's society you will find that a number of cars are still on the road and they are not paying the road tax. It seems to me that we continue year after year to do the same thing.

Again, in the developed societies - and the Chief Technical Officer must look and see what is happening in other societies - they are colour coded so that the licence plates for this year will not be the same for next year, different colours and so on. I believe that we need to look at the licencing of vehicles, so that there needs to be greater coordination between the Public Works Ministry and the Police so that persons who do not pay their road tax could be easily detected. Right now it is the hardest thing and the only way you find that a person has not paid his road tax, is when he has an accident and he cannot produce the Certificate of Compliance. So that is a challenge facing the Ministry that we to address and address very carefully.

Another challenge facing the Ministry is that of relocating persons when new highways must be instituted. In my constituency for example, at Constant, I believe if greater planning was done, the residents would not have to wake up one morning and find a bulldozer in front of their homes.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

We understand. We like the roads and it is good but after a year persons are still waiting to be relocated and that is not fair. I believe it is a World Bank programme, yes, but the Ministry must tell the residents what is happening to them. We have persons who are now renting and I think the Ministry needs to, and we are all in this, set out a programme. You cannot be renting a person for 18 months at \$1 000 a month for one individual, something is wrong so we have to address that. The residents at Dash Valley and Constant need to know what is happening in their lives.

Mr. Chairman, I know that in my constituency they tell me that I have a lot of roads. I am very thankful for the Ministry because I got a lot of roads between the last five years but we need more. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we have more than 20 bad tenantry roads in St. George. We have five at Bridge Cot.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

Right. There is an old road at Walkers which needs to be addressed as well as locus Hall. I have seen a lot of work up there for the rehabilitation of roads. It has to be done. We have to widen the roads because we have new buses.

Mr. Chairman, the road at St. Augustine was to be cut for the past four years. I am waiting very patiently. I am getting a lot of cursing from the people at the Church.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

Yes, even the church. At St. Augustine Church they tell me the rocks are now coming down and they

have set back the graves for a number of months now. The church people have said to me that I am no use. They do not understand what is happening.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

For four years, Mr. Chairman, so we need to get that road cut and the road widened at Market Hill corner as well. There needs to be road widening also at Flat Rock.

12 Noon

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

My constituents are really on me. We have the worse roads in St. George. Mr. Chairman, there are still people walking on dirt tracks.

Aside:

Hon. A. P WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order,

the Honourable Member is misleading the House when he says that St. George North has the worse roads in Barbados. He knows very well that St. Philip as a parish has the worse roads in this country.

Mr. Chairman: At this point I will ask the Honourable Member to conclude.

Hon. G. A. Clarke:

To conclude?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, to conclude, your fifteen minutes are up. You can return for our second fifteen minutes if you want to.

Hon. G.A. Clarke:

Mr. Chairman, there is no dispute whatsoever. The Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry knows that St. George has not only the big-gest tenantries, but we have people still walking on line and retreats, walking through lines three feet and so on, mud tracks, changing two and three pairs of shoes, despite the fact we got a lot of help. I am thankful and I always work with the depots. I must say I have worked with the depots. Golden Ridge had a beautiful depot, a good depot, nice workers but at least I want something done, within the next couple years, about the twenty roads that I have listed to the Minister. I thank you and I shall return.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN:

I thought that I was fairly visible in here but it is quite obvious that I am not visible, Sir. My position is that I just want to clarify a few things because in my opinion, listening to the Opposition, there are some misconceptions in relation to the Transport Authority. There are also some other misconceptions that need to be clarified.

My understanding of the Transport Authority is much the same as the Honourable Member's for St. James North. There is a fundamental distinction between economic regulation and other regulation. As I understand it, the Transport Authority will be responsible for some of the functions which are now carried out by the Licensing Authority, and some of the functions which are carried out by the Ministry of Transport and Works in relation to licencing - the standards, safety, control of licences and control of licenced drivers and things of that kind. I understand economic regulations, in the sense of fare setting, will be the primary responsibility of the Transport Authority.

As I understand it, a decision has to be made with respect to whether that is assigned to the Transport Authority or to be treated in the same manner as a public utility. These are matters that no doubt in the fullness of time, when we see the Fair Trading legislation relating to the regulation of public utility, and also when we see the Transport Authority, we will discover whether it is to be assigned to the public utility regulation or to the Transport Authority. That is the contribution I would like to make in that respect.

With respect to other matters which are of great importance to me, everybody knows that Route 13 is one of the most lucrative routes of transport in Barbados. Every day I travel on Route 13 to Bridgetown. I want to say that I would invite any member of this House and the Opposition to travel that route regularly to see the behaviour of some of the ZR vans on that route.

No attention is paid to the rules relating to safety, overtaking, stopping, all of those things, Sir. It is a classic example of some of the obnoxious features of unregulated transport. I welcome the return of the Transport Board in that area. Day after day I receive from my constituents, particularly the older ones, petitions and requests for the return of the Transport Board. They say their nervous system cannot stand

travelling of the ZRs. That is what they say. They write me and tell me that. They say their nervous system cannot stand it. Many of them prefer to hire a taxi rather than to travel by the ZRs. I would like to congratulate the Transport Board on their decision to come on that route. I am sure there are other routes in Barbados where a similar situation exists.

One of the good things, Sir, that has been happening recently in relation to the ZRs and Transport Board and so forth, is that I am detecting a recognition by the organisations which represent ZRs that they themselves recognise that the public is fed up with some of the bad eggs who operate the ZRs, and that if they themselves do not discipline them, it would be done to the detriment of the ZR as an industry.

I have members of ZR owners as well as ZR drivers in my constituency. They come to my constituency office and tell me that they recognise that they must do something themselves, if not they will lose. So I want the Government as a matter of public relations, to publicise that fact. There is a lot of misunderstanding that the Government intends to abolish ZRs. That is foolishness. I never heard of that yet. The Government should give full encouragement to the efforts of the associations that represent ZRs to discipline their own bad eggs. I am sure that the Minister in his usual bold manner will make that note.

12:10

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:

The Minister has very quickly built up a reputation as a screen star. I hope that the next opportunity - which I know will not be in the distant future - that he gets to talk on television or on the radio that he would make that point.

My favourite other area is the question of drainage. Now, we have had some progress after a lot of effort, a lot of writing, a lot of pleading and a lot of beseeching of the Ministry dealing with the peculiar problems of drainage in Goodland, Maxwell and St. Lawrence. We have made some progress. I think this year is probably a record year for well cleaning. I do not believe that the Honourable Member for St. George has recognised that.

My understanding of the position ... and I am very much in contact with the Drainage Unit, not necessarily always friendly contacts because sometimes very frank exchanges takes place and my views as to their competence or otherwise is made very clear but I must say that they seem to have speeded up their work and the records would indicate, no doubt when the Minister reply, what has happened.

This is a continuous problem. If they clean the drains as they have done last year and they are doing still now we will have no problem when it comes to drainage. I am very glad to see that they are doing quite a bit of work at the time when it should be done, that is in the dry season. If they do not monitor it

continuously, they would get back into the same position in which they were.

The whole of Maxwell - and I have lived there all of my life - is a peculiar area because there were a number of ponds in Maxwell which took the water from Silver Hill, Kendal Hill and all of those areas. I have seen some crazy people who have been building - I do not know how they got the planning permission - very very near to the major pond at Deal Garden. I hope that we do not have a major rainfall before something is done to ensure that the encroachments on that pond are removed.

The same thing occurred on parts of Dover. I know there is a specific scheme for the Bridgetown/Speightstown/St. Lawrence redevelopment. I always felt that was a mistake. It should have been Bridgetown/Speightstown/Oistins/Maxwell/St. Lawrence. Special schemes have been devised I believe for the Dover area and I would like to see it speeded up. There used to be a pond in Dover. Cable and Wireless used to have a mast on it. Somebody bought the land and fill it up so that the water that comes from all around Dover cannot drain there anymore. I am looking forward to that scheme being implemented and the continuous monitoring of what used to be called the salt pond area between Maxwell and Dover.

The last point I will like to make on this question of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport is this. It is like a recurring decimal. That is, there are a great number of people working in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Some have excellent qualifications, such as technical, university and things like that. There are a lot of people who are trained in-house and there is a strong feeling that the technicians who are trained in-house are not being treated fairly. There ought to be some internal human resource regulation where people who go in there and are trained will know how to get promoted. Passing exams apparently is not only enough because they have their own internal exams which you have to pass but the question of selection and promotion is a grave concern.

Now, if the Ministry of Public Works and Transport wishes to have the best production from its supervisors I believe that transparency in that area should be obvious. I understand that the workers get their training. The workers themselves say they get the training but they do not know how to get promoted, what they have to do to get a promotion and what performance targets they have to achieve. All of that criteria should be made known because that is a sore point. I have got too many letters on it.

I do hope that every effort is made within the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in its management to ensure that maximum productivity prevails. I believe that we voted a lot of money for that department and all of it is not well spent. That is my belief. Some of the designs criteria ... I am not an engineer but I do not think I am foolish, and as the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has said, it is a mystery to me why you should have a roundabout at that corner in St. Philip like there is a mystery to me why they should have a roundabout at St. Patricks. There is a theory that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport love the roundabouts and they designed them and whenever they get an excuse we will have one.

Within a Ministry as large as that, they should have some critical reviews of their own designs particularly if those designs come from outside consultants because once you pay a consultant on a percentage basis they have no incentive at all to save money.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by commending Government for its commitment of well over \$50 million for its road maintenance and road rehabilitation programmes. This year, I do envisage an assault on many of what we term bad roads in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I know I have the greatest confidence in the Minister responsible for Public Works and I know that he is going to make sure that the road from Ebenezer, St. Philip that goes up to Chapel will be worked on this year. That road has been nicknamed 'Abortion Road'. Mr. Chairman, I would not want to describe on the Floor of this House very graphically how it got that name but the roller coaster effect did cause something to happen. It is the worst road in Barbados. I have written no less than 15 letters to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport about that road. To date, nothing has been done on it but I know that something is going to be done on it this year.

Mr. Chairman, when you get to the junction by St. Philip and you turn right to go to Six roads, that road too makes you feel as if you are in air pockets, it has that effect on you. Mr. Chairman, I know that something is going to happen to those roads. They cannot continue so any longer. There are too bad.

Mr. Chairman, if you had to turn left and you had to go to Clifton Hill through Church Village - instead of going toward Three Houses Park you keep straight over the hill there - the problem there is that those people who lived on top of the hill very often have to walk over that hill with their heavy baskets and so on. That hill is extremely steep. When I walked it during the campaign, I was panting by the time I got to the top of the hill. Can you imagine, Sir, when those people have to go over there with those baskets? Now, the problem here is that the wall going up to the hill is narrow. The people living there have requested for the longest while that that wall be chipped away so that the bus can go over Clifton Hill so that they would not have to go over there with those heavy baskets.

12:20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

I am pleased to say, Mr. Chairman, that only a week ago I received a letter from the Minister himself writing to me to say that the equipment will be there shortly and that work will begin on the chipping away of that wall. I anticipate action.

Mr. Chairman, that road, the Station Hill Road going to Moncriffe lawyers would know that road very well, the people who go to the police station will tell you that road too is extremely bad. Don't talk, Mr. Chairman, of when you go to Three Houses Park and the whole question of Parish Land going up there and so on! You know what the problem there is now, Sir? The actual road is not 6 ft. wide because the edges, the two sides of the road, have fallen away and all you have now is a narrow piece of road that you cannot actually shun two vehicles, so when you reach a certain point and you see a vehicle coming, you have to put your car there, and stop and allow the other fellows to pass. I know we are going to get action up there. I have confidence, Sir, in the Minister responsible for Public Works. I believe when they do that road too that curbs have to be a must in those areas.

Mr. Chairman, Lucas Street, King's Park, those of you who have gone to King's Park recently know how bumpy that Lucas Street Road is. Those of you who have to come from Ruby to go across to Sandford know how bad that road is. I anticipate, as I said, some action from the Ministry of Public Works on this occasion. I wish that I could say, as an Honourable Member has said before me that he got a lot of roads done. I wish, Sir, that I was in that position today.

Mr. Speaker, River Land and Eastbourne - I must say that the Minister responsible for Public Works has his roots in River Land. He would know the condition of that road perhaps better than anybody else. He is a gentleman, Sir, of good St. Philip pedigree.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the reason why a lot of the roads have been in this condition, and I believe other Honourable Members have mentioned both reasons so far, first of all is the amount of vehicles that we have on the roads, the big ones, the cars, trucks and so on. A lot of the roads, perhaps, were not built to accommodate those heavy vehicles and St. Philip, I must say, does have its share of those big vehicles and cars. We have a tremendous amount of cars in that beautiful parish of St. Philip. A lot of the roads, perhaps, were not well done at the base of the roads. Some of them, as I said, maybe were not made for these vehicles and were made for the buggy, the cart, the horse and so on but not for the amount of traffic which we are having now.

I would even urge that if the Ministry of Public works wants to experiment with the concrete roads, they can take one or two from St. Philip and we can be the guinea pigs. We do not mind. If they want to experiment, we are willing to give them one or two from St. Philip for them to work on.

Mr. Chairman, the lack of paved roads in St. Philip is still causing some districts to be virtually isolated from bus routes. We get Padmore Village here, then you drive along a lonely road then you come to Lucas Street, then you go over to Sandford, then you go over to Vineyard and they find themselves in little pockets. Traditionally what used to happen is that the buses went along what they considered to be the main roads.

In this day and age I find that those villages which are more thickly populated tend not to be on the bus routes. What we used to think was the main road now, if you think about it, Vineyard is a classic example. The bus never went into Vineyard. Even now I am making a plea for the buses to go into Sunbury in St. Philip but there is a problem with widening the mouth of Sunbury for the bus to be able to turn into it. I would love to save some of those constituents as much as half a mile that they have to walk out to what they call the front to get the buses.

The bus route goes through Ebenezer now, when you come up to Brereton, you turn and go over to Carrington Hill out into Ebenezer now. That has meant a tremendous amount of difference because the bus route formerly was turning left before you got to the Brereton Village and you drove along a lot of road where you did not have a single house on. Now you are able to go up through the Village of Brereton, and it services a lot of houses.

Perhaps, Sir, the biggest disappointment which I am having now in terms of that particular situation is at Duncan's. I had written and the buses actually started to drive through Duncan's. Then they go through to Lucas Street and so on, because the road started to give way, the bus drivers said they were not going through there anymore.

Mr. Chairman, one of the worst things you could do is to give people a service like that and then take it away from them. If they did not have that service, I would not feel so badly but because of the poor condition of Duncan's road, the bus drivers now say they are not going through there anymore and the people are on my back every day. They had it and it has been taken away. I am asking for some help in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that those districts should be denied the opportunity of public transportation because of any bad roads. This is a point I am making, not only for St. Philip, but I think it is a national issue that certain communities are cut off because of bad roads when it comes to the bus service. I believe that as a Government we have a social responsibility.

I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church East used the term when he was speaking to bring along those communities which do not have the bus routes.

Mr. Chairman, in the few minutes left to me...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

You have two minutes.

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say, Sir, that there is a public perception, and this public perception is fairly widespread, that the Government workers, generally, do not extend themselves. That has even gone to the point where some school children, I believe, must begin to believe it.

The point I am making is that even when the Ministry of Public Works uses a private contractor to do their work, you get people commenting that the work is taking long because there is this widespread perception out there that once it is Government, it has to be slow.

12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

I do not necessarily agree with that, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has borne the brunt of that criticism because those people are visible. I have never yet heard anybody make the point that the hold up of the work is due to lack of equipment or the hold up of the work is due to the lack of material or because the work is technical or anything of the sort. Everybody always tries to get on the back of that particular Ministry.

Mr Chairman, I close by saying that I am not on their backs like that because I know that the demands on that Ministry are many. I know that the expectations of Barbadians where that Ministry is concerned are high. Road maintenance is not easy. We have a tremendous amount of road surfacing and road works to do and they have a serious mandate. I do not think that they are any different from any other workers even in the private sector because in the private sector we have people who work and some who shirk. In Government we have the same thing. I am not pointing my finger at any of the public workers. We will always have those who do an honest day's work and those who do not.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a brief intervention and be fairly parochial in my focus. I believe the expenditure associated with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport can be easily justified and is certainly very much appreciated. Whereas this Government will score high marks for its macro economic policy and programmes, certainly the issue of public roadworks and transportation are matters that keep governments connected with the people.

I believe as a responsible Government you want to stay connected with the people by serving their basic needs. I want to touch on a few matters especially relating to St. Michael West, my constituency. Before I do that, however, we have observed over the past day or so the result of a survey recently done which suggests that there may be some dissatisfaction with some aspects of the service of the Transport Board and I would not want to dwell on that. I believe the Minister and the Ministry will address those matters and the Transport Board staff.

From a personal perspective, I would like to commend the Transport Board bus driving staff. My experience over the past few years is that there has been a significant turn around in terms of the approach of the bus driving staff of the Transport Board.

Similarly, I would like to commend those who work in the charter section of the Transport Board. These are the two areas with which I have had some contact. The turn-around is very evident whereas in recent times we have encountered situations where bus drivers were abusive to each other and abusive to the paying public and abusive in the face of children, we have seen a level of courtesy and cooperation and indeed a level of accommodation by the staff that drive the buses as well as those who work in the charter service section and I think it would be remiss of me if I did not take this opportunity publicly to commend them and I would want to do so.

The Minister in his presentation made reference to the fact that utility companies inflict their own level of disrepair on our road surfaces. This is something that we have heard time and time again. Roads are resurfaced only to have utility companies while pursuing their legitimate activity leaving disrepair and associated cost in their wake. I do not know and I have not heard from the mouth of the Honourable Minister in his presentation if they are and, if so, what penalties can be applied or are applied to utility companies that are guilty of this type of delinquency - I would want to call it.

I personally was once in a position to witness the Hindsbury Road resurfaced, newly surfaced, when I lived on Hindsbury Road, only to my dismay the following day to see a utility company working on the road. It seems to me that better coordination should have offset that kind of obvious cost which would have been incurred. My concern would be the application of penalties for doing utility work and leaving the road in a state of disrepair.

I noticed that in the Minister's presentation he made reference to the rehabilitation of roads around the City and many of these touched on the St. Michael West constituency. We know that some of this road work will take place along Passage Road and at the junction with Baxters Road. I have a particular concern about that junction.

There is an obvious success story associated with the effort at Oistins with respect to vending activity at night, especially on weekends. I, myself, have been able to go there on some occasions to mingle with locals and tourists to enjoy the atmosphere and obviously I have never been in After Dark but I have been to Oistins after dark. I think there is an obvious success associated with that particular activity. I think there is also another successful instance, because it only happened once, associated with nightlife sporting activity at the lumber company pasture. What the constituents of St. Michael West are concerned about and have proposed is that the Baxters Road/Passage Road Junction which now carries a playing field and a pavilion be used for a fusion of those two types of activities - night-time sporting activity and economic activity of food vending.

All that would be required is the installation of floodlights on a very large playing field which can carry two cricket games at one time. This would also help to take care of some of the traffic congestion along Baxters Road.

I have also been to Baxters Road on many occasions at night and been a part of that activity and there is obvious traffic congestion. Perhaps Baxters Road/Passage Road presents a particular opportunity in that regard.

I am sure that the Honourable Member for the City has her own dreams and aspirations for the constituents of the City, a dream which perhaps will shortly become reality. We are hoping that whatever the dream and the reality associated with the City constituency somehow the Baxters Road/Passage Road Junction on the St. Michael West side could be tied into that.

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Continuation of Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

I notice also that traffic lights are to be installed at both ends of Passage Road and that Passage Road is to be made a two way street once again as it was previously. It obviously has to be widened but the Honourable Minister has informed that we are talking about project which would run into 2003. I have some concerns that relate to Passage Road as it exists right now. Constituents of Alleynes Land on the Passage Road side, the St. Michael West side are concerned about the movement of vehicles - taxis and emergency vehicles; ambulance - because there is a business providing an ambulance service on Passage Road and these vehicles, because Passage Road is now one way, make a short circuit through Alleynes Lane which is a very narrow road and a very dense populated. It is only a matter of time if this is not checked before somebody's child is seriously injured. There are emergency vehicles using that area, any hour of the day with sirens blazing disturbing people's rest. That is because Passage Road is now one way and people find it more convenient to divert through Alleynes Land to get back on to Bank Hall and into the White Park area. That is a concern that I want to voice on these people's behalf.

Mr. Chairman, with reference to the Eagle Hall market. I am glad that the market is being reconstructed and the whole area is being enhanced but I have some concerns about the availability of parking at the Eagle Hall corner when the market is finished and which we hope will be soon. I have some concerns about parking and I want to know if some consideration cannot be given to closing off Kings Gap on the Eagle Hall side.

Asides.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

It is a very short stretch of road. To closing off Kings Gap on the Eagle Hall side and perhaps just simply relocating a few houses to make space for additional parking and I also think, additional vending activity to enhance the opportunity being offered by the reconstructed market. That is a concern I want to voice with respect to the Eagle Hall market and the Kings Gap area.

Hindsbury Road also figures in the plans of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. One lady attended my church recently and I am not too sure if she came to listen to the word or to give a word because shortly after I had finished giving the word and I stepped outside she approached me and wanted to know if Roebuck Street was in St. Michael West, if Black Rock was in St. Michael West, if Hindsbury Road was in St. Michael West because all of these roads are in a terrible state of disrepair.

Asides.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

Parts of all of them are within St. Michael West. We are appreciative of the plans which are in train for the Hindsbury Road section, the Roebuck Street section and indeed, the Black Rock section of these

roads.

I have heard the Honourable Member made mention of the fact that about 60 houses along the stretch of Hindsbury Road are to be addressed in terms of the road re-construction and road repairs. Most of those houses are on the St. Michael West of the road as opposed to the St. Michael South Central side of that road. I have concerns as to the implications of the road works for people who live on Hindsbury Road on the St. Michael West side of the roadway.

Presently, as have been stated 18 000 vehicles use that stretch of road per day. It is a very busily travelled roadway. What we do notice that on the St. Michael South Central side, whereas the majority of dwellings are on the St. Michael West side on the St. Michael South Central side there is a developing business sector. I believe that suggest that you might be seeing an increased volume of traffic. That further justifies the need to address the problems existing along the Hindsbury Road.

I have spoken before several months in this Honourable House and I want to re-echo that call for something to be done on the Prescod Bottom area of Hindsbury Road.

Asides.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

In between Hindsbury Main Road and Prescod Bottom there is the Hindsbury Primary School and vehicles often traverse from Bank Hall through Prescod Bottom passing at the back of the Hindsbury Primary School. We have had incidences where children have knocked over - I have said that here before - because of public service vehicles using these roads, sometimes ZR off route come through there to avoid traffic especially on evenings. I have called already that attention be given to this matter and perhaps some sleeping policemen be installed along Prescod Bottom which might help to offset that kind of activity. I want to repeat that call.

Very quickly, Mr. Chairman, the matter of Headleys Land. People always very quickly refer to Headleys Land but the problem at Headleys Land is a problem of flooding and the problem of flooding needs to be address. There are some people who want to push the notion just as they do in St. Michael East, about the business of squatting. Squatting is not the problem at Headleys Land, the problem at Headleys Land is remedial work to avert the flood situation that occurs there from time to time. Squatting is only a secondary condition. All these years we have heard about flooding and only in recent times we hear people starting to talk about squatting. The problem at Bank Hall with reference to Headleys Land is first and foremost the flooding problem and not the squatting problem where one does exist in a very small way.

The problem at Headleys Land runs from Progressive Road, Holligan Road, Downy Gap, Brathwaite Gap, Mayers Gap, Skeetes Road - it is a Bank Hall's problem and not a Headleys Land's problem. We really long for the day when the work on the canal at Headleys Land should be completed. We appreciate the effort to widen the canal so that it provides and outlet of a sufficient width that allows for water to pass, quite the contrary as to what now exits on Headleys Land with a very narrow canal. We would hope that when this canal is finish that it is widened to the extent where it is twenty feet, where the flooding to some extent is relieve and address. This canal, twenty feet wide and of some length runs in between three residential area. It therefore would expose children to a danger and we would hope that

some consideration is given to that safety aspect of the remedial work to be done there. We would also hope that the place could be properly greened and green to such an extent and the remedial work, so effective, that it could provide an opportunity for the schools in the surroundings area to use it for environmental studies and studies on the work of bacteria. Perhaps people who are interesting in engineering could look at the work of the canalisation down there and that could be of benefit to them. We are asking, Mr. Chairman, that there be a meaningful turnaround in a situation as currently exists.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

Honourable Member we have one speaker before lunch. I would ask you to come again.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. TOPPIN:

Mr. Chairman, I decided not to rise until I heard my number call on this occasion. I am indeed grateful that you finally saw me.

My contribution is not going to be very long. I want to begin by complimenting the Minister for the very excellent presentation he made to the Honourable Chamber yesterday and the other contributions he made during the course of the debate so far. It is very important that this Ministry and Ministries like the Ministry of Social Transformation, Rural Development Commission and so on, it is very important that they get it right. These Ministries constitute what I refer to as the nut and bolts of Barbados development and existence. I am very pleased to see that the Honourable Minister has come to grip with his responsibility in such a very short period of time.

12:50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN:

I am pleased to see that the Honourable Minister has come to grips with his responsibilities in such a very short period of time. There are those who are very strong supporters of the other Party, who themselves have had to say that certainly he deserves an “A” for effort. He is certainly very busy as a Minister and the one point I wish to highlight about him is that I think I can now say that there has been a long overdue return to a sense of equity in the distribution of works to be done by his Ministry. I give him a hard time sometimes on this but I know that deep down inside he has a sense of fair play, as I say, it is a welcome return for that approach to the doing of things in the constituencies of the various representatives.

I think he should also be commended for recognising that Barbados’ road infrastructure has reached the stage where it is simply deplorable. It really was a situation that was untenable and could not reasonably be expected to continue any longer nor could it be done in two lanes. Therefore, the Honourable Member must be commended for bringing to this Parliament a set of solid proposals, properly costed, to ensure that over a period of time, sooner rather than later, systematically our road infrastructure is going to be improved.

I want to go on however to make just a few points in my contribution today. I want to first start on the issue of the ZRs and the minibuses.

This Government does not at all view this matter as one where there is or should be any confrontation between Government and the ZR owners and operators. We do not think it is a confrontation issue and in fact, I would simply say that if there is anyone or group who is behaving as though there is and should be confrontation in the matter, is the ZR operators themselves. What we on this side are simply interested in, is the preservation of law and order, that is all.

In the Ministry in which I preside, we recognise the importance of ZR operators and minibus operators as small business people. The Ministry is preoccupied on a daily basis with ensuring that proper programmes and policies are put in place to ensure that small businessmen can come into existence and thrive and survive. So we are not in any way aiming at the demise of the ZR or minibus culture. We recognise the important role that they are supposed to be playing in the provision of public transport for ordinary commuters.

What we are concerned about is the breakdown of law and order on the streets by the operators of the ZR vehicles and the minibus drivers, that is what we are concerned about.

I had the privilege one Saturday morning in my constituency, where I am every single Saturday morning as God sends, I had the benefit of hearing from the horse’s mouths the types of things that these fellows do and they sit and brag about it, they cut you out. If there is a ZR operator four or five vehicles behind them and you are in between the two of them, you cannot get past the one in front. He is not going to pull into the lay-by to let you pass. He does not want the other fellow behind him to get in front of him and get the passengers that he should be getting. They stop in the middle of the road, although

you provide the lay-by for them.

I believe also that a system of common sense and courtesy should prevail at all times and in all things. The ZR operation is no exception. If the rain is falling, you would not expect a ZR driver, if he can accommodate somebody by taking them a few feet beyond a bus pole to drop them off at a bus pole. In a situation like that, you can understand a little infraction here and there, in the interest of common sense and courtesy, but for no known reason at all, the fellows have decided that a bus stop means nothing to them whatsoever. It is just another piece of furniture alongside the road and they do not intend to comply with it.

Sir, I recognise too, as I said, that commuters who use the transport system, the travelling public, are not always privileged to own a vehicle so I recognise as well that they need the transport system but sometimes they themselves do contribute to the problem in the way in which they behave. For no known reason again, sometimes, they would choose not to go to the bus stop, but rather to stand maybe 40 or 50 yards away from the bus stop, so that the ZR operator, hell bent on not losing the revenue from that passenger, is going to stop both at the bus stop, pull off and stop again another 40 or 50 yards away from the bus stop to make the extra fare, clogging up the traffic, when the passenger could easily have placed himself at the bus stop so that law and order could prevail.

I believe that in circumstances such as those, there may be some scope for looking at penalising both the driver and the commuter in the interest of the preservation of law and order.

Sir, much talk was made of the issue of fair competition and the regulation of the public transport sector. I believe that some Honourable Members may have really gone too far and wide on it. Because the simple truth of the matter is that there is going to be a transport authority. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central will tell you the exact parameters and so on of it are not yet fully defined. The exact role is still being worked.

The current thinking is that the Fair Trading Commission will handle the economic regulation of the public ground transport sector but it is not yet cast in stone. In any event, if it is felt that the Fair Trading Commission should carry it, in view that it will regulate other service providers and utility providers, it may well be something that may well be short lived because, the fact of the matter is that it may well be possible to argue that the transport sector is now effectively competitive. Now, if that happens I would just want to say that the policy in relation to fair competition is one that promotes and protects competition, not competitors. There is no competitor who is to believe, no matter how small he is that he is going to be given any extra special privilege to compete in the Barbadian economy. You will recall I spoke earlier in this debate and I mentioned that fair competition legislation will ensure that every legitimate business enterprise will be given a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the Barbadian economy.

Sir, the ZR operator must not believe that with the advent of fair competition that there is going to be any special status conferred on him. Neither will any special status be conferred on the Transport Board either for that matter and all the arguments will be heard to determine exactly how the matter will be proceeded with. But as I said, it is not possible at this stage to speak definitively on it because the exact scope of the Transport Authority has not yet been trashed out and fully established.

Sir, I want to touch on another matter which I have found to be a sore point now for some considerable time and it relates to the question of speed limits.

1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN:

This Party, in a previous administration, saw it fit to construct an ABC Highway and to impose a certain speed limit on it., fifty miles per hour. The intention was to increase the efficiency in getting from point A to point B when you use that highway but there are those who see it as just another road and they proceed to get on the road and drive at fifteen and twenty kilometres an hour, delaying traffic for no known reason and preventing you from being efficient, as was the original intention, in getting from point A to point B along the highway. I, therefore, believe that on that road, it should also apply in relation to the Highway 2A roads that are vast, especially built for access and a bit more speed, we need to look at the issue of minimum speed limits along those highways. It is simply not good enough that someone can feel he has a right, as he does, to go on roads, especially built for that purpose of improving efficiency in transportation and then turn around and clog it up and defeat the very purpose for which the highways were built. So I think we need to look at that and I think we also need to look at the issue of those instructors who take learner drivers on the highways.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member has one minute to conclude.

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN:

I am now starting. They take learner drivers on the highway when in fact no-one should really think it prudent, either in the interest of the learner or the other travelling public, to carry a learner driver, before he has reached a certain stage of competence, to travel on a highway of that magnitude.

Mr. Chairman, I have run out of time. I have to touch on at least five other matters, including some constituency matters, and therefore I will return, thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The question is that I report progress to His Honour, the Speaker, and ask for leave to sit again. The Chairman reports progress and asks for leave to sit again.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Chairman, I too would like to lend my voice to this debate in this Chamber dealing with the Ministry of Public Works. Most of what was discussed this morning happened to be the area of drainage and since that is what is the problems that rest within the constituency of st. Michael North West, I would also like to talk about the problems facing st. Michael North West, and also the success or the help that had been given by the drainage unit as far as St. Michael North West is covered. It is a known fact that one of the flood-prone areas in st. Michael happens to be the very constituency of which I am talking about and which I represent.

Sometimes the residents in certain areas of that constituency are a bit concerned when there are weather reports in relation to rain or in case of flooding, the worries of the people of St. Michael North West are very strong at that time when those weather warnings are being heard. I am concerned in the sense that something should be done. Based on the fact that the Drainage Unit has only been established just a matter of two to three years ago. It has been doing some excellent work. In addition, I am looking at the component of the Drainage Unit and to ask the question if the component of the Drainage Unit is strong enough to meet the demands of Barbados.

In relation to the entire island, I think at times

the staff of the Drainage Unit is called out to work in areas such as the gullies of Barbados. I think in time the staff of the Drainage Unit is called out to look at certain situations in relation to the blockage of canals and the blockage of wells. Before I start to talk about the problems facing St. Michael North West, when I look at the component of the staff of the Drainage Unit, I have to ask if it is fully adequate enough to meet the demands of the problems facing Barbados.

What worries me is that from my observation of page 152 of the Estimates, I realise that you have a situation where there is only one technician. You only have one inspector of well. If you have a

situation where you have one technician and one inspector of wells there is no wonder that when you complain to the Drainage Unit for a problem that you are turned on so many occasions that you are faced with the situation of not knowing exactly where to go or what to do. Sometimes you have to ask the very Minister for assistance.

I think here is a situation with a perfect example where because there is one person in that position and there is one inspector of wells, then you have a very serious problem in relation to the work of the Drainage Unit. Further down you have a situation of 36 general workers and 64 heavy-duty workers. My position here that clearly somewhere along the line the provision of work, the dissemination of work to these people, would have to be hard in certain areas in getting things done. What I have also observed is that the component of the staff remains almost the same for the year 2000, as it was in the year 1999 - 2000.

1:10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

My major concern at this point is that with the amount of problems facing Barbados as far as drainage is concerned. We know for a fact that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport transcends many other Government departments. I will give you an idea what I am speaking about in this instance. Since the Ministry of Health happens to be concerned about the problem with the dengue fever and the Aedes Aegypti mosquito then this is an area where the Drainage Unit is practically involved as well. The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Health is actually concerned in that area and they have pledged to rid Barbados of the dengue fever and the Aedes Aegypti mosquito. This means that a lot of work would have to fall under the umbrella of the Drainage Unit.

We have talked a lot about roads here and the resurfacing of roads but one must fully understand that

we could talk so much about roads and we could repair the roads of Barbados but if the drainage is not right then water can seep under the very road that have just been resurfaced which in turn will cost the Government more money to repair that road.

From what I have seen here, I think the Drainage Unit needs to be looked at in a deeper context and the top brass of the Drainage Unit needs to be strengthened in order that work can be carried out speedily.

One of the things that we must also look at is whether there is an understanding between the Town Planning Department, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the Drainage Unit. We know for a fact that when it rains, if it rains on an open spot that is okay, but if a building goes up in that particular area more water is accumulated from the roof of that building than if it was from an open spot. We have seen many buildings going up in Barbados and in this case many areas seemed to be prone to a blockage as a result of this.

I am asking this question to the Minister of Public Works and Transport. Is there is a close marriage, a close understanding or some sort of agreement between the Town Planning Department and the Drainage Unit in relation to some of these places that approval has been given for buildings to be built on?

For example, if I take my area, St. Michael North West, within the last few months we had a very serious flooding problem in the area of Brighton which was so frightening to the point that the next day the rain fell people started to look for cover. What is even more frightening is that the Barbados Light and Power Co. Ltd. has built what we consider to be a power house in the area just outside of Quality Motors which is frightening in the sense that the water that fell on that night was just a matter of inches away from the power house. This is a very serious situation to the residents of Brighton.

I ran about that area as a youngster and last year was the first time in my life that I have seen that area in such a serious position where in between the Spring Garden Highway and Brighton we had water that was about eight to 10 feet high. This was very frightening insofar as the 'backup' of the water was concerned. Was a careful study taken in relation to the drainage problem in this area because it is also alleged that the placing of the Desalination Plant along the Spring Garden Highway and because of the ridge that has been built on the Spring Garden Highway which embraces the areas of Lower Black Rock, Brighton and Brandons, we have a situation where the water has no outlet and should there be a very serious flood in Barbados I believe that this area is prone to disaster.

I say that to say this, when you take the provision that has been made by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport at Brandons to release the water into the sea, then the question I have to ask here is, if there is an agreement between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in relation to the Drainage Unit there and the environmental position as far as Brandons is concerned.

I am wondering if this is a case where there is a protection of certain waters flowing into the sea. I am only asking that.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member has kindly given way. Within the Ministry of Health there exists an entity called the Environmental Engineering Department that would normally deal with the matter that the Honourable Member is speaking about. Sometimes the word 'environmental' appears but it is not always in the Ministry of Environment.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Chairman, as I continue on that path, the matter of concern at Brandons is the fact that provision has been made for the outlet of the water from the canal that runs along that area there just outside of Brandons. What we have observed as residents and as the parliamentary representative is that they put the big tractors to clear the bunk on the beach and hours after that tractor move from there, the canal is blocked again because of the sand wash and as a result of that there is no movement in the canal again.

I could attest to the fact that water has remained in that canal for months on top of months creating a problem for the residents within that area in terms of the dengue problem. I am asking the Minister responsible to pay close attention to that area. I have reasons to believe that the problem with the bunk there relates to an engineering problem because if one should take a site visit and look at it, one could see that no provision has been made for the outlet of water.

They have given us what we could consider to be 6 inch and 10 inch holes in certain places for water to escape and it is obvious that if a coconut shell goes into that area then it becomes a blockage. I am asking the Minister responsible to look at the problems facing the outlet of the water between the sea and the inland area of Brandons. As I have said earlier, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport built a canal between the area of Fernihurst, Deacons and Small Land, Bridge Gap. This is a matter of concern. It is now almost four years that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport attended to that job at that area which I just mentioned. Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that after all of these years, this still remains an unfinished job. I have been appealing to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to have a look at it.

The reason why I have been appealing to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to look at it is that you could clearly see that the blockage of the canal is caused by the soil falling into the canal. You could look at it clearly and see that a hole which has been dug by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport is dangerous to the people from within the area and even more dangerous to the students of the Eagle Hall Primary School.

For four years, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport went into this particular area attempting to build a canal which would have led the water from the area of Black Rock - Bamboo Gap to be exact - over to the canal in the area of Goodland. Somewhere along the line this is going to be a very serious threat to the residents of that area because with an unfinished canal and heavy rainfall in the area, it is going to be disastrous.

I am appealing to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the Drainage Unit to have a look at those two problems which I have just mentioned.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has got one minute.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Chairman, I must tell you that I will be back. I just want to say very quickly as I continue that one of my concerns as far as the Drainage Unit is concerned is Deacons Road. Deacons Road has a very serious drainage problem but I do not know what has caused the blockage there. I believe this is a matter for the engineers.

2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

From what I have been saying, I would like to go back to the top and wrap up. If there is such a demand for the Drainage Unit in relation to the problems facing not only St. Michael North West, then the top brass staff at the Drainage Unit needs to be looked at again given the room, that when people complain to the Drainage Unit there could be someone there that could answer their problems.

In closing, I believe I should be back because there are other matters in relation to drainage, Sir. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

HIS HONOUR J.M. EDGHILL:

Mr. Chairman, I too would like to add my weight to this debate here this afternoon. I would like, first of all, to commend the Government as well as the Minister for attempting to do a good job when one realizes that there is a lot to be done in relation to many of the roads in Barbados.

It is also interesting to see that in this year's Estimates something like \$58 million has been allocated for road projects, and somewhere in the vicinity of \$7.7 million has been allocated for drainage.

However, before I go further into that, I think I will go into parochial matters as these are the matters which affect us most of all, especially when one comes to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I would like to say, first of all, that only some months ago I submitted a list of roads to the Rural Development Commission as well as the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

This afternoon, when I was talking to another Honourable Member from this side, I realised that having submitted about 15 roads to be done by the Rural Development Commission, that the Rural Development Commission now has \$4 million in this year's Estimates and already \$3 million is committed to projects which are ongoing thereby leaving just about \$1 million for the tenantry roads which I submitted. However, realising that so much money has been allocated to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, what I will be doing tomorrow morning is resubmitting a list to that Ministry. I will change it up in such a way that I would like to see almost all my roads being done by the Ministry.

As a matter of fact, I have something like 15 very small roads. The fact is that my constituency is relatively compact in that the length is just about 1 mile and the width in most parts is just about 500 metres. In fact, it is by far the smallest constituency within Christ Church.

Therefore, having such a compact constituency and having just about 2 000 metres of road some to be paved and some to be constructed, I am really looking forward to getting all my roadworks finished within the next financial year, especially when one recognises that it costs approximately \$500 000 to do one mile of road and I am asking for approximately 200 kilometres which is just about 1 mile and a third, in other words, I will be getting about \$0.7 million in road repairs. When one looks at the amount of money which is being allocated to this Ministry, I do not see why I should be struggling at the end of the year to get these roads done.

There are also many roads in the Christ Church East Central constituency, the constituency of the Chairman...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

You said Christ Church East Central?

HIS HONOUR J.M. EDGHILL:

Yes, Christ Church East Central. There are many roads there which are in dire need of repair. I am hoping that something will be done because although this is Christ Church East Central, we in Christ Church always look at the various constituencies as one and not necessarily as five different entities so anytime work is being done in Christ Church, I would like to see a more equitable distribution of the resources throughout Christ Church in general.

There are some roads in particular which I would like to see being done. There are roads in the Sergeant's Village area, some very short roads, some in the Kendal Hill Tenantry B and Kendall Hill Tenantry A. There is also a very important road to the west of the Silver Hill Housing district which is called the Silver Hill Landing Scheme. That road is very narrow and it poses a threat to many of the

people living in that area.

Many times I have seen the minivans driving through that district in a very reckless manner and I am asking the Minister to look into the widening of that road. It is approximately 225 metres in length. As far as I am concerned that is a relatively short road. There is also the Silver Hill Housing District. The road in that area is very narrow as well.

I wrote a letter to the Ministry asking that some humps be put into that road, or what some people call sleeping policemen, in order to guarantee the safety of a lot of the young children living in the Silver Hill Housing district. There are also a number of roads which have been affected by water as a result of the poor drainage. It is true that these roads just need, in some cases, especially the ones in Maxwell Plain, curbs which would alleviate some of the problems in connection with these roads.

In the constituency of Christ Church West Central there are many persons in the Cane Vale, Maxwell Hill, even the bottom of Kendall Hill areas who have to catch two buses to go where they are working very often in the Hastings/Worthing districts. There is no real cross country route for that matter. I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Transport asking that a bus service be given to that district. As a matter of fact, this bus service would affect three particular constituencies in Christ Church, namely, Christ Church West Central, Christ Church East Central as well as Christ Church South.

I am asking that this bus service originate from the Lodge Road area going right down to the top of Oistins Hill, turning right to Cane Vale, Maxwell Hill, Top Rock and then when it gets to Top Rock, turning left up to Maxwell Road, Welches, Oistins, the lower part of Thornbury Hill. Then it can turn and go to Church Hill opposite the Foundation School Road and at the junction it can turn right and go back up to Lodge Road from where it would originate.

2:40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of His Honour J. M. EDGHILL:

This will have a positive effect on people in these three constituencies because many people, even in Maxwell Road and Silver Hill which may just be 1 000 kilometres from Oistins, very often have to walk, even in the mid-day sun, to get to Oistins to do their shopping, sometimes older people.

In recent times I realised that there are many old persons in this Kendall Hill/Maxwell area who would rather catch a bus and go to Bridgetown and possibly go to Rick's Supermarket to shop and then come back up the road. As far as I am concerned that is time consuming and I am looking forward to this bus service starting as soon as possible. I think the General Manager told me that I should be getting this bus service early in April or May. So I am really looking forward to getting this bus service started in the not

too distant future.

Another problem which is confronting Christ Church West Central is that of poor drainage. Over the years Town and Country Planning has given people permission to build houses sometimes in water streams and, as a result of that, after you get a fairly heavy downpour of rain you get flooding in some areas.

One has to remember that with the disintegration of the plantations - I understand that some 2 000 wells have virtually been blocked up - we are not getting the water being assembled in various areas which would benefit the aquifers. I think it is very important. It is true that we have a drainage unit but I think this unit is not able to do effectively the job which it was meant to do. I am appealing to the Minister where possible to get the private sector which would have better equipment in relation to cleaning these wells many of which exist throughout Christ Church.

I think it is very important for us to tap the water as far inland as possible. In recent times we have been hearing about a depletion of the water resources in Barbados and as long as we can tap the water at a very early time, especially inland, I am sure that this will help to increase the amount of water which will become available to us in Barbados.

There are, however, some areas in Christ Church West Central which have been greatly affected after a very heavy downpour. There are areas such as Briar Hall which is in the back of Vauxhall, as well as to the back of Warners Park. After a very heavy downpour sometimes these areas are inundated with three and four feet of water. This poses a great danger to the children of these districts as well as it is also a health hazard. I can remember checking some months ago and I was able to identify large amounts of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes and this in itself is very dangerous to us.

Most of you know the dangers associated with mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are responsible for killing about 30 per cent of the people worldwide on an annual basis and it is very important that we do something to limit the dangers associated with the dengue mosquito.

There are four viruses which those mosquitoes carry and they are all now in Barbados and it is going to be very important for us to look at eradicating these mosquitoes. So we will have to do something in terms of the drainage situation not only in Christ Church West Central but throughout Barbados.

There are a few other areas which need a better drainage system. In the Graeme Hall area at one time the water coming from Upton, Kingsland, used to pass right through Graeme Hall and then go right down to the Graeme Hall Swamp, but with the introduction of this new road from the Top Rock Roundabout to the highway poses a problem in that the water no longer is able to get past the road and as a result after heavy downpours of rain the people in that area get problems.

I think my time is up and I will come back later in the debate.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few points before this debate is finished. There was a Subcommittee of Cabinet that met in November last year to look at how we could make recommendations for easing some of the traffic problems. There have been good reasons why the Committee has not met frequently

but I anticipate that in the new financial year they will get back to regular meetings. One decision that was taken at that meeting I wish to speak about and to remind the Minister and his Permanent Secretary that this is something that can be done at fairly short notice for little expenditure.

We agreed that there were certain areas where the security of the people in those areas could be improved by laying down humps. They are given a special designation in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. They are called calming devices. I know them as humps or secret police. I see them written as humps in other parts of the world. We agreed that in certain areas we can lay down these at various points to reduce the propensity for speeding on the part of some drivers of vehicles who tend to speed in heavily built up areas.

Sir, in my constituency, as I have indicated to the Minister previously and I am putting it on the record of this House, there is a road in the new Cane Garden Development called Platinum Avenue which has been made a thoroughfare by all kinds of vehicles, from vehicles of the Arawak Cement Company to ordinary cars. There are lots of little children in that area and it is really a terrible danger for the children in Platinum Avenue and I am asking the Ministry early in the new financial year to put down an adequate number of humps in that road.

Sir, when this matter came before PPC ago it was represented to us that there were conflicting opinions of previous Attorneys General about the legality of these humps. I wish to disagree with my predecessors and say that the law is very simple. All you have to do is to give the motorists adequate warning that there is something in the road that will interrupt the smooth passage of his vehicle.

All you have to do is to put up a sign either on Platinum Avenue opposite the school, Lester Vaughan or the first turning on the right when you come down Canewood Road saying, 'Drive Slowly. Hump!' That is it. If you want to put 'Warning' in red, put 'Warning' in red at the top. That is all you need. Now if I come through there like a madman and I mash up the springs and the shocks of my car that is my fault. I cannot sue MPW. All you need is to give the driver adequate notice of the impediments in the road and it is up to him to respond adequately.

All over this country we are getting reports from people. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was telling me last week that they put in a new road in Danesbury and when the little children are about to play a little road tennis and cricket, the fellows are now taking to drive through there at great speed. We have to nip these things. I am asking the Minister to put down the humps.

What we had decided is that the Ministry would have written the MPs to ask them to submit a list of the roads where we can put down the humps.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I want to make a point that we have the same problem between Glebe and Rosepark. We have complained to the Ministry. A new road was put in about two years ago and traffic is now coming through at 50 to 70 miles per hour. It is very dangerous and we have asked the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to put a hump.

If the Attorney General is saying that it is legal now we believe that with time it can be done.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

It was always legal, Sir.

2:50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

Sir, the second point I want to raise. In June this year the Road Traffic Act of Barbados will be nineteen years old. Section 1.21 of the Road Traffic Act has never been implemented in Barbados. It was amended in 1992 and amended in 1994 but after nineteen years Section 1.21 is still not part of the law of Barbados. Section 1.21 is a very important provision in the Act which will operate, in my view, to the greater efficiency in the collection of fines for road traffic offences and will prevent persons who commit minor traffic offences from having to come to court several times and stand up in the sun waiting to be fined \$150 or whatever. The section allows for what I might colloquially call pleading guilty by force. If there are certain types of offences committed like we see on Broad Street every day where vehicles are parked on either side of Broad Street and blocking it up...

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

There is a whole list of offences which the previous Government enacted in 1992 but did not implemented. Leaving a vehicle parked on the road at night without lights or reflectors. Obstructing free passage of traffic on a road or left waiting on a road or parked on a road. Loading or unloading on a road. Parked in contravention with traffic signs. Carrying more passengers than licence to carry. Being a public service vehicle travelling on a route other than a specified route and so on.

The intent of the original Act in 1981 was that if a traffic warden or policeman saw a vehicle offending against the Road Traffic law, you stick a notice on it with certain information and it gives you a period of time in which to pay a fixed penalty. So, if I park in Spry Street but should not park there, they will stick something on my car saying: \$50 to be paid within 21 days. I have to send my \$50 to the Clerk of the Court and you do not get a conviction if you do that.

For nineteen years we have never brought that law into force. We require people all the time to stand up and wait and go back after six months you get the case heard because of the list. We can reduce the impact of all of these cases on the Magistrates Court if we implement this. I believe that all you want is a couple of computers linked to Magistrates and probably two clerical officers to operate them - computer literate, of course.

It is not my responsibility to administer the Road Traffic Act but I am inviting the Ministry of Public Works and Transport - I have it in my work programme and Members will see it in my brief - to join a working party that I am setting up in the Ministry of the Attorney General this year to look at this. If for nineteen years MTW had done nothing about it, I am going to approach it on the basis of law reform. I will set up the working party and I wish the Ministry to send nominees to sit on the working party so

that we can bring this into effect. We brought the law in 1981 and did not proclaim it; the DEMS came and did not proclaimed it, amended it in 1992 and in 1994, created additional offences but yet it is not operable.

Sir, I believe that if we can get the system of pleading guilty by force of these minor traffic offences in place we will do the public a great service in that they would not be required to come and stand up outside in the yard waiting for the cases over a long period of time. If the thing is properly computerised, I believe it is very simply to installed, then we will be able to improve the efficiency of fine collections in the Magistrates Court.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Sir, the third matter I wish to raise relates to the drainage in Jacksons. For some time now we have been complaining that - you do not have to have a storm - that when it clouds over on the west, it will dump water in Jacksons and you get a flood. Sir, three years ago I went with officers from the Drainage Unit with Reverend Zacharias Gibson who either owns or is responsible for a large amount of land in the Browne Gaps area. Sir, all right through Brownes Gap, all in there is Reverend Gibson and his family. He volunteered to the drainage unit that they could have whatever parts of the land they wanted to put down some well. We saw one opposite Jackson Community Centre by the shop on the other side where there is a large open space where they could put a well there to trap the water coming down from Shop Hill before it gets down in the bottom. Today, Sir, not one has been put down. I really felt that the drainage unit needs to get its finger out and start tackling some of these areas that have been on the back burner for a long time.

Sir, that reminds me before I sit, Sir. Right out here in the back of the hospital there is a road off River road...

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I am sure if it is called John Beckles Drive but right there by my Chiropractor, Dr. Seale, at the back of his place. Every time you get a little shower there is a big collection of water and it floods.

It cannot be right that we have seen that for as long as any of us has been in here, there has been flooding. There has to be a simple way of dealing with. I do not know if you would put a kind of well and lead the water off into the Careenage or cut a track below the level of the road and shoot the water into the Careenage..

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Yes, a pipe or something but it does not seem we are applying ourselves to the little things like that, Sir. Sir, I would hope now that the officials of MTW are here that before June this year they will get that sorted out before the rainy season comes.

Mr. Chairman, those are the three points I wanted to raise on this matter on this Head in addition to what I spoke about yesterday afternoon.

Hon R. D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I have heard the last three speakers made mention of the problems of drainage. The last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned that area behind the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that has been giving some problems for quite some time.

3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

I know the road there, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central drew it to my attention one morning. I told him I had seen it but I thought it was fixed by then but it is a problem that has been ongoing for quite some time. There was a hole in the road itself so what happened is when the rain falls, it does not run out as it should into the side of the road into the river. Another thing, when the river comes in, it comes in the road also so what it tells me is that the road should be raised more or less or, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said that some kind of outgoing pipe should be put in the earth to take out the water.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

My technical people are here and I am sure that they will be making notes of these things. The other thing I would like to say about that is that I think it is high time that the Careenage could have a dredging again. For quite sometime it has not been dredged and I would like to know that that will happen very soon.

We do have a drainage unit and I have heard Honourable Members complaining about work in their areas. First, let me say that it is a fact that everybody knows that Barbados is a low-lying country and we would never be able to eliminate all the flooding in Barbados. It is a very flat country. It is low lying and in the areas of St. Thomas and St. Andrews with the peak and so in there, water runs one side, over to the east and water comes into St. Michael, from as far as St. Andrew and St. Thomas trying to find the bottom. When it gets to the bottom, into the St. Michael's area, it levels out on its way to the Constitution River and to the sea. We do have some problems with the drainage.

Now, I want to bring to the attention of this House that I also heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central talking about contracting to clean the wells and if private contractors can do the

work but I want to draw to his attention that the contract work that is being done on these wells, is being done by private contractors. The Ministry itself does not do the work. The work is tendered out to these contractors and we have in excess of 12 to 15 contractors that do the work for us on a yearly basis.

I also want to say here that I have the achievements of the Drainage Unit for the period April 1st 1999 to end of February 2000, all ten months of the financial year.

On the well contract, works on some 349 wells were completed. Twenty-five or 7% of the total were new wells. Wells remaining were cleaned, deepened or rebuilt. In terms of the distribution of wells, we had 135 in the south, St. Michael 132 and the northern district we had 82 wells.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

I would try to give the Honourable Member hear the figures for St. Thomas, as I find them. I will go on. I will come back to you.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas also mentioned to me that, I think it was a Reverend who owned some land in that Jackson area and they had given permission that the Government could use it for part of the drainage problems in that area.

The department cleared some 79 water courses. Reserves by mechanical equipment across the island - seven were in the northern district while 28 and 44 were worked on in St. Michael and the southern districts respectively.

Civil works - where wells are concerned and drainage and so, we installed and precasted the covers at Skeetes Road, the same thing at River Road and completed the cover at St. Lawrence, adjacent to the Pepper Pot. Excavation of strong water retention basin was done at Sailor Gully, St. Peter. Two check damn tables were designed at Sea View, St. James and we are doing a considerable amount of work at Headley's Land.

Let me touch a little on these three areas: Sailor Gully is in St. Peter and water coming down from the heights over the years, we found that every year there was flooding in Gills Terrace in St. Peter. In order to alleviate that problem, retention wells were dug at Sailor Gully in St. Peter. Early in coming to the Ministry, I toured the area of Sailor Gully and we were able to have a view ourselves of how the retention wells will be working up there. As I said, that is to keep the water from going into Gills Terrace and the Speightstown area.

Also at Blowers Gully in St. James and Seaview, St. James, we have permission to use the quarry at Blowers and damn the water coming down through Sunset Crest and into Holetown because that is another area that has extensive flooding when the rain falls.

The other area that we are paying special attention to is Headleys Land area in Bank Hall. Over the years, Bank Hall main road used to have extensive flooding. I remember going to watch cricket at Empire and if the rain fell the whole area was flooded in a hurry.

We know that in the Headleys Land area, whenever we have heavy downfalls of rain, we have problems there so we are doing some remedial work there. There was a three feet wide drain, but it is being extended to about 12 feet and that drain is to take the water from the Headleys Land area to the Constitution River, it will be going underneath the road at Roebuck Street. We have acquired an old shop next to the Globe Cinema and that will be part of the area where the drainage will be going through to take the water from the Headleys Land area right out into the Constitution River.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Sir, those are the main areas that we are working on and some money has been voted in the Estimates this year for drainage, as usual but any Honourable Member in this house, there are 28 of us, who are having any problems right away, the Drainage Unit is there. You can make your complaint to the Drainage Unit and I am quite sure you will have their attention as fast as possible.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned the traffic calming devices. We know them as humps in Barbados and the Member has complained to me about these humps in the area of Canewood Road where people are using...

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

In the area where I live, I have the same problem. I need to have some in my area also because I find that when people see a nice strip of barber green road in a residential area, they just go on the road so we all have problems in our constituencies. Like I said, again, these problems could be brought to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport where the humps and so are concerned, but I found that we doing some work on it and we know that we have to...

Aside.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

I think it is about two years ago that Cabinet had made a decision on it and I was advised by my technical people that we first have to have a meeting with the residents of the areas before we put them in. It is a very good idea. We have to work on it and as I said, anyone having those kinds of problems in their constituencies where that is concerned, do not hesitate to call the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and you can talk to the people involved in that area.

I want to say that we are looking at having seat belts legislation in Barbados in place by September of this year, where we are making it mandatory to have seat belts in our cars. Older cars that were brought to Barbados without seat belts will be given a time of six months to get seat belts in those cars, after that and you do not have seat belts in your car and even if you have seat belts in your car and you are not buckled up, you can be reported by the police officer for not complying with the laws. As I said, we will be having that seat belt legislation by September of this year.

I also want to talk about the area of Martindales Road. Martindales Road is the area where we have our Queen Elizabeth Hospital and over the years, as a boy I always came along and heard and I saw for myself signs that it is a silent zone and you should not blow your horns and rev your engines in that area. I have already spoken to the Chief Technical Officer about looking the possibility of re-routing heavy traffic, that is buses, ZRs, minivans and Transport Board buses from using that area and to just let it be an area for the use of motor cars.

3:10 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Some time ago I was in Queens, New York, and I saw a sign next to the road saying, "You honk your horn and you pay \$350.00." So you see, it is a silent zone and I believe that if it is a hospital there are sick people in there and the kinds of horns that some of the vehicles have, especially these public service vehicles, these loud things they call ear horns. They just keep a lot of noise and I would also like to know that when the Transport Authority comes on board we can look at the possibility about allowing these horns.

If I can just go back a little to what we were on earlier where the roads and so are concerned, I would also like to say that C. O. Williams Construction has set up an appointment to see the personnel at the Ministry. Mr. Williams has offered to bring a piece of equipment to Barbados that will do a lot of the road work in a shorter space of time. He said that he had some equipment that he used in St. Lucia and I think, Grenada. He can bring this piece of equipment to Barbados. He has offered to bring it in to Barbados and give us a free demonstration on part of the road in Barbados to show us exactly how it works. It takes the old asphalt off the road. Instead of throwing it away you would refine it through a process and reuse it to spread the road again. He has offered us that. We have designed a paper to take to Cabinet to get approval to allow Mr. Williams to do the demonstration for the Ministry.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has one minute to wind up.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

I do hope that when the road works get off the ground by next month, that what we did at the Black Rock road can be done by the other road builders. That is, on the Black Rock road we worked at night. At night it is cooler. The men work better. You do not have any distractions by your friends passing and talking during the day. There is no time to go by the shop and hang out. You can get a lot more production out of night work. As I said, I hope that we can get a lot more of that happening in Barbados. I'll be back a little later.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have heard me said this before, but five years ago the Government commissioned a study on the state of the roads in Barbados and although I was never shown the report, I gather that the constituency of St. George South had the most unpaved roads of a constituency in Barbados. I spent five years in agitation for a redress of the imbalance. I would be ungrateful, Sir, if I did not say that some were done. The reason we had the most unpaved roads was that St. George had the most plantation tenancies in Barbados. The road system in this country evolved from the plantation system because you had to have cart roads to bring out the canes which almost covered the whole of Barbados in another era. So we had a lot of roads that were unpaved. I agitated quietly, behind doors, in caucuses, in camera, whatever to have this addressed. Some were done and I am going to try to give some credit to those who are responsible, like Todds Tenancy was done, Buttals, Jordan, Woodland ...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Byde Mill? I cannot drive my car into Byde Mill to see my constituents. I have to park my car in the playing field by Byde Mill and risk having another broken ankle to get to my constituents. But the thing is, Mr. Chairman, I have so many that when you do a few you still need a great amount of roads to be done. Byde Mill was mentioned and Drax Hall Mills, Drax Hall Hope. You go down in Prerogative, You go into Workmans, Elcock Road, you go into Macaroni Village, you go into Dash Valley, you go into South District, all over the place, Sir.

I heard one of my colleagues talking about flooding. The most notorious flooding area in Barbados is Middleton. The people from MTW have been to Middleton at least 10 times in the last 10 years.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Whatever the name. All they do is change the name with the same results, at least ten times. In Middleton, Sir, when the rain falls heavily people who are away at work cannot get home on that day. They have

to get a 'sleep-out' and the people who are in cannot get out. This business about roads is very critical. People used to ask about public baths in my district. That is the era in which I started but nowadays people have moved on.

I heard a debate yesterday on social transformation. The major post-independent social transformation in this country has already been affected. The Freehold Purchase Act that gave the people the plantation tenancies right to ownership of land has completely changed the face of rural Barbados. People are now talking about roads in a way they have never talked about roads before in politics in Barbados and this Government will ignore that at its peril, ignore it at its peril because that is all I am hearing about in my constituency. People who used to complain about other things. They do not complain about them any

more. Everything is the road.

3:20. p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

I am not satisfied that the type of resources that are necessary has been put into these Estimates. I had promised my constituents that I was not going to talk about roads again until the television cameras were on the Budget debate where I could hold a constituency meeting on television. I was going to do that, but, Sir, I have split loyalties. There is loyalty to the people who election after election gave me a whole lot of votes and an allegiance to a political party of which I belong but sometimes the pressure is so great that I have to go heavily in favour of those who voted for me.

I do not like to put any pressure on anyone, but in these Estimates - and I do not read Estimates too good because I have never been good at figures and that is why I am a poor man.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House when he said that he is a poor man and I want that remark struck from the record.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Mr. Chairman, with the assistance of those who are better at figures than I am, I see that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport will have in excess of \$20 million for road maintenance. I am not including the Bridgetown roads. The Rural Development Commission (RDC) has been given \$4.14 million. As the lawyers will say, I have been informed and verily believe that of the \$4.14 million allocated to the Rural Development Commission (RDC) that \$3 million is already committed for ongoing projects and therefore in the coming year there will be just over one 'measly' million for the Rural Development Commission (RDC).

Let me tell you this, Mr. Chairman, I am just saying that the roads in my constituency are unpaved roads which have never seen a bit of paving since this country was founded. The paved roads that are in disrepair are to be done by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the roads that were never paved - those cart roads - that are all across my constituency must go to the Rural Development Commission (RDC) and they only have \$1 million to spend for all of rural Barbados.

I am, therefore, being put on notice not to expect anything. I would hope that some adjustment would be made to these Estimates before they are passed or shortly thereafter they are passed to come with the

requisite supplementary because all the roads that I have called so far are roads that have never been paved and therefore, cannot be touched by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. They must only be touched by the Rural Development Commission (RDC).

If I had to mention the ones, Sir, that have been paved, I would mention roads for instance from your constituency, Mr. Chairman, to mine, the Road from Edey Village through to Boarded Hall. That road is in a disgusting state of disrepair, although a lot of vehicles coming from the Airport and carrying people down to the west coast pass that way. However, if we go down in St. Andrew where no more than two dozen vehicles pass in any given day you would see millions of dollars in a four-lane highway there.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

I am not being facetious. This is not humour. The truth of the matter is that we in the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) have been saying for a long time that there has been the development of two Barbadoses. There is urban Barbados and the coastline where all the 'big-ups' lived and then rural Barbados. Two different stages of development.

I was part of an administration in this country that decided that we would eliminate this distinction by bringing to the people of rural Barbados what is their natural share in the patrimony of this land. We worked hard, Sir. All these canes we grow for three centuries and build up a sugar industry which made the people on the coastline, and suburban Barbados to live 'high on the hog'. In the meantime, the agriculture workers in Barbados, their children's and their children children' despite the fact that they have made this major contribution to the development of this country are still being left behind.

I am imploring the Government to try to adjust things in my constituency. It still has more unpaved roads than any other constituency in Barbados, much to my shame, Sir, because the people of my constituency have every right to say that I have not served them well. I was about to say that I will talk about it on the television cameras during the Budget debate but then I understand that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is the guru, who will know which of us will speak, so he may not give me a 'pick'.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

I want to quickly mention one or two other things before I sit. In Dash Valley, which is part of my constituency, the Government has built a new road in an area there. It is beautiful, Sir. At the same time, another arm of the Government - I am not blaming anybody, this is policy - the Barbados Water Authority is not allowing the people living on that road to have the benefit of water services. I cannot think of anything more idiotic than that. Here it is, that the Government built a new road in a district but another arm of the Government is saying that they are not giving water services to the residents there because they are in the water zone. Incidentally, it is the same Ministry, so the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.

I listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East making a case about the people living in the

water zone. There are only four houses in this area in Dash Valley that has been refused water services. One is a fairly substantial house which is worth over \$100 000 but they cannot get any water. They must get a bucket of water from the neighbour because the Barbados Water Authority based on an existing policy said that they are not giving them water in the zone. All the other people on that street have water services. I am making an appeal to the Minister of Public Works and Transport to make a note and underlined it in red and to look into it to see if some help can be brought to those four households.

Now, Sir, before you tell me that my time is up ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, your time is up.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

It is up, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

Yes, it is up.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Thank you, Sir.

3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

Mr. Chairman, I want to remind the Ministry of Public Works that the jetty at Half Moon Fort is in need of repairs because the fishermen in that area would like to have back the usage of the jetty they once had and because of the poor conditions they are having without the jetty they have to compete for limited space in Six Mens. I would like the Minister of Public Works and Transport to acknowledge that the fishermen are people also and they have a right to earn a living.

I would also like the Minister of Public Works and Transport to recognise that the transport system that is operating in St. Lucy is not the most efficient for the simple reason that the people travelling to Crab Hill and Connell Town must find themselves in a bus that ends up in Josey Hill. I do not know why the people of St. Lucy would have to go on an excursion every time they travel on a Transport Board bus before they can get home. They have to spend sometimes as much as two hours on a bus in order to leave Bridgetown to get home. I am asking the Minister of Public Works and Transport to speak to the officials of the Transport Board to make sure that no one should have to spend two hours on the Transport Board buses in order to get home and to work.

I think it is ridiculous and I feel that now they have enough buses Connell Town, Pie Corner and Josey Hill should get back their service. I am also calling on the officials at the Ministry to understand that Harmony in St. Lucy was started since 1994 and none of them have seen it possible to complete that particular road.

The Honourable Member for St. James North has assisted me by writing Ministries acknowledging that I have written him about that particular road and nothing has been done. I know the Honourable Member for St. Andrew will say that is not true. That is his policy but the Honourable Member for St. George North understands where Harmony is.

I would like to point out to the House that it is a serious matter that Rural Development Commission has been formed since 1994, six years ago, and the Budget for Rural Development cannot reach \$9 million. It is regrettable. When the Barbados Labour Party was campaigning for the 1994 re-election they promised the people in the rural areas that they would have brought a better life to them. They promised that if they voted for them they would deliver on their promises. They told the people that the rural area that has always supported the Barbados Labour Party and it is true. Yet we cannot get proper roads in rural Barbados, you have a situation in St. Lucy alone in which there are over 60 roads required and not one completed. At Hope Road alone you have over ten roads, at Rock Hall more and do not talk about the Pie Corner area. At Half Moon Fort there are about three or four. I can list them off the top of my head.

The Barbados Labour Party cannot continue to ride on the backs of the masses of the people in this country, who have worked on plantations to develop this country, and promise them roads and do not deliver.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is supposed to be the Ministry to deliver the goods but you can give the Ministry the commitment and request to build roads but you are not going to give that Ministry the finance. I have not seen any significant increase in the vote for the Rural Development since it was placed on the Estimates of this House as a department.

I am calling on the Minister of Finance to provide some of the \$1.4 billion in additional revenue that he has collected since 1994-99 to make sure that rural Barbados gets its fair share of the roads in Barbados. If Rural Development Commission is supposed to build roads, these Estimates of Expenditure must reflect that command has been transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. You are asking to build roads and you have not supplied the necessary finances to build the roads. I am saying that it has to be a gimmick.

It is clear to me that this Government does not have a policy for building roads for the masses of people in Barbados who worked hard in the fields of Barbados to develop urban Barbados and the West Coast and South Coast and they are getting all the gains off the backs of the poor people who have developed this country.

You cannot tell a plantation worker to continue to work hard in this country to earn foreign exchange to keep the economy going and yet he cannot get the benefits. What madness are we talking about? When you look at the landmass of Barbados, rural Barbados has to be over 75 per cent of Barbados, yet it cannot get its fair share. Eight million dollars and when you check it, most of this money will probably go in salaries and wages.

Stretching from St. Lucy to St. Philip including part of St. Michael and part of Christ Church is rural Barbados and only \$4.1 million to build new tenantry roads. I am calling on the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to make his voice be heard in this Parliament. If he does not represent his constituents, I will have to acknowledge the fact why certain members on the Back Bench did not take the Ministry, because they regarded it as a Ministry not suitable to be held by them because of the vote.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development must make people understand that this Ministry has to be one of the most important Ministries. I have been saying this for a long time. I honestly believe that this Ministry should be the Ministry looking at finding the second hospital for Barbados, the second airport for Barbados and things like that. This must be part of rural development. If people are going to just see this as handing out \$5 000 to people then the Rural Development should be closed down, because there is a bigger role for Rural Development in Barbados than just giving out \$5 000 loans and talking about agriculture.

We need a second hospital in Barbados and it must be placed in the north. You cannot encourage investors to come to Barbados and invest the type of funds that we will soon be generating in the north of Barbados at the naval base and do not have the necessary facilities to accommodate those particular projects.

I am calling on the Minister of Finance to recognise the importance of rural Barbados and put the necessary funds behind rural Barbados. In the same way they are prepared to put the necessary funds behind the West Coast Development, the South Coast Development and the Urban Development, rural Barbados must be seen as some place too. That is why you will have a place like North Point Hotel cannot reopen because the infrastructure in that particular area is not good enough to encourage people to develop. We have a naval base which I must say, instead of allowing Sandy Lane to push down Sandy Lane and then invest \$300 million, the plan should have been to allow them to build a Sandy Lane for the Americans that they were talking about because it is the only place you can advertise

Barbados for Americans that has a connection to the Americans. We missed the boat. I am saying that instead of bulldozing that building at Sandy Lane that cost so much money they should have built a new hotel at the naval base and it would have achieved the same thing and even more.

3:40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000.

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

At the same time they could have continued to market Sandy Lane for the English, as it is known. We have missed a golden opportunity but sometimes people lack foresight. This was one of those occasions that the Government lacked the foresight to do the necessary thing.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I am also saying that I asked the Minister about a road at Shermans where an investor from London has been able to come and narrow the road. He has been able to deprive the fishermen of an area where they could haul up their boats. I want to know what is going on in St. Lucy because, let me tell you something, it is not going to end like that. The Government must find an alternative location for the fishermen in St. Lucy to haul up their boats or something will go wrong. I am not going to continue with this foolishness in here where people who do not have a connection to Barbados ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, let me tell you what happen. Some Members of Parliament do not understand what is going on. Because this is the fishing season most of the boats are out to sea where you will realise and recognise that problem when you have to haul up those boats. There will not be that space available to the boat owners to haul up their boats anymore at Shermans. It is also creating another problem, Sir, the boat builders in the area will now have to look for a new location to repair their boats when they stop flying fishing this season.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

The principal boat builders in St. Lucy are Luthan Babb and Judy Babb. Do not give me that foolishness.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Everybody in St. Lucy is related to me.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the Government must recognise that if they are going to walk around pretending to be a progressive Government that they must allocate fund to help develop the areas that poor people within rural Barbados live. They must stop pretending to the people in rural Barbados that they have their interest at heart. If you were to carry out a survey you will recognise that at least about 80 per cent of the road in rural Barbados are un-paved. In urban Barbados that percentage is only 5%.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has one minute to conclude.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Sir, I am saying that in the productive areas like rural Barbados that you have to put back some of the revenue to support the people who have generated the revenue.

Sir, I thank you very much.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Mr. Chairman, I will be very short in reminding the Honourable Member about the needs of the fishing industry in St. Lucy. I wish to remind the Honourable Member of one thing. That by now we would have had an excellent fishing scheme in the north had it not been for the decision of the Democratic Labour Party to jettison the fisheries development scheme for Speightstown and the surrounding area in 1987.

Asides.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

That is a fact. It was perfectly compatible with the tourist development. Sir, the second point I would like to mention with respect to the situation...

Asides.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I know Half Moon Fort by heart. As a matter of fact, the spill over effect of the wise investment by the Labour Party in the heat of the Opposition of the Democratic Labour Party in the 80s by building Heywoods, by building the by pass road, by moving some of the houses in Six Men's that was threatened by the seas, by moving some of those....

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South does not

normally do this but he is misleading the House on this particular matter. It was the Democratic Labour Party who removed the houses from the west of the road in Six Men's and put them on the land that was previously set up to be used by the IDC.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I was the Minister responsible for the IDC that acquired the land from the late Mr. Lyle Ward. Long before the Honourable Member came we had the most active Member of Parliament for St. Peter that used to bring in questions about the threats to the houses.

Asides.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Nothing was done? The Honourable Member forgets in that area between Challenors Warehouse that juts out into the seas and goes to what he calls the Judge Gap and now it is the Kellman Road, the part where you go by where the half way house is and you turn a sharp left and go down there. It is recognise that sooner or later there has to be a land reclamation scheme or a bouldering of that area to allow you to widen the roads.

Sir, what I want to emphasise in respect of that area - I know it very well, Sir - is that I am glad to say that I have read a lot of documentation, that the Northern Fisheries Development Scheme has been placed on the front burner. As I understand it, every effort is being made to ensure that that scheme comes to fruition within the time span of the Barbados Labour Party being in office.

Asides.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

You can be assured that it will come into operation - you can be assured of that. Half Moon Fort is developing like everywhere else. Without the Cement Plant, without Heywoods, St. Lucy would have still be in the backwoods with the Democratic Labour Party despite the thirty seven years of representation that you always brag about.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. I want to remind the Honourable Member that there was a stage in Barbados' development that St. Lucy had the most stone structures per area when the Naval Base was operating. Many people within St. Lucy were building just stone structures to be renting to the Naval Base. That was not stopped by the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I just want to remind the Honourable Member also that the planning for the rural development is something that not only St. Lucy is concerned about. I myself am part of the rural development area and I would like to see too some additional allocation so that we can get more. We also must remember that the Scotland area is part of the rural development too and the Scotland area is an area, by its very nature, which has a great absorbing capacity in relation to taking up money. I look forward to seeing more done in our area.

As I keep saying, Sir, it is not only the north of Barbados that is developing. Within the next ten years the fastest growing area in Barbados will be that area between Six Cross Road in St. Philip and the airport. There is no question or doubt about it, Sir. There is absolutely no question about it. There is one further point that I would really like to raise, Sir.

3:50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Sir, there is one further point that I would like to raise in respect of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I want to ensure, I think Honourable Members have spoken of it here before, that the road weeding programme still continues. There is some doubt in the minds of certainly my own constituents and yours too, Sir, as to the interrelationship between the programme of the National Conservation Commission (NCC) and the programme of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

We know that the NCC and the Ministry of Health have a specific programme at certain times of the year after the rainy season, before Christmas, that an effort is made to clean up spots which are left by their owners. But my understanding of the position is, and I have raised this on a number of occasions, that the responsibility for keeping the gutters clear is still the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport but all along Highway 7 in particular, all along the areas of Enterprise and Silver Sands, the Goodland, Thornbury Hill areas there are problems with respect to keeping the gutters clean. Sometimes when they are kept clean, Sir, too long a period elapses in my opinion, between stuff that is created by the weeders and its collection.

My final point is, Sir, I have a real problem with respect to the roundabout at Top Rock. There is a back up of traffic between Maxwell Road and the traffic coming from Bridgetown or coming from Dover or coming from the ABC Highway, particularly between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. It causes people to divert into Dover and causes stress to the old people in the Dover Love and Care Home, when the minibuses and others fly through there, trying to come around through Braddie's shop at the back of Dover Playing Field to connect back up with the road in St. Lawrence.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:

I have repeatedly written on that. I have written many times to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport about it. There is a problem. I do not know why all of a sudden there is a back up there, but I believe, Sir, that part of the reason is that one used to be able to turn right if one went up through Graeme Hall onto the ABC Highway, that has been discontinued. When you go up there, you have to turn left. You cannot turn right anymore but it is something that needs investigation.

I also believe that the cutting down of the tremendous mound at the junction of the Maxwell Hill Top Rock, which should have taken place years ago that that needs to be looked at. But my constituents in Dover and Maxwell are very worried about what happens there every morning between the hours of 7:00 and 8:30. Something should be done and I hope that the Honourable Minister looks at that and see how he could alleviate the problem.

I know there are a lot of people from other areas that come into Christ Church to work, that is what happens. You cannot keep the people from St. George and St. John from there. They drive down in their motor cars and come there to work all along the coast but we have no problem with that but the traffic at that junction needs to be looked at.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am so much obliged for an opportunity to speak to this matter. I was really very happy in his opening presentation to hear the Honourable Minister make reference to what is known in certain circles as the outer ring road and the inner ring road for Bridgetown starting up. There are severe implications for the Bridgetown Redevelopment Plan out of that and for the movement of road traffic in the City.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, Sir, just two weekends ago, officials from the Barbados Tourism Investment, Inc. (BTI), the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Ministry of Public Works and some others walked the City early Saturday or Sunday morning, I forget which it was, looking at this.

Now, Barbadians have, I have to say with quite good spirit, put up with the temporary inconvenience which allowed the Wharf Road to be rebuilt and the north face of the wharf to be rebuilt and of course the wonderful cantilever board walk to be built, all of that is critical to the Bridgetown Redevelopment Plan. It was important and I insisted at the time that the Board Walk should be cantilevered over the water because we need all of the road width there as we can get, in order to allow a dual carriageway, so to speak.

It is proposed that on the land side of the Wharf Road that proper side walk will be built and that it will be covered, colonnaded with potted plants and it really would be very beautiful. It is expected that all of the owners along that colonnaded side walk will open up onto the Wharf Road because there is a lot of good frontage there for retail and so on.

Sir, the proposal is, as far as I am aware, that the traffic will go down the Wharf Road and where we turn now on to Hincks Street and across what is Prince Alfred Street, in front of the old Barbados Mutual Building, it is proposed that there is a possibility that it would go even further down Hincks Street and turn across Cowell Street, which is the street which would take you into what used to be called the Lower Green.

As you will recognise, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the paving of Swan Street is only a prelude to similar paving on Broad Street. The proposal is, of course, that Broad Street will be partially pedestrianised in quite the same way as Swan Street is, and has been for several years now, partially pedestrianised.

I am anxious, and I myself went to visit a few days ago, and I have spoken to the Minister and I have

also spoken to the Chief Technical Officer, Mr. Archer, that we need to bring Swan Street to closure at a soon date. We have been long in doing it because we have had to accommodate the merchants and their peak times like Christmas, their peak times like Crop Over, their peak times like Independence and so on and of course Easter is coming up. It is in our interest that we bring Swan Street to closure as soon as possible and for more than one reason.

When the merchants on Broad Street see how beautiful Swan Street is going to be, they are going to move on their own initiatives as they are already doing with respect to the board walk. The Barbados Shipping and Trading has already approached the BTI and they have also spoken to me about the desirability of extending the board walk westward at their expense.

4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

They want to develop Carlisle House, that big building at the bottom of the Wharf Road where BARTEL and so on has offices. They want to develop that building and put nice retail offices, cafes and so on and so forth, make a nice courtyard effect, and carry the boardwalk beyond it so that would be part of that development as well. I have persuaded them that the need to be looking at high-rise car parking in addition to that.

So, in order that the traffic would be rerouted that remedial work had to be done on the Wharf side. As I have said in other forums, the Lord was with me, very, very helpful to em in this regard, Mr.

Chairman, Sir. It was good that the Minister of Finance himself was present one day, to see a huge hole open in the Wharf Road, and a woman almost lost her life in it. The Lord is moving with me again, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Only two weeks ago another hole opened. I was not here so that did not have anything to do with me. Moving in mysterious ways, a hole opened on Broad Street, so I hope that would bring to quicker despatch the work which has to be done on Broad Street. All that is left to be done on Swan Street because we took time putting in all of the utilities. The drainage had to go in, the paving is nearly finished now and I think it is much appreciated by Barbadians and visitors alike. The lighting is in. What has to go in now would be signage, very interesting signage, not just a street sign saying Swan Street but a street sign giving a little bit of the history of Swan Street and all of the other streets off Swan Street, like Coleridge Street and White's Alley and so on.

The proposal is too that we would put in full-grown trees and shrubbery on the street, street furniture, nice benches where people can sit and chat and so on. We will be able to do that with Broad Street as soon as it is possible. Broad Street, unhappily Mr. Chariman Sir, has turned into a pig sty. There is no other way of describing it, a pig sty. I come up on Broad Street three mornings a week going to the gym, the dirt, the garbage still on Swan Street. Yesterday morning, Monday morning, coming here to this House all kinds of nastiness on Broad street. This morning four vehicles were parked, the people were out of them you know, not somebody with the engine idling, dropping off somebody and hoping that the police would not do anything. The police do not do anything. They stand up and observe that. Barbadians have to understand that you just cannot do as you like in the year 2000. You cannot operate as you did in the year 1920 or in the year 1890, not with the traffic that we have on the road.

When I was a growing up as a child and a young woman, nobody would ream of parking on Broad Street, but now people park there. They bring the tourists and a minibus would stop and uyopu have to wait behind that for twenty-five people to get out, and everybody kissing everybody and giving a message and all of that foolishness. Securior will park their van outside of the bank and you have to wait. 'Banks' trucks are offloading beer, you have to wait behind them. Four vehicles were parked on Broad Street with nobody in them, on Broad street this morning as I appraoched in here.

Every Thursday I go to the Cabinet in a rage for the same reason. There should be no parking on Broad street. There should be no parking on Swan Street. Barbadians have this idea in their heads that they must open a car door and by magic they are going to be sitting down in an office seat and they are not going to walk anywhere, and all of them are overweight.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there will come a time when people who want to have access to Broad Street will have to put off their passengers on Victoria Street or on one of the side streets as they do now with Swan Street and delivery times will have to be fixed and staggered so that Broad Street and Swan Street, as befitting the main street in a capital city, will operate in a certain way. I have to say a word of thanks to the Ministry of Public Works because all of this infrastructure work which had to be done to accommodate the development plan for Bridgetown is much on the way.

There is still important work to be done in respect of the Swing Bridge. The Swing Bridge is going to be replaced. It is not a bridge that will swing. It is a bridge that will lift now, what they call a lift bridge, so that you can have your traffic coming through into the inner careenage. There are also plans, part of the Bridgetown redevelopment plan, for developing the inner careenage, not only the outer careenage but the inner careenage as well. There are plans to go even beyond the inner careenage on the

other side of the Duncan O'Neal Bridge, to what used to be the Constitution River, you can hardly call it a river nowadays, it is filthy. We do not know the last day that the carenage in or out was dredged. You have people pasturing cows and sheep, feeding in a green pasture, happily and most contentedly. We will have to find a way to relocate them as well because there are plans to develop both the embankment, moving from the Charles Duncan O'Neal Bridge right up to the James Tudor Roundabout. That will have an access in to a refurbished and renovated Fairchild Street Market and River Bus Stand as well, with plenty of accommodation planned for vendors of all kinds - vendors of fruit, vendors of vegetables and so on and so forth. It is a huge plan.

Asides.

A lot of it is gelling and coming together now because the private sector was waiting.

Mr. Chairman: Could I have some order?

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am so much obliged to you. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the private sector was waiting to see if the Government was in earnest about this, they have been sort of holding back but the Barbados Tourism Investment can tell you now about the number of people coming forward with all kinds of proposals that would make Bridgetown into a vital and vibrant and wonderful city in the early 21st century, a city worthy to be called the capital of Barbados.

Now, the Honourable Minister also made reference in respect of the four cross, Barbarees Hill, Passage Road, Baxters Road and Westbury Road. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West also made reference to that and I want to pick him up on that.

Mr. Chairman: Before you pick him up on that you have two hours to conclude.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Two hours? I thank so much Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I mean two minutes, two minutes to conclude.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Would that I had two hours! Well, maybe I would stop at this point simply to say that I wish to support the propoal and would hope to work in tandem with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in the development of that four cross. We lost a lot of fried fish market share to Oistins and I want the barren of Oistins who is in this place to understand that we are coming back for our market share. There is enough for all. There is enough for all, enough for all.

I have the same vision that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has, a wonderful flood-lit playing field with people vending all kinds of things, the restoration of Baxters Road, that is my priority for this year 2000, with all the wonderful overhanging galleries and so. We are just about to get started on that so that there would hardly be any boundary. Somebody wake up the Leader of the Opposition he is missing important information, Sir.

In a couple of years and no more, Baxters Road, let us say the whole corner, the Westbury Road, Baxters Road, Barbarees Hill, Passage Road Corner, will be a place like no other in Barbados. The determining motive for that area is going to be lights, light. This is a place where I want to see bus loads and coach loads of tourists going for the evening experience, Mr. Chairman, Sir, in Bridgetown and St. Michael West. This is a place where traditionally Barbadians used to go on Friday nights and Saturday nights. We have plans all through the week that every evening in Baxters Road we will be highlighting a different kind of activity, pool rooms are going to be busy, etcetera.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I know that I am out of time but I would hope that you would accommodate me at a later time in the debate so that I can frame out a little more this vision for you and for Honourable Members of this distinguished House. I am much obliged to you, Sir.

4:10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Mr. D. T. GILL:

Mr. Chairman, at least I still got a little light this evening and I am going to make full use of my 15 minutes because I do not think that I will get back into the debate the way the pecking order is going.

Sir, first the things parochial, as I make my contribution to this Head which is now being debated. I must say at the outset that during the year I have had a fairly good relationship with the people of the depot which services St. Michael South Central. I have walked with them up until about five weeks ago. They have come back. They have cleaned the edges of the road. They have patched the potholes. They have done their weeding and they have moved the stuff. I do not know if this system will spread further north but they have moved them and it would be unkind of me to know this and not to mention it.

Last year, we were able to get some drainage work done and hopefully I would like to see this progress continue during the few dry months if there are any in this year before the traditional rainy season steps in.

I will like however to draw to the Minister's attention the urgent need for those traffic lights at the Pine North South East West junction, a road which he has to take every day either to enter or to leave his workplace. Hourly, there are all sorts of freak accidents occurring there.

Sir, there are some small problems which need to be rectified. Simple problems like marking the roads clearly. White is not a reflective colour. It looks good when it first goes down but the moment you have a heavy downpour of rain and the silt washes over it you do not know what is white from what is black. I think a lot more of the intersections and minor roads need to be clearly marked. Small things like major stops are hidden behind overgrowth, by structures and are too close to the junction and people just do not know that they exist.

There is an accident probably every morning in the Pine Hill area as you work your way down from the North South through the back down to the People's Cathedral. There is one practically every morning and evening at the Quakers Road intersection with all the minor roads coming in from Belmont Road.

Sir, the other thing which is of great importance at this point is the escape routes for the public service vehicles. I do not want to say if there are ZRs or ZMs or what have you, but I know for sure that there are routes which have now become standard for them which they use as getting away routes, when you leave Tweedside Road to get onto Halls Road. Sometime ago you would have seen where one of those vehicles ran into a private galvanised paling at the back of Chase Road. The same thing obtains as people try to get away from Brittons Cross Road and work their way across Villa Road down through the road there which is broken away through to Flagstaff and into the Clapham area. Sir, the time has come where some of these roads must be clearly designated as 'No Entry' because they are not only posing a threat to life but also to limb.

Sir, it is the improving technology and the number of vehicles on the road that are posing great problems. That is what we have to look at. Everybody speaks about the intersection as you come off by the Life of Barbados at the roundabout there into Fordes Road. The reason for that, is that point is a point of convergence as well as a point of divergence. This is noticeable if you check the traffic coming from the north of the island across by Julie'N and working its way into the south as well as coming from the East and working its way into the City and then people trying to branch off at Fordes Road.

There are two factors as far as I can discern that are causing the problems. As I have said:

- (1) Convergence/divergence.
- (2) The escape routes and the right turn.

In my humble opinion and from my vantage point, I would say that it is the right turn which causes problems in urban Barbados. If we take the same highway definition which defines the urban areas for the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and use that definition to assist us with the traffic, then in the morning in the peak hours between 7:30 a.m. and 930 a.m. there should be no turning to the whatsoever, but as the Honourable Member for the City said, everybody wants to get as close as possible to a gate to drop off a child at school. Everybody wants to drive right on their doorstep to work but you would have to sit and plan your route carefully.

It is when you make the right turn that you hold up 15 - 20 vehicles behind you before somebody is gracious enough to let you out. Whereas, if it is more or less an unidirectional flow of traffic and you are to take a picture from an aerial shot, in essence what would be happening is that all of the traffic within those defined boundaries would all be going in a counter clockwise flow. I think that would bring great ease to the congestion. We cannot get rid of the cars. That is a fact. You cannot limit a family to X number of cars. There are certain things which this administration or the other will have to make quite soon and without any hesitation.

Sir, speaking about the traffic congestion, in another three months we are going to see how easy it is to use roads like Bank Hall, Bay Street, Dayrells Road and Pine Road. That is the time, Sir, at which

exams are being written. The fifth formers will be doing their exams. The sixth formers will be doing their overseas exams. The students of the Barbados Community College (BCC), the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) and the University of the West Indies will also be doing their exams. You will be able to get a bus with consummate ease. You could leave home with five minutes to go. The streets will be like a ghost city.

This is telling me something. We have to change the hours of work. There are people who have been going to work every morning at the same time for the past thirty years and fretting themselves every morning about the traffic situation.

Sir, we have become so advance in technology now that one does not have to get into one's office for 8:00 a.m. or 900 a.m. anymore. Sir, I was most surprised when I went to London 17 years ago to realise that business in the city do not really start until 1000 a.m. but Barbadians have this fixation that they are used to getting to work at 800 a.m. and that they had it so and it must be so forever and ever, amen.

Many babies, kindergarten and very young children are dropped off by their parents at the various day care centres and kindergarten schools at 7:30 a.m. because their parents have to start work at 800 a.m. We can have a system where we can have the post secondary and tertiary children starting school as late as 1000 a.m. and the others starting at 900 a.m. and have staggering working hours for the adults. There are many people who can get into their offices for 1000 a.m. There are some who could get into their office for 600 a.m. Sir, this will help in great measure to alleviate the problems which are served up as a result of the heavy number of vehicles on the roads.

Sir, there is something else which is causing great concern to me such as the movement of chemicals and heavy prefab structures. I see tons of chemicals and heavy structures on long vehicles coming down White Hall and Green Hill in that area which have no right being moved at the same time as our peak hour traffic.

4:20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

We do not know what are in the containers. We see trailers and such heavy duty vehicles travelling late in the evening without any correct lighting along the sides of the vehicles. All these things are dangerous and our traffic population is increasing. It is increasing exponentially. If we do not bring some sort of order to what is transferred at what times and on what roads we are just praying for a big catastrophe one of these days.

Sir, speaking about the ability to change and to adapt according to growing lifestyles and technology, I

must compliment the Ministry for the joint venture with the desalination plant, a plant which, I think, is some 15 to 20 years overdue. It is difficult again for Barbadians to change. You hear people calling in and saying the water does not taste the sweet way, but these are the same people who will go North, go into Miami, go into Florida not knowing that quite a significant amount of their water is purified by way of desalination.

Sir, we have to come to grips with the fact, and particularly the hotels and the golf courses, that they have to use recycled water from their sewage systems. Each of them should have a system whereby the sewage effluent should be recycled and used for their golf courses, gardens and lawns.

What I hate to hear and abhor the statement that they use well water as if well water is no part of our underground water. The same brackish water which they use and which they speak about, it is high time that brackish water be converted by the same hotels, and not only by them, but by the Water Authority, as drinking water and a step further, to help to boost the existing drinking water supply as opposed to the potable water supply.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I would ask the Honourable Member to conclude.

Mr. D.T. GILL:

I will conclude now, Sir, because if I do not get in now, I do not think I will get back in, the pecking order is very tight.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

But time is time.

Mr. D.T. GILL:

Yes, Sir. Just as the City of London had to do their refitting in order to conserve the amount of water which is being lost, and it was estimated that a quarter of the water pumped through London was not reaching the destined households and delivery points, there is also great evidence that in the underdeveloped and the not so rich countries as much as 50 per cent of the water which is pumped, does not actually reach the desired destination.

Sir, we must move with technology, but as we move with technology we must be prepared to limit the impact which improved and improving technology brings to bear.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I do not know if I will be able to get back in, but I would be grateful, and I am grateful that I have caught your eye. I am obliged, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This certainly proves that perseverance seldom fails.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a brief intervention in this debate on a few points. First of all, Sir, on

the matter of public transportation, I join all Honourable Members who have indicated the need for some adjustment to be made to the way we approach this matter of public transportation.

My perspective is for us to remember that in dealing with public transportation and for the Ministry really to remember that public transportation is an essential economic input. If we work from that perspective, Sir, we will recognise that any decisions we make concerning how we route public transportation, the route structure, the operating hours and even the fundamental requirements for there to be an integration or coordination of efforts of the Government-owned and private owned transportation, we will remember that one of the difficulties we have right now is that many of the routes as presently run, and indeed, some of the operating hours, are based on an economy and a demography of the past.

The reality is, Sir, that since the last major route rationalisation, new communities have emerged all over Barbados. You can count, Sir, very easily, the several communities which are even less than 10 years old. There are many less than 20 years old. Many of the routing structures, the way how the buses have run have been along the traditional routes which have been there since there was a bus service.

There have been one or two innovative services, for example, the Oistins to Speightstown, the St. Judes to Oistins, and so on, a few cross country services, but I would strongly argue, Sir, that if we follow the growth and development of the new communities, Kingsland is not very old, as you would be aware, Sir, and I know that you know Kingsland very well, but it is a very large community. Lowlands, Sir, is not an old community, and I can go on and on to list them. A fundamental point is that we have to take the opportunity in making the major rationalisation of public transportation of dealing with population shifts.

The other point we must recognise, Sir, and I must make this point on behalf of areas of my constituency. Sometimes an assumption is made that new communities which are primarily wall houses, the development areas as they are generally called, do not need a bus service. That is very wrong.

One of the greatest lobbies that I have in Lowlands, Sir, is for an improvement in the bus service. Many people would assume these people have big wall houses and they have cars. In some cases some of the newer residents might have sold their car to help meet the down payment. That is a reality of how people progress and the husband, wife and children need the bus.

In many cases, Sir, as people are in the dawn of their adult life and the dawn of the relationship and building a future, they may only have one car, but both members of the union are working. Therefore, they need to be able to get around, not to mention the children, Sir. There is as much a need for bus services in these areas as there is otherwise.

In addition to that, Sir, even in some of the more affluent and mature districts, there are people who work in those communities. I am making the very strong call for a rethinking of the way how buses run.

4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Everyone nowadays does not work in Bridgetown. That, again, is part of the tradition so that all roads, except for the special services, all buses go to Bridgetown, which has a complication. For example, in my constituency there are several persons who live ranging from St. Patricks to Silver Sands and areas between Parish Land, who have worked at Newton Industrial Park. You would have many persons in the constituency of Christ Church East Central who work in this area. Some work at Oistins and what we need in these suburban parts of Barbados are more localised services.

A person should be able to catch a local bus from Silver Sands to get to Newton. That is the reality of the relationship between work and residence. A Silver Sands resident would have to catch a bus from Silver Sands, get off at Oistins and walk up the hill or if they can afford it, go to Bridgetown and up again. So we have to look at a local service. In fact, Sir, because this is one way where rational use could be made of the larger buses and the smaller buses that we have so that larger services can run from Bridgetown to strategic points around Oistins, the Glebe, Six Roads, Holetown and so on, and our small units used for local service within the wider community because there are still many people who have to walk long distances.

The other point is that we have a reality today where work time is not just eight to four or seven to five. There are people who work shift, seven to three and three to eleven and eleven to seven. There are people who are in our service sector in restaurants, and other leisure facilities who work until midnight and one o'clock. There are people who are required to go to work at the early hours. I would want to suggest that the Ministry in doing its rationalisation of transport has to take account of the needs of the new economy where the hours of work have expanded and perhaps put in place a limited special service for those persons in the tourism sector, in information technology and other aspects of the international business sector whose work is driven not so much by our traditions in Barbados but by the requirements of the market that they serve, the reality that things like entertainment are primarily night-time based.

Sir, I want to move on to another point, the matter of how the Ministry carries out work in communities. In the Christ Church area - and I am sure I have your permission to speak of it, Sir, as you have to be in that silent position - there is something in the region of 185 miles of road, one of the largest, just second to St. Michael in terms of the amount of road within the parish. For the most part that Christ Church area is serviced by the South Point depot of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Sir, I would want to support the Ministry in its new policy thrust and urge them to do even more in terms of providing equipment and fully allocating resources to these depots and also to ensure that in the allocation of resources to depots that an account is taken of the amount of responsibility which the depots have, by way of comparison with other parishes with 40 miles of road because of the reality of the situation.

We, in Christ Church, Sir, want to make a very strong argument for a strong, vibrant, well equipped depot in Christ Church so that our roads from Kendall Hill to Oistins, from Chancery Lane to St.

Patrick, from Briar Hall to Vauxhall can be properly serviced. The other reality of having lots of roads is that there is lot of potential for damage and disruption.

We know that with all of the house building and other economic activity going on in our area that the Water Authority will from time to time have to cut the roads. Very often due to the breakdown of equipment and other factors the road is not able to be reinstated soon. That causes great inconvenience.

It is my strong view, Sir, and I know that the Minister supports this, that the inconvenience to the general travelling public of Barbados would be greatly reduced where localised depots are fully equipped and able to deliver repairs quickly, because the other factor is that very often if we were to depend on a centralised approach sometimes the problems that exist may not even be known. Thankfully, we, politicians, keep them on their toes and let them know what is happening so I am making that strong pitch for Christ Church as far as the resources are concerned.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the operation of the depots I would also want to make the strong suggestion that we sometimes revert to the facts of the past. It was not unusual in the past to see a can of tar with a pump and some bricks along a couple of roads and a rock engine. Tar roads were used for a number of the local and secondary roads and it was a cost-effective, regular, routine form of maintenance and it certainly provided if not a smooth, an even surface which was convenient for driving and for walking. I believe that in many of the local roads within our area that a fully resourced depot would be of great value.

In the limited time that is available, I want to move on very quickly to one other aspect of the Ministry. This Ministry is charged, as I indicated in the Estimates, with responsibility for matters in relation to water resources. Identification, provision of maintenance of waterways, gullies, outfalls and other drainage facilities as well as the protection and conservation and development of water resources and the operation and maintenance of sewerage systems.

Sir, I want to give the greatest possible support to the Minister and to the Barbados Water Authority as they attempt to ensure that this society is provided with an adequate supply of water. I trust that the investment made in the desalination plant will certainly go a long way towards solving what has become an annual problem of shortage. Over the many years, in the crop season, there are shortages, all like now, Sir. We are hoping that would become a thing of the past with the desalination plant.

I want to laud them as well on their aggressive programme of leak detection which they have embarked upon as well as water mains replacement. In my area, for example, where I live in the rural part of Christ Church, many roads under which these water mains lay were on dirt with some marl and paving on top. Sir, where I live in Christ Church is agricultural. When I look through my windows I see canes. What it means is that at this time of the year tractors, trailers, trucks are there. Where I live in Christ Church is also an area of oil production so several times a day large tankers roll by with oil and under these dirt roads are the water mains.

I must commend the Barbados Water Authority for the very prompt way in which they have fixed leakage as a result of the imperfect conditions in which these water mains were laid. It is to their credit that, notwithstanding those challenges not of their making, they have been able to rise to the challenge. I would want to urge the Barbados Water Authority to be part of a greater degree of inter-governmental

department coordination. The matter of drainage and prevention is very much interlinked with the matter of resource protection. I would be the first to make a call for sustained and greater effort in the prevention of flooding as areas in my constituency are prone to flooding ranging from the Woodbourne area to St. Patricks down to Silver Sands, Chancery Lane, Gibbons and Sayes Court.

I would commend the Ministry for the increased well cleaning and well digging programme which they have in place. The reality is that in many areas of the country and, more particularly, Christ Church, there has been a clash between human development and the national economy. Many of the areas that were water courses have been blocked by construction. Many of the areas that were recesses in the land which we in the country called 'bottoms' are areas in which persons have done substantial construction and they have either prevented water from running or diverted the path of the water.

4:40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon R. R. FARLEY:

The \$7.7 million which the Government has allocated to drainage services is money which is well spent. Those of us who do not live in flood prone areas do not appreciate the hardships, the loss, the discomfort which is occasioned by persons who are affected by flood. Sir, you and I would know it, we have areas like Wotton which continue to be somewhat of a problem although it has been eased somewhat over the years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon R. R. FARLEY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The gully system of Barbados has over the many years been the key in providing that dual role, that of taking the surface run off and that of aquifer recharge and putting the water back into the earth which comes out then in the form of a well, Sir. If you want to see a perfect example of that go and visit Harrisons Cave and you will see what has happened. Test has also been done, Sir, to prove this.

The Barbados Water Authority needs to join with the Ministry of Environment and other agencies to ensure that there is a proper education programme because I do not think that persons illegally dump in gullies. People who throw dead sheep, old fridges, mattresses, old brick and mortar are aware that they are throwing this into their drinking water. That is a reality, Sir. I think that the Barbados Water Authority is well placed to use whatever financial, technical and other resources they have at their disposal to deal with this because at the end of the day, their mandate cannot merely be the abstraction of water for distribution around the country but the protection of the very source of that water, which in our case, are the rainfalls and the surface run off.

Sir, I want to urge Barbadians to join in the protection of the gully system of Barbados out of recognition that it is that gully system which for all of the years that there has been a Barbados has prevented flooding and has put surface water into the underground wells and has allow us to be able to quench the thirst of an ever increasing population.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Chairman, as a representative for a low lying area I want to address this whole question of drainage. I recall many years ago, Mr. Chairman, writing the Ministry which I thought was responsible for draining, and the Ministry referred the correspondence to an expert in a different area all together. I believe this was before the Coastal Zone Management Unit. The so-called expert, I do not remember who is, replied saying, that where you have low lying areas you could almost throw up your hands in despair fatalistically and say that because the seas are close by that nothing could be done. I did not like that at all. Once the seas is close by you get all types of allegations. In England there is a cricket ground called Hove and when the ball swings at Hove they say it is the sea tides although I do not hear anybody say that Kensington is close to the sea and that the sea affects Kensington's pitch. This particular chap who was not a member of the Ministry of Public Works insisted that nothing could be done realistically to alleviate the problem of flooding on the west coast because it was located close to the sea.

I am heartened, Mr. Chairman, that we now have a Drainage Unit and legislation that accompanies the activities of the Drainage Unit. It was this side of Parliament, Mr. Chairman, that passed the legislation to do something about it. Certainly, on the basis of having made a conscious choice, Mr. Chairman, to pass legislation to control flooding and also to set up a unit, then clearly there is such a thing as the political will to do something about our drainage problems.

Mr. Chairman, we have to ensure that where we have this political will that it sufficiently backed up by a determination amongst those who are supposed to carry out the mandate to ensure that in a modern era the best available advice of a technical nature is given and that acts will be carried out to do something about the problems.

I would concede, Mr. Chairman, that too many Barbadians get a bit too anxious and sometimes a bit outrageous about this problem. I know what it is when a puddle of water no more than a foot would be some place and the whole community would be alarmed rather than throwing some marl in the water to stop it being there. I also know instances, Mr. Chairman, where people agitate for a road and then when

the road is being constructed and a little dust comes off they make noise and if a puddle of water gathers close to the road they make noise when sometimes they themselves could do something about the puddle.

I want to be fair then, Mr. Chairman, and say that quite often some of us in Barbados get a little bit carried away about our concerns with little puddles of water and when we can help ourselves, we turn to Government agencies. I do not, however, want to be pessimistic or fatalistic and say that, bearing in mind the character of a given location or its closeness to the sea or gully, that inevitable a damnable problem will exist. I do not want to say that all. I feel that in a modern era where engineering has been able to break down barriers and where people can usually, Mr. Chairman, to be honest, easily diagnose problems, then once we put in place the types of systems to get our programmes going we should have no problem.

The people of Barbados single out a particular functionary in the Drainage Unit as a person really on the ball and a willing person. I do not remember the person's name and in any case if I give the name it would be divisive and fractious to single him out as a public officer of such great repute that other around him might feel a little bit left out and such like.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that considering what my colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said, with the will, with the legislation, with the determination and the determination must be political and administrative, we can do something about this. Gullies varies in size, depth, location and such like and some of our gullies can help up to hold back this water. I am aware of a plan at Sailor Gully to do something there. We need to know, Mr. Chairman, that if we do not do something about drainage problems where they exist that not only would our constituents get angry and impatience with us but in certain sensitive areas severe flooding can go pass causing ordinary inconveniences into presenting problems like threats to health if the water is left back to harbour mosquitoes and can also, in certain areas like Sunset Crest, for example, see problems of structural undermining of homes that people have spent thousands of dollars to build.

I, as the Member of Parliament for one of these areas, would certainly welcome an assurance that there are plans to look at the diagnoses that have been done and to ensure, based on these diagnoses and based on the concerns, that this Ministry which is one the biggest and most important Ministries in Barbados, would find all that it takes to get the programme going. I am not a pessimistic but I believe that in time things are going to happen but at the same time we also have to consider, Mr. Chairman, some interesting new challenges.

In the St. James area, there were expanses of land that for years were in cane holes. Where Royal Westmoreland is, used to be cane holes years ago.

4:50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.E. EASTMOND:

Where Royal Westmoreland is, used to be cane holes years ago and water never used to pass there and go down to Mount Standfast and the Garden and cause flooding. Now there is a new development called Turtle Back Ridge up in the hills, I suspect the Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows this place, since the coming into existence of the Royal Westmoreland Project and this place called Turtle Back Ridge at Sion Hill, we are now seeing new trends to do with flooding.

Do you know, Mr. Chairman, that Highway 2A between Chris Sobers's shop and the corner at Westmoreland is now flooding, when years ago that was not conceived of. The plantation at Sion Hill had cane holes, was very much in agriculture and the water was held back but now, down below the Royal Westmoreland, we are getting this flooding problem for the first time to such a degree that in a situation where no Government is endlessly endowed with resources, I have started writing letters to some of the developers to tell them that since their developments have come on stream, if they have any sort of social conscience to make a contribution to the alleviation of this problem.

Aside.

Hon. R.E. EASTMOND:

I have written to the Royal Westmoreland already. I have written a lot of private sectors interests who stand to make money and who are using our country as a locus for their profit making and I have required of them to demonstrate enough of a social conscience to help us deal with situations which have emerged since their developments and such like.

People always talk, Mr. Chairman, of the price you pay for development. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, a lot of our people who have been here all these years, need to be sure that they live, and move and have their being in comfort and all these threats that are in the way of their peace of minds, all these things that could happen to disrupt their livelihoods should really be out of the way.

Mr. Chairman, I am making this intervention in good faith and in an optimistic hope that something is going to be done to alleviate the flooding on the west coast. Before closing, Mr. Chairman, you know that in the context of the 'cut and thrust' of Parliament, those of us on this side, if you interpret collective responsibility at its highest, cannot criticise a Government, not here.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that I am urging my colleague here to take into account these concerns and to use his good offices to bear in mind that as we support his programmes and his policies. We who have constituencies and we all in here have, do want to make sure that our constituents live in peace and our constituents are able to enjoy life without disquiet.

Of course, some of us should understand we have a responsibility to advise our constituents as to how they can help themselves. I am still alarmed that a lot of people in sensitive areas wait until an accident is about to happen or in an emergency, to seek insurance coverage, whilst they could have done it way ahead of the unforeseen and help themselves that way.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, to doing all that is necessary in terms of organising their properties so that if these floods and such like happen, minimum damage will be caused, I am beginning to wonder if some of the buildings on the west coast really were well advised. Really, I am wondering if some of the buildings on the west coast really had the Town Planning's permission. I rather apprehend not.

There are little districts in St. James and St. Peter where people drop houses wherever a spot was available and I rather believe that a lot of them did not have Town Planning's permission and we now have to deal with problems which, with proper planning, could have been obliterated. I believe that all right thinking Barbadians, apart from expecting the Government to do miracles, should always ask themselves when they are about to invest in a project or to undertake a particular type of activity, what could they do sensibly and correctly with an element of foresight to ensure should nature takes its course that they would suffer minimum dislocation.

Mr. Chairman, I am thankful to you and I endorse the contribution made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. Thank you.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended until 515 p.m. today.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be suspended until 5:15 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER:

This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it shall now revert.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have long exhausted this debate but it is necessary for me to make my own interventions regarding some of the subjects that were discussed under this Head. Let me first begin by endorsing some sentiments expressed here this morning by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he talked about the improvements that have been reported regarding the behaviour and the attitude of the Transport Board's members of staff, drivers, etcetera. These are similar reports that have come to me from my own constituents regarding improvements in the level and standard and quality of service being delivered by the Ministry of Transport and Works, particularly the Transport Board.

However, Sir, I believe that we still need to totally rationalise the concept of how we deal with rules in Barbados, particularly in this area of public transport. I also endorse the sentiments of the Member for Christ East, about the essential economic input that transport provides. However, I believe, Sir, that we are still operating in an environment with old structures and rules when there is a new and emerging economy in Barbados.

New communities have sprung up, new communities in places that people would consider people may have cars, but some of them do not have cars and are still very dependent upon the public transport system. I believe, Sir, that particularly in industries like the tourism industry for example, and this concept of bringing many new rooms on board, we have already in the sector had some problems with the Barbados Workers' Union regarding bus service at night. There are many areas, as you get more hotel rooms in Barbados, as you build the number of rooms that we desire and with the new rooms coming on stream, these are going to put particular strain on the bus service or any type of public transport service to provide transportation at later hours, if we are to provide the quality service that is expected of a destination like Barbados.

However, there are some things within the statements made by the minister that are of serious issues to me. I was listening very carefully when he said that the Transport Board continues to present losses every year from the Government. I am still concerned about whether or not we are using everything within our potential, everything available to us, to shore up the revenues of the Transport Board without reverting to what I consider, not be to the best step in the world and that is to put the Transport Board back on to short routes, which were given to the private sector.

Let me say, Sir, that all of the persons who have spoken, who claimed to be champions of poor people, champions of people moving from the lower class into the middle class, it is my belief that urban and suburban transportation has been one area in which many Barbadians have become entrepreneurs. It is the one area in which many Barbadians have been able to ply a trade and to move themselves upward in Barbados.

I believe it is not the best step in the world, without exhausting first all of the opportunities available to us to make the Transport Board a better service and to make it more applicable and useable. The people of this country to go back to the short routes. I, Sir, believe that the Transport Board has a lot of potential, which is not been put to the public.

I know before there was one gentleman there who did what I consider to be a great Public Relations job. He has gone somewhere else, to the Barbados Water Authority, I believe, but he did a fantastic job in what I think was really trying to create a base for the Transport Board to be more useful to people. I do not know that we have exhausted every avenue. There are creative and innovative means of making the Transport System better, of making the transport system earn more and spend less.

When I lived overseas, there were ways and means in which the public transport system had linkages to the private sector in which you used incentives to make people ride the bus, to make people ride the subway. There were all kinds of creative and innovative ways. They were ways of facilitating the use of the bus, the use of the public transport system. I am not sure in Barbados that we have won marketing to the public well enough that our transport system is one that works, and works well, and that you can afford to do things, for example, leaving your car at home a day. I know Barbadians are very attached to their vehicles but at the same time, I believe there are many ways in which we can encourage people to ride the bus and to use a transport system which, for all of the complaints that we have in this area, in Barbados, is still the best transport system in the Caribbean, and maybe better than in some developed countries.

I believe, Sir, that there are ways and means. This thing about the short routes, I believe, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, that there are people in my constituency, you would not believe, there is no bus running down the middle of Beckles road, for example. There is no bus that runs down Beckles Road, up Brittons Hill, and through that area. There are many old people, for example, that come up there. They will not use a ZR van or they do not want to use a ZR van. Their constitution cannot take it, either physically or mentally therefore, it is necessary that these people have an alternative.

I believe, Sir, it is necessary for us to have a bus route, have a bus that is running up through Beckles Road, right up Brittons Hill, all the way up to the bottom of Rendezvous. I think it would be a good profitable route. I do not understand why it is not possible for us to continue to let these young entrepreneurs and some of the older, continue to ply the short routes and let us weed out the bad ones out of the system. Rome came down because of indiscipline. Luxury and accommodation gave way to indiscipline and brought down Rome. We need to weed out the bad ones out of the system and continue to let these people have a 'leg-up' in terms of being entrepreneurs in Barbados. I do not believe that all the ZR drivers are bad. There are some of them who are very good drivers. They are some of them that are very polite but we need to continue to do this.

The other thing is I do not know that we could ever get away from subsidising public transportation. We will always be tied to subsidising in some measure public transportation, but the level at which we subsidise it is what is the issue. I believe, Sir, that there are methods available to us, innovative and creative ways for us to continue to create a system which is less subsidised and continue to offer people opportunities to become entrepreneurs and to get interested in the systems.

As far as I am concerned, Sir, I need to compliment the Ministry on some of the other areas at which they have looked. Thank you for having the lights at the bottom of Beckles Road and Bay Street working again, which was causing a serious problem to many. There are some areas of concern. I want to see fixed. First of all, we have Culloden Road. Culloden Road is a road that is used by a lot of traffic but you know there are no sidewalks on Culloden Road. The lower part of Culloden Road has no sidewalks and we have too many schools too near to that area. It does not have any sidewalks and it needs sidewalks. Beckles Road needs sidewalks in some areas. The Ministry has been very good. It has done some work in fixing some roads in Kings Village and some areas of Dalkeith, and the road under Clapham just outside of Reece Land in Brittons Hill that has collapsed, it has done some extensive work there.

However, there is a situation in the Bayland and I know that you would tell me that the Ministry of Transport and Works is not responsible for this, but during the South Coast Sewerage Project, roads were dug up in the Bayland and they have never ever been reinstated properly. We have people in the Bayland who are suffering. They tell me that is the Ministry of Health but somebody needs to do something about the roads in the Bayland because they have never been reinstated properly and we have significant problems with that.

As far as I am concerned, Sir, the road in Dalkeith, by Dalkeith corner, there by the NUPW, that too needs to be widened and that needs to be changed. That is a most dangerous corner. We have the Seventh Day Adventist School, we have the Garrison School, that road needs widening. We have asked about it, we have written about it. At night you cannot even see anybody passing there at all.

Regarding the drainage, I've heard people talk about drainage in their constituencies. When they were doing the South Coast Sewerage Project in the Bay Land and the fellows dug down they hit water early, very early.

5:25 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

If you want to talk about places that are prone to flooding, there are two places in the Bayland called Clarke's and Luke's Avenue. Somebody put in a pump there some years ago. The pump does not work. It never work and it will never work. Every time there are two drops of rain, Clarke's and Luke's Avenue in the Bayland floods.

When I was a boy, I remember seeing a former Prime Minister there in boots, galoshes, winter coat and all kinds of things because that area is an area that is prone to flooding.

The older people living in St. Michael South have told me that Beckles Road used to be a river bed many years ago. There is a pasture there now by the corner of Old Quarry Avenue - I think it is - but people told me that they used to fish in there. It used to be a pond. So when I hear people talking about drainage and talking about which areas that are prone to problems, those are areas that easily comes to mind.

I must admit that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport have done some very good work in terms of cleaning some of the wells and clearing some of the areas but as soon as the rainy season comes we are going to be faced with the same type of problem all over again.

Sir, there are some other areas that have problems with flooding. The back of Culloden Road has a problem. There is a place called Bullen's Alley just off Dalkeith Road which has a problem with drainage. Bullen's Alley has never had a good road. There are still cart roads actually leading through from one area of that road into the area of Dalkeith and that has never ever been paved and continues to cause a problem.

I must say though that whenever someone is sharing blows that they must take some blows. I must admit that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has been very accommodating to the people of St. Michael South. They have been quick to respond to our pleas. They were quick to come anytime we needed them for a visit. We have actually walked the constituency together to look at areas of concerns and they have been there for us.

I want to commend and add some kudos as well to the Minister for the action that has been taken while he diligently carried out his job.

I thank you. Sir.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I would also like the Minister of Public Works and Transport to let the Chairman of the Barbados Transport Board know that I have written to the Barbados Transport Board about a bus service going through Alleyndale and Oxford in St. Lucy. They have assured me that they did not have the buses at the time but that when they receive the new buses they will take my request into consideration.

I am happy to report that the last set of those buses is in the Port now or has been cleared today and I would like to receive a letter from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport through the Barbados

Transport Board to let me know when Alleyndale and Oxford will be able to get a bus service.

I am also calling on the Minister of Public Works and Transport to issue a permit to some ZR person so that Rockfield, Bishop's, Coconut Hall and Greenidges ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

So that the people at Bishops and Cluffs would not have to walk from Greenidges corner to where they live. I think that in this day and age that distance is too far to ask people to walk from Greenidges corner to Cluffs.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I think that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport should issue the necessary permit to the people of St. Lucy so that those people can get the necessary transportation.

I am also calling on the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to speak to the Chairman of the Barbados Water Authority because since 1994, I have written to them about areas in St. Lucy that cannot get the proper water service they deserved. A good place to mention will be Spring Garden where the Honourable Member for James North could confirm that there is a half inch water main going into Spring Garden and there are about 12 houses there to be served by that half inch water main. I am calling on the Minister of Public Works and Transport to put the necessary resources and policy in place so that the workers at the Barbados Water Authority can implement these changes.

In that same letter, I have written about other areas in St. Lucy which need water service. It is regrettable that in the year 2000, I should have to be speaking in Parliament on areas like Mount Johnson, Hope Road and River Bay where people have to run long lines of pipes in order to get a water service. I think we should be past this. In the same way that we can build a recycling plant we should be able to supply water to people houses. I am saying that priority must be given to the people who have worked the fields to help develop Barbados.

I am also calling on the Minister of Public Works and Transport to recognise that the road leading into Rock Hall should have been resurfaced when that road went through the plantation - and I could never understand why the World Bank would want a road to go through Lamberts up to Date tree Hill where people hardly live but places like Josey Hill and Rock Hall and so on the roads could not have continued on.

I would also like the Minister of Finance to give to the Minister of Public Works and Transport the money to make sure that the necessary equipment and asphalt remaining from repairing the roads in Maynards are given back to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to repair the roads in St. Lucy.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

I rise to make a second intervention before closure is brought to the debate on this Head. This morning when I make my first intervention the concentration was on roads but there are a number of other areas that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport is responsible which have implications for the functioning of certain areas in my constituency.

I will use the next 10 minutes or so to stay at a very parochial level. The first area I would want to address is the drainage situation in the constituency of St. Philip South. Time and again, a number of areas in my constituency have been experiencing severe flooding. The most notable of these is the Woodbourne Park area. For quite sometime, the folks at Woodbourne Park have been suffering, and suffering badly, as a result of the lack of proper drainage over there. I can speak at length about this particular problem because I have a sister who lives there and she is perhaps the person most affected as the result of the poor drainage which exist in that area.

Things get so bad in periods of heavy flooding at Woodbourne Park that for about five or six months in each year, for the last number of years that I can remember, my sister and her family have had to vacate the area and go in search of a more comfortable and safer habitat. What we are experiencing in Woodbourne Park is that persons have to go and rent accommodation elsewhere for the safety of themselves and their families while this problem persists.

I have drawn this to the attention of the Drainage Unit and I am hoping that in the very near future a proper plan to deal with the Woodbourne Park area once and for all can be put in place.

5:35 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of other areas where the drainage problem persists. The Long Bay Development, the people there are always in contact with me, Ruby Development, Sunny Meadows which is very close to where I live. Spring Farm is another area close to me. The Long Bay Junction near Mike's Trading also experiences a serious problem of flooding.

Mr. Chairman, I will move quickly and turn my attention to the transport service. There are a number of areas in my constituency which, I am happy to report, have been benefitting from improvements to the road service. I have made contact with the Transport Board with a view of having the buses diverted to those areas now that the roads are in a better state.

The areas that come to mind are the Highland area. Diamond Valley has a reasonably well paved road. The Berlin Road, I am hoping the buses can turn through there coming up from St. Patricks, turn into Berlin Road and come back out just above the oil company. That would ease the folks in those areas tremendously. Some of the older folks who are living furthest are suffering severe difficulties when they have heavy packages and they need to lift them into their homes.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the transport service once more, there is one area of concern and it has to do with an anomaly that exists with the issuing of the permits for those ZR vans that travel the Route 16. That would be from Bridgetown to St. Patricks. Quite unlike the Transport Board buses which are allowed to go beyond Six Cross Roads and go around to Mangrove where the bus depot is being brought back into operation, those minibuses are required to come up to Six Cross Roads and stop. What it means is there is a school just up the street by me. A number of minibus drivers attempting to be cooperative by driving beyond the permitted limit may have run into problems with the law.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

What is happening is there are a number of school children and there is a primary school up there. If these children go to the minibuses, it does not make sense putting the children out at Six Cross Roads. I must say the road from Six Cross Roads to Four Roads where I live which takes them to the school that road is in a fairly poor state added to the fact that there are no sidewalks along the stretch and the children's lives are put at risk.

The minibus drivers try to be cooperative by taking the children up from Six Cross Roads over to Four Roads. What I would like to see done is a regularization of the issue of the permit for that particular route to have the minibuses travel the same route as the Transport Board bus so they can go past Four Roads over to Mangrove, then come back down to Six Cross Roads and down the road.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy also made mention of the fact that we need to install more water mains to deal with those folks who are living in the most remote areas. Some of my constituents in areas like Gemswick, those who live further in like Mr. Waterman and Mr. Best they have to run pipes considerable distances and all sorts of vehicles run over these pipes. When there is damage to those pipes, if the damage is unknown, it shows up in the water bill.

Mr. Chairman, I will be appealing to the Barbados Water Authority again to give us some help with the installation of water mains so that the folks will have to run pipes shorter distances. Other areas include Kirtons No. 3. There is an area in Seaview that we are looking for the installation of water mains.

Mr. Chairman, the final point I would want to speak about relates to roads. I mentioned earlier the road from Six Cross Roads leading up to Four Roads but the stretch extends up to the Kirtons junction. I want to appeal to the Ministry of Public Works - first of all let me thank them for including this particular stretch of road on which I live.

There is a special road rehabilitation programme for next year but because there are two schools in that area, that is, St. Martins Four Roads Primary, which is very close to myself, and the Princess Margaret School which is in Six Cross Roads, the children come from upper St. Philip to get over to Princess Margaret School and the children come from all directions to get to St. Martins Mangrove Primary that when they are fixing the road in that area, please give sidewalks to protect the lives of the young children.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you. Thank you.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, we have had a very healthy debate on this Head 37. I want to thank all those members on both sides of the House who have made their contributions. Your concerns will be noted. Your comments and observations will be noted and will not go unnoticed.

There were some concerns raised after the luncheon period. I want to let the Honourable Member for St. Lucy know that work on the damaged bridge at Alexander, St. Lucy, was due to start earlier this year. All the steel has been bought and bent. However, the plantation owner in the area has asked that we do not start the work early because of the crop season so we are accommodating him.

Colleton to Checker Hall - work was started on the cutting down of the rock to the narrow roads. The Barbados Light & Power, we know they have some poles in the area to be moved. I can assure you that we will be working on those for you.

I want to touch on the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, not home base, but to talk a little bit about the depots in Barbados. The country is serviced by 12 out depots. All the constituencies, except the parish of St. John have depots. The constituency of St. John is serviced by the depot at Golden Ridge in St. George.

If I can just look at the depots, Mr. Chairman. The depot at Richmond is responsible for servicing the constituency of St. Michael Central, St. Michael South Central, St. Michael West and Bridgetown. Now the Deacons Farm is responsible for the constituency of St. Michael North, St. Michael North East, St. Michael North West and St. Michael West Central.

5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

The depot at Bridge Road is responsible for servicing St. Michael South, St. Michael East, St. Michael South East and the constituency of Christ Church West. The South Point Depot is responsible for servicing the constituencies of Christ Church West Central, Christ Church East Central, Christ Church East and Christ Church South.

The St. Philip Depot at Six Cross Roads services the constituencies of St. Philip North and South. Golden Ridge services St. George South, St. George North and the constituency of St. John.

The St. Andrew Depot at Belleplaine services the constituency of St. Andrew. The Joes River Depot which is no longer there was responsible for servicing the St. Joseph area but now is operating out of the same depot as St. Andrew. Very soon we will be having a new depot built for them.

St. Thomas is serviced by the depot at Bagatelle; St. James North and St. James South are serviced by the depot at Prospect. St. Peter is serviced by the depot at Jerusalem and Chance Hall Depot services St. Lucy.

Incidentally, a new depot at Chance Hall is being erected. A few weeks ago, my technical staff and myself visited all the depots in Barbados to get a first hand look at how the depots operate, what is happening to the depots and their needs and concerns. We have found that where the depot at Chance Hall is operating from is in a very bad state of disrepair. The depot at Deacons Farm also needs some upgrading.

I would say the depot at Prince Road is the best kept depot and Six Cross Roads is not too bad. We have been given some money by the Minister of Finance this year to upgrade our depots and I believe that if we can upgrade depots and keep them in good condition it would help to motivate the staff there. We are planning to outfit the depots with one refrigerator each and a little table-top stove that they can get a cup of tea or do a little cooking during the day when they do not carry to work lunch.

Some chairs and desks are needed at some of these depots. They all need utensils so we are working very hard to bring these depots up to scratch. If the workers are motivated, I am quite sure they would deliver the goods.

I want to touch also on the concerns of the Member for St. Michael South Central. He mentioned the traffic lights at the Pine. Yes, the Pine is at the East-West, North-South junction, it is a dirty corner. There are accidents every day. When I have to go that side I go around by the Wilkie Cumberbatch School, come down and cut out that side because I do not want to be involved in an accident there.

We decided that we would put some traffic lights in the area and we put out to tender the whole business of bringing the area up to date, extending the lay-bys, putting the lights in place. Two tenders came in, one was for \$2.5 million the other for \$2.7 million. We are not in a position to do that this year so we decided to do it in-house. We do have the lights. We have been given some money by the Ministry this year and very soon we will be able to get those lights installed.

The last member spoke about the Transport Board. We are getting ready to have the buses rolling. As I said earlier, the buses are being off-loaded at the Port now and all the members who have concerns about the bus service in their constituencies can rest assured that we will soon be having a proper bus service for you.

I also want to say that last Friday I attended the opening of a seminar by the Barbados Transport Board. I was able to meet a young gentleman there who was a product of the private service vehicles. He is now working for the Transport Board and I said to him that he should be a good role model for the other private transport workers, in that he has for two years straight won the yearly award for the best driver and he has also won awards on four or eight occasions.

There are not all bad drivers in the system. We are still begging those who know that they are not up to scratch to come to scratch.

I look forward to having a full debate on the Transport Board in this Chamber as soon as we come together to look at the whole restructuring of the Transport Board.

The Honourable Member for the City was talking about parking in Bridgetown. I, myself, passed Broad Street this morning and I saw the indiscriminate parking there. There is one particular van that parks on Broad Street almost every morning. One morning I stopped and asked the guy why the van is parked there and he said it is the bank's van and it can park there.

Quite often I have to go up Broad Street and if I see a policeman ask him to go down and clear up some of the parking in Broad Street. Broad Street is so small. It is a main shopping area and it is not right that people should come and park indiscriminately in that area.

The other thing I want to look at on Broad Street concerns a lot of broken culverts that I see. I know the Ministry is responsible for the upkeep of the roads in Barbados and these culverts but we have to have dialogue with some of the owners of these buildings because I believe that some of these owners are responsible for the sidewalks if they put them there when they were putting in their buildings.

After the Estimates debate, probably week after, I and my technical people will be having a chat with the Rayside people who are getting together the Bridgetown project. They are far behind hand on that and we want to see what is happening to try to get that whole Bridgetown area completed.

Someone earlier spoke on signage. There are two sets of signage. We have the regular ones on roads. When I visited the Chance Hall depot I saw some signs that were weather beaten and you could scarcely see the name of the streets, some of them are broken. I drew to their attention what was happening and they promised me to have those signs. It is not only in Chance Hall that this goes on but all over the island you can see signs which are weather beaten. The other thing about signage is that a paper is going to Cabinet on signs in Barbados. It will cost some money but we are being offered help by some business people. We know that Barbados is a tourist designation and when tourists are in Barbados they have to know where to find certain places so we are working on the signs for Barbados.

At this moment, I would just like to touch on what is happening at the Water Authority. The Barbados Water Authority had a few problems during the year 1999 where water outages were concerned. Part of this was as a result of adding some 55 000 domestic water metres to the system during the past two years. We can safely say that with the coming of the desalinisation plant that we should not be having those outages that we were having in the past.

The Barbados Water Authority from tomorrow morning will be opening their customer services office in the Coles Building in Bridgetown. We are trying to get our image out there. I want to take off my hat to the manager there, Mr. Stetson Babb, who, as you know, previously worked with the Barbados Transport Board and then he went to work with the Barbados Water Authority. Mr. Babb is doing an excellent job with the Water Authority. He is bringing the kind of image that it should have.

Over the years I am quite sure that you would agree with me that the Barbados Water Authority had a poor public relations image and Mr. Stetson Babb has done a fantastic job, as I said, and the office will be opened tomorrow morning.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South was talking about water metres and zones. The Honourable Member for the City called them 'banjo strings'. This is where you live in an area where you do not have a water main so you have the one-inch pipe running on the side of the road and up the gap. I have been able when people write to me - the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has written to me recently on two or three areas in his constituency that these people do not have water mains - to get some in place of late. We managed to get one through Mann's Gap in Passage Road. The Barbados Water Authority has crews involved in this aspect of the capital works programme.

5:55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

For the last three to four years, however, our internal programmes have been seriously disrupted by the Ministry's own road work programme. As we go on now, we will be hoping to have more and more water mains laid in areas. When the tenantry road programme is going on we make sure that if a road has not got a water main, we put in the main before the tenantry road is built. All those people who are living in tenantry roads can rest assured that as we go putting tenantry roads in place that we will be making sure that these areas that need water mains will have the small three inch water mains as well we are encouraging the NPC in areas where people have a desire to use their products, to run the gas main at the same time so that we would not have to go back in there and cut the roads and so on.

The Barbados Water Authority at the same time has outgrown the office where it is located now. Two people cannot walk on the stairs at the same time and the building is small and congested with boxes packed in the corner. We have the accounts department at Welches and we have another department located at Eagle Hall and we are paying rent for these places. There is a piece of land below the Pine Hill Dairy which we are purchasing to build our new headquarters. We are looking at putting up a \$25 million project there.

Mr. Chairman, one more thing I want to look at is the highway rehabilitation special project. The Government will be looking at rehabilitating some thirty to forty roads over a four year period. In addition to the Bridgetown bypass project which is a \$53 million project, we will be doing the special

project of the Hindsbury Road which is a \$3 million project and as I have said, we are having a programme where we will spending in excess of \$6 million per year over the next four years of this programme. One of the roads included in that programme will be Martindales Road where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is. That Martindales Road is in a very bad condition. Just week before, part of the road caved in and it was not passable for about one week but we took the opportunity then and Barbados Water Authority went in and changed part of the main and then we did some good work in there. As I have said, later this year we will dig up the whole road and resurface that whole road.

Jemmotts Lane also is very heavily used by vehicles and that road will be resurfaced. The ABC Highway between Everton Weekes roundabout and the Clyde Walcott roundabout will be given a face lift also.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I would like to inform the Honourable Member that you have two minutes.

R. D. MARSHALL:

Bay Street at the Wellington Street corner to Jemmotts Lane will be fixed. Halls Roads, River Road, John Beckles Drive, Speightstown by pass, Bragg Hill, Ebenezer, Six Roads, Padmore Village in St. Thomas, parts of Collymore Rock, Grazettes Road, Fairfield Road and Deighton Road amongst others. As I have said, it is a four year programme.

Asides.

R. D. MARSHALL:

My family here is reminding me that Lead Vale in Christ Church should be done. In Lead Vale there is a massive job to be done and we will make sure that we pave it for you but I cannot assure you that all will be done in barber green. There are some side streets where we will have to use the ordinary oil and chips on that road. As I have said, Mr. Chairman, I once again want to thank all those Members who contributed to the debate. We had a very healthy debate and you can rest assured that the staff at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport have been given mortar to build the bricks and we will do that. My staff have assured me that as long as we get the vehicles that we will be doing the work. By the end of April, we will be having enough trucks out there because each depot should have at least three trucks - one weeding truck, one passenger truck, and one materials truck.

Honourable Member were concerned about weeds being left at the side of the road. That happened in the past because we did not have the amount of trucks to use but now every depot will have the required number of trucks and the weeds will be move between 48 to 72 hours. Once again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I beg that Head 37 as amended stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 10:GOVERNOR - GENERAL - \$998 657 .

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 10 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 11:JUDICIARY - \$201 968.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 11 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that.

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

6:05 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT - \$6 505 753

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (AS AMENDED) -

\$41 891 407

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 13 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE (AS AMENDED) - \$6 132 316

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 15 as amended stand part.

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

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE - \$2 753 909

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 17 - THE OMBUDSMAN - \$290 660

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 17 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 18 - AUDIT - \$771 730

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
(AS AMENDED) - \$ 84 772 649**

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 19 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 20 - MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT (AS AMENDED) - \$5 737 536**

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that Head 20 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 21 - MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (AS AMENDED)
- \$16 792 105**

Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

I beg to move that Head 21 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH (AS AMENDED) -

\$176 581 045

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Head 23 as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (AS
AMENDED) - \$40 733 746**

Hon. A.P. WOOD:

I beg to move that Head 25 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES - \$34
161 727**

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

I beg to move that Head 26 stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**HEAD 27 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT (AS
AMENDED) - \$84 962 493**

Hon. G.W. PAYNE:

I beg to move that Head 27 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (AS AMENDED) -

\$24 458 858

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Head 28 as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 29 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS - \$280 212

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 30 - THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (AS AMENDED) -

\$49 258 765

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Head 30 as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE (AS AMENDED) - \$30 608 674

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 32 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 33 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR SPORTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM (AS

AMENDED) - \$29 311 782

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 33 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE (AS AMENDED) - \$224 469 016

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to Head 34 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS (AS AMENDED) - \$28 800 383

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 38 as amended stand part.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE (AS AMENDED) - \$ 9 872 706

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Head 50 as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CLAUSE I

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Clause I stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CLAUSE II

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Cause II as amended stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CLAUSE III

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Clause III stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CLAUSE IV

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that Clause IV stand part.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

THE SCHEDULE (AS AMENDED)

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

I beg to move that the Schedule as amended be the Schedule to the Bill.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

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

6:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

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

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, the Bill was read a third time, passed and be cited as the Appropriation Act, 2000.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER:

Order, please. With the House's permission we will now revert to Government Business.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister, I beg to lay the Annual Reports of the National Productivity Council for the years 1996 - 1997 and 1997 - 1998.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following

The Fair Trading Commission Bill, 2000

The Utilities Regulation Bill, 2000.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, seconded by Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN, the following Bills were read a first time:

The Fair Trading Commission Bill, 2000

The Utility Regulation Bills, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

In so moving, Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform Honourable Members that copies of the Bills should shortly be in their hands. It is proposed by the Ministry responsible for these Bills that they would invite public comment. I believe up until the 15 May, so that people can send in their concerns, criticisms or suggestions about the Bills. After we have completed the process of consultation, we would have the second reading perhaps some time in June.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 8 - THE MONEY LAUDERING (PREVENTION AND CONTROL) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2000

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Earlier during this sitting I indicated, and I believe that the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for International Business indicated that one of the disconcerting activities internationally, has been the movement by the OECD countries and more recently by the Financial Action Task Force to, as we see it, put road blocks in the way of the development of jurisdictions such as ours, as offshore financial services centres. It is one of the ironies or paradoxes of contemporary international situation, that international financial institutions and indeed many leading developed countries have encouraged countries in the developing world to shift their economic focus from that of a monoculture to a more diversified economy, indeed encourage them to turn their economies outwards by providing a number of services.

At the same time that encouragement has been given and countries in this region have responded and followed the lead set by Barbados in 1979, when we passed sweep of offshore legislation to provide another plank to this economy. All of that is happening and yet the same countries that have been encouraging us to diversify our economy have suddenly within the last two years, started to condemn the practices of certain countries in the financial services sector.

I say some countries, but there is a danger in that because as far as the Caribbean is concerned, and certainly at the level of the United Nations. Even countries such as Jamaica, which have no noticeable offshore sector, have been fingered by the UN in the document "Tax Havens and Banking Secrets", as jurisdictions which carry on harmful practices. The OECD began the attack on the publication of a document on harmful tax practices.

More recently, the Financial Action Task Force, which is a grouping of developed countries, not only Europe but also as far as Australia, the FATF has recently let it be known that they intend to carry out studies on many of the countries in the offshore financial services, and they are prepared to deem those which have lax, regulatory and legislative frameworks, non-corporative countries.

Barbados is not a tax haven trade. Barbados is a low tax trade, primarily so, and even though there has been no single report that I am aware of, which has spoken adversely about Barbados, we cannot be complacent.

Barbados is a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force which was launched in Kingston in 1992. The Financial Action Task Force, which is a kind of mother organisation, published 40 recommendations in the late 1980's. The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force adopted those 40 recommendations and added another 19 to them. The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force was developed with the assistance of developed countries in the FATF to ensure that jurisdictions in the Caribbean run clean operations with a view to reducing the potentiality for money laundering.

The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force uses many strategies and programmes to ensure that member countries do as much as possible to reduce the potentiality for money laundering. They start first with the system of self-assessment where a country is asked to answer a large number of questions and as a result of that, you are assessed as to your status in terms of regulatory and legislative framework. Thereafter, you go through what is called mutual evaluation and briefly, that requires that other countries, other than the particular country which is being evaluated send in a team, there are usually three - a banker, a senior police officer and a lawyer and they spend about a week in each jurisdiction.

6:25 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

These evaluators are not from the country so that when Barbados was evaluated in 1998, we had someone from the Bahamas, the Netherlands and Bermuda who came and not only study our legislation but they met with the Central Bank of Barbados; commercial banks; insurance companies; post offices; Customs and a whole slew of persons and agencies and they wrote a report which was then taken to the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) in plenary session.

In the plenary, the country is rigourously examined on the report. I should have said that you get a draft to see what the evaluators have said about the country and then the draft comes up and it is discussed in the plenary and ultimately you will get the final report.

When Barbados was neutrally evaluated, we got a good report. There were a few concerns which were expressed about certain aspects of legislation and the Government set up a committee to continue work on the report and to make sure that in due course we will make the necessary amendments to the legislation by closing the loopholes which would have been identified. Generally speaking Barbados had a good report.

Now, although we are closely related through the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force to the Financial Action Task Force, it comes as a bit of a shock that the Financial Action Task Force which is cognisant of the reports of countries in the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force - because when I was Chairman of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force in 1998, I had to go to Brussels and do a presentation for the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force - they are aware but it comes as a shock that while you are in a grouping which has the blessings and financial support of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that suddenly that body, which is virtually the parent body of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, should be seeking to destabilize countries in the offshore sector by threatening to carry out very detailed surveys into the operations of financial services in these countries.

We are aware of the publication of a set of criteria which the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is using and which ultimately will determine whether the country responses to the criteria are satisfactory, and if so, presumably, the country will get a clean bill of health, if not, the country is liable to be classified as a non-cooperating jurisdiction.

It seems from what I have seen recently coming out of the United States of America by the Secretary of State, Sommers, that they are even considering the imposition of sanctions against countries which do not measure up to the criteria which they have set up.

Now, we in Barbados are confident that not only do we run a clean jurisdiction but that we have taken trouble over the years to ensure that there have been as few loopholes as possible. Generally, at international meetings I can say I think, truthfully, that people appreciate what we have done in Barbados to support and maintain our reputation as a clean jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, money laundering is big international business. The biggest centres for money laundering are certainly North America, Miami, New York, London, Hong Kong and Zurich. I expect that the Financial Action Task Force will be pursuing the same kinds of strategies as they are pursuing against us with some of those cities that I mentioned.

I think that at the heart of the recent determination on the Financial Action Task Force, to make life difficult for some of our jurisdictions, is an understanding that in those very developed jurisdictions there are taxation systems which operate to the disadvantage of the domicile taxpayer in the developed country who wants an opportunity via tax planning to let his money work for him in another jurisdiction.

I do not believe that the developed countries take kindly to the fact that there are dollars out there owned by the citizens, of let us say England, which are finding their way into an offshore jurisdiction and yielding higher returns than could be yielded in the countries of origin. I think that is at the heart of the matter. There is some jealousy and there is some envy.

Now, when the OECD published their report I think was Luxembourg, and Switzerland that responded initially and told them that it was none of their business. Barbados' position is different. We do not believe that we have anything to hide and we have therefore made it clear that, without prejudice to the sovereignty of Barbados and without prejudice to the right of Barbados or the Crown in right of its Government to Barbados, to institute such taxation measures as the Government of Barbados thinks are appropriate in the financial and economic interest of Barbados.

Notwithstanding that, we are prepared to cooperate and so at meetings with the Financial Action Task Force and certainly with the OECD, the Government's position has been represented by officials on the behalf of the Government.

Sir, I know that the developed world is determined to classify the offshore financial sector into those which are cooperating and those which are not. I am under no illusion that certain countries in the Caribbean are going to be blacklisted. There are however influential organisations in the world which are not happy with the methodologies being pursued by OECD and the Financial Action Task Force.

6:35 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

On the 29th and 30th March, the United Nations itself is convening a forum on offshore services in the Cayman Islands, Barbados is sending a delegation to that. It should be led by the Minister responsible for International Business.

Next month in Vienna the matter will come up at the 10th UN Congress on International Crime and Treatment of Offenders. I expect to be leading a delegation to that meeting and I will make my position clear. As I explained the other night, I had to speak frankly about this at the UN in 1998 even before it became an issue because we had got wind of it.

The Government enacted the Money Laundering Prevention and Control Act in 1998. That Act calls for the establishment of an 'Anti-Money Laundering Authority' comprising, I think, three to five persons. The legislation has been highly commended internationally. I must say that we followed the model of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Last year I asked the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for assistance in establishing a financial investigations unit in Barbados. It will be a full time executive secretariat. The 'Anti-Money Laundering Authority' will be like a board with five persons at the top but the day-to-day monitoring of suspicious transactions, as is called for by the legislation, will be the responsibility of the Financial Investigations Unit.

Towards the end of last year, the UNDCP responded to us and sent a team, including a very high-powered official from the UN Office in Vienna. They met with all of the relevant persons. They produced a report at the end of December which we have. They have promised us from about May a consultant, his name is Mr. Pinner, an Australian, to assist the Government of Barbados in establishing the Financial Investigations Unit, (FIU).

In anticipation of getting the legislation on the road and staffing the office, the Government has provided initial start-up funds under Head 30, Attorney General. When the legislation was initially drafted, ministerial responsibility for money laundering was vested in the Minister of Finance. The best advice is that this matter should revert to the Office of the Attorney General so that the Prime Minister will be happy to be relieved of one more department. I will assume it, Sir, without any demur.

All the Bill before us is doing is really vesting the responsibility for the Money Laundering Prevention and Control Act in the Attorney General. That is the purpose of Clause 2 of the Bill. I thought I had a duty to set this Bill in the context of the international pressure that offshore financial services centres are getting from the developed world through the OECD and the FADS.

I wish, however, to say that I welcome the UN forum that is being held in the Cayman Islands on the 29th and 30th. It was represented to me by officials from the UN that that body wishes to work with jurisdictions which are willing to be assisted in getting to an acceptable level of regulation, and technical assistance will be provided for those countries who are willing to be part of a movement of clean international financial services centres.

As I said, Barbados is being encouraged greatly to attend this meeting and, in the language of the letter that has come, to show and express the political will to have technical assistance to help us clean up our act where necessary.

We do not think there are many areas which need tightening. There are a few we can think of. I would not necessarily refer to them here, but what I think we need to do in terms of legislative enactment is something that can be easily identified and shortly dealt with. There are one or two things in the IBC legislation, the International Trust legislation that I think have made themselves obvious to me.

The study that is going on now, I did not mention that. What the Government has done in the meantime is to have established a committee including people from the Central Bank, the Office of the Attorney General and so on. This committee is working through those criteria set by the Financial Action Task Force and preparing Barbados' response. Arising out of that study, which should be completed by March 31st, we will more easily become aware of any lacunae in the legislation which need to be filled.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to second this Bill and to speak very briefly on it.

The House would be aware of the great need and the very many efforts to which we are put to defend the interest of the traditional industries of Barbados. It is also true that we are put to a great effort to defend the new sectors that were supposed to be the driving force behind the modern economy.

Anybody responsible for overseeing the growth and development of the Barbados economy therefore has equally to be concerned with protecting the interest of the traditional sectors, but more increasingly so, Sir, protecting the interest of the new sectors of the Barbados economy.

We are familiar with the problems that the sugar industry has faced from changes in the international trade rules. We are aware of the tremendous challenge that is faced by manufacturing and our efforts to make Barbados and the region compliant with WTO Rules. The challenge faced by the international business and financial sector of Barbados is very new. It is very dangerous and it is engrossing a large

proportion of the time of a substantial section of the Cabinet and a substantial section of the Civil Service available to advise the Government who, otherwise, should be available for promoting and developing the sector.

The reality, Sir, is that a group of countries without lawful authority, called the OECD countries, have decided unilaterally to try to take action in the first instance by preparing a report to bring a halt to the development of so-called offshore financial sectors. The dangerous part of it, Mr. Speaker, is that Barbados, like the rest of the world, is a signatory to a general agreement on trade and services.

6:45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

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

It is my view that any action to be taken by the international community in relation to trade and services should take place within the context of the general agreement we have signed to which all countries are signatories. The OECD countries which constitute the developed countries of the world are also signatories to the general agreement in trade and services. Hence, their move to try to initiate unilateral action to restrict the growth of international services is contrary to the spirit and the provision of the general agreement in trade and services that they have signed.

Barbados is participating in this exercise, virtually under protest, because we do not want our name to be on a black list but at the same time all of us who are signatories to this international agreement have to stand by them. In a new global society, countries of the world have to accept the principle of multilateralism. No one country, no one group of countries which are signatory to international agreements can, nor should be allowed, to feel that they can force solutions on the rest of the world defined only by reference to their own specific interests.

The position of the Government of Barbados that we have taken and the position that I will take this week when I speak to the international community at Boston University, and we have discussion on this matter, is that matters such as that being grappled by the OECD should be the subject of solutions in multilateral fora.

I am pleased to say, Sir, that one of the more important conclusions that were arrived at the global conference of small states was the undertaking by the international community that the solution to the problem of international business and finance should be found within the appropriate multilateral institutions and should not be forced upon countries by a group of countries claiming to be international policemen in areas where the first people who ought to be arrested are themselves.

Sir, we are participating in this matter at great expense. The Government has had to constitute a negotiating team and we have had to go hither and thither and yon to protect the name of Barbados. The OECD ban has caused a cloud to be cast over the international business and financial sector. There are

some private practitioners who speak glibly about the fact that enough is not being done. There is a tremendous fight that is being fought here out of the rings. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will speak to it.

I went to a summit in Brazil to make one and only one comment to the leaders of Europe that what they were doing was unlawful, without proper authority, contrary to the spirit of the GATT, that we had to collaborate but we were doing so under protest that the sooner the international community came back to protect taxes it would be best for all of us.

I say this, Sir, because there are some leading members of the international business sector who speak glibly about what the Government is doing and what it is not. The reality is that the sector is now under a cloud and until that cloud is lifted by the appropriate action in the multilateral forum we will have a continued capability in having the sector perform at its normal highly energised level.

In that respect, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to commend the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Attorney General, the Minister of International Business and his advisory group and the Government negotiating group that has been specifically put in place to defend Barbados' interest in this most vital matter.

In many respects, Sir, part of the solution to all of this lies in our putting in place regulatory and supervisory systems that can stand scrutiny, that are based upon best practice and that allow the financial system both onshore and offshore to function in an environment where only the best regulatory and supervisory practices are applied.

Barbados, therefore, has systematically been upgrading its regulatory and supervisory system in every capacity. We have put in place money laundering legislation and what is before the House is a piece of legislation to ensure that the legislation is implemented forthwith, with despatch, but also in a manner that will allow us to ensure that it adds to our supervisory and regulatory capacity.

It is my judgment, Sir, that the Ministry of Finance is not the best place to locate an anti-money laundering unit because the Ministry of Finance at the end of the day has to give an oversight to all our supervisory and regulatory functions in relation to our financial sector and therefore, the Ministry of Finance needs a detached view from the functioning of this anti-money laundering unit. We feel, therefore, it is best to be located in the Attorney General's Office but the Ministry of Finance will not lose oversight of it.

I give the House the assurance therefore that no effort will be spared by the Government to make sure of Barbados' name as a clean jurisdiction where legitimate international business is carried out.

I give the House the assurance that the Government will continue to pay keen attention to having in place supervisory and regulatory systems in all aspects of business such that a finger cannot be pointed at our country for any delinquency in our willingness to properly supervise financial and other activities. I would also advise the House that very soon we will be having for the House's consideration a new security act and other important pieces of legislation that when all put together will satisfy the world that Barbados' capacity to provide financial services and to regulate the supply of financial service is second to none.

There are some Caribbean countries that have gone ahead with legislation which the Leader of the Opposition has spoken about in terms that I am not sure merits his acclaim. I am told that some Caribbean countries are so defining the international business sector to include CARICOM. That will pose great difficulty for us in Barbados because we cannot be both a single market and see that single market as an external economy.

For Barbadians, the international business economy is an extra-regional market. If you are part of a single market and a single economy that single economy cannot be seen as an external economy at one and the same time. We have asked for a brief on the legislation of some Caribbean countries but I just want to say that Barbados will have great difficulty functioning in a single market economy in which other Caribbean economies in that single economy treat Barbados as an extra-regional market. That is all the complexity of what we have to deal with today.

Sir, this is part of the Government's continuous effort not just to safeguard the interest of the old traditional economy but to rise to the challenges that are faced now by the modern economy and it is in that capacity that I wish the Attorney General the best in a capacity that is intended that I should have to carry out on the country's behalf.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, I will not be long as I see you want to wrap up today's debate. First of all let me say that until the Prime Minister's final words on this matter I was getting concerned that the point was not yet being taken, a point that I have made on several occasions in here about the developments within CARICOM. The fact that a brief is now being sought, even before you got the brief, I could tell the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter - I am not going to do it now - about some of the development that have been taking place.

Let us say, six years ago, there were probably three full members of CARICOM that were pursuing the financial services sector in a significant way, Barbados, Bahamas, and perhaps St. Kitts. There were some other territories that had legislation for offshore banking and other individual pieces.

6:55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000.

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

In recent times you had St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, Belize, St. Kitts, Antigua, Bahamas, Anguilla, Barbados. Then you have the U.S. Virgin Island, Cayman Island and Bermuda which everybody tends to put in the same pot. The point, however, that of greatest concern is those territories which exclusive of Bahamas that are going to be part of the single market. I felt from as far back as then when I was Minister of Finance that efforts should have been made to harmonise this scenario. The point being that I had a suspicion because there were some Caribbean territories which were introducing legislation and also leasing their corporate registry for international business purposes to private operators.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

Belize is a well known example. Michael Ascroft basically runs the offshore sector there. If you go into Belize Bank tomorrow and ask them for information on their offshore sector, they reserve the right to ask you why you are asking for it. Then you have St. Lucia that almost went the route of getting a firm of UK Attorneys to oversee their offshore sector. These would be extremely dangerous developments and they were taking place against a background where there was no strong movement on the single market. Since then we have made progress and, as I have said, it is clear that many countries in the Caribbean are pinning their hopes on economic stability on major growth in this sector and are therefore going to feel, until the single market comes into full bloom, that they are in competition with other jurisdictions.

Sir, that is the first point that concerns me because there needs to be some kind of harmonisation and institutional arrangement to deal with this problem. It is going to be a major scenario at the end of the day which could create divisions of opinions throughout the region and regional leaders going off to take positions on these issues, while at home the domestic Governments do not necessary buy into those positions because they want to see their sector grow faster than anybody else's. That is something that really needs attention.

I look at the allocation of portfolio for Caribbean in yesterday paper and I do not remember seeing any for international business. Antigua had services...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

Oh, I see, that include international business. Well, I am not saying anything else on that subject for now.

The second point that I want to make. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that no effort will be spared to ensure that our domicile is a clean one but I also wish to say that it would be grossly unreasonable for the taxpayers of Barbados to have to finance elaborate schemes for the maintenance of

this reputation. We simply do not have the resources. There therefore must be greater international collaboration.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

I can speak from personal experience. May be the Attorney General knows about this or he does not but about four years ago a gentlemen came to me and said he was very well connected and wanted to set up an offshore bank so we started the process of drafting the documents. When we asked him for profiles of the directors he gave us all kinds of fancy excuses and told us to contact this body and that body but we never got the information. About a year after we had abandoned the application I got a call from the US Embassy. They said they had picked up a man at the Los Angeles Airport, not for money laundering but when they opened his brief case they found some Republic of Vietnam bearer bonds each worth US\$50 billion.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

It was a ludicrous scenario. On the bearer bonds was this representation that the bank issuing them was an offshore bank licensed in Barbados and that the Attorneys were from Barbados. Of course, never having an experience I would have panic but they told me at the Embassy that this is a common scenario. One needs to be extremely careful because he said that they tend to target people like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West because they know of his connections. They would target somebody like me because of my position in Parliament because they feel that that is a way of getting around any situation.

Now, there is no law firm, no matter how lucrative, not even the Chambers of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, that could afford to carry out the kind of diligence that would be necessary to prove the credentials and honour of those directors or the bonafide of the man sitting in front of you. Most of those guys have already dealt with other Government, other Attorneys and other institutions and they know the system. Fortunately, the Central Bank of Barbados from way back adopted a position that it was not going to license any more offshore banks unless they were extremely sure and could receive confirmation from Interpol and the other authorities about the directors and so on and, therefore, that would never have succeeded but these guys do not wait for the application to succeed. They forge ahead and there are some countries in the region that at one time you could have gone into with US\$1 500 and purchase an offshore bank and fly back out the next morning.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

How are we as a small country going to be able to monitor and find resources? Therefore, if you say, best practice, I think we need to define what that is now, and that needs to be communicated across the profession and across the institutions that are going to be involved in the development of the offshore sector.

Some years ago, I know the Honourable Member for the City is not going to admit to the error of her

ways, but the first debate the Honourable Member had in here of the offshore sector, I remember that she pointed out that gentleman by the name of Jerome Schneider had written adversely about Barbados. I told her that I did not think that it was worth worrying about because Jerome Schneider is an expert in tax havens. The point we made then is that Barbados is not a tax haven.

Aside.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

I understand that but those who read Schneider's book we do not want down here so if they write negatively about Barbados, thank goodness because anybody who travels on American Airlines you will see in the American Way Magazine there is always an advertisement carried by Jerome Schneider telling people how to secrete money. Barbados is not a jurisdiction for him so I would not even have bothered with it. There are many little pamphlets and books written about tax havens in which I am embarrassed but they do often include countries like Barbados and they say they do not have available information. We need to make sure that we constantly make the point that Barbados is not to be view of as tax haven. That we are a low tax jurisdiction, there are certain kinds of businesses that we want and there is only one way to enhance that. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East is going to have identify new products. Some of them we have identified but we took too long to get them on the statute books because of wrangling within the offshore committee that advises Government.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter talks about the private sector operative. Well, they are complaining about Government but you could not put the seven of them in a room and get them to agree on anything not even the colour of the chairs they are sitting in because they argue constantly over the same kinds of issues, basic issues, whether we should become a tax haven or remain a low tax jurisdiction. Conceptively there are miles apart, and therefore, whatever legislation you bring or whatever products are suggested, within that committee, there is very little agreement.

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

Government, therefore, is going to need to acquire its own expertise, say this is the direction we are going to take, these are the products we are going to go for, we want to go into more leasing arrangements, we want to develop a registry here to facilitate those leasing arrangements, a variety of items and that kind of development is something that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East needs to look at.

There is also a recent publication by the former Miss Rosemarie Antoine, now, Mrs. Kenny Anthony, which was recently delivered at a ISES Conference, looking at the very issue the Attorney General speaks about, development internationally to bring all activity on shore. And while that goes counter to the way in which we want to develop our International Business and Financial Services Sector, it should be required reading for all parliamentarians because it explains principally what the issues that we are trying to deal with, by way of improving our regulatory framework, are all about.

Aside.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

It is one of the documents at the conference they recently held on services in the Eastern Caribbean and I believe the Ministry had some representatives.

Aside.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

The Trinidad Government, in a very unplanned way, developed its own niche in the financial services, contrary to what people say. We always grew up hearing that Trinidad would never be a financial centre but they licence a series of merchant banks. When Barbados wants to borrow money now, you hear Barbados goes to the Trinidad market. All that means is that the facilitators are based in Trinidad but that kind of thing developed. It is true we have them here but we have never pushed it in the way like Trinidad and a lot of it happened because of the way in which Trinidad was restructuring. You needed the presence of those merchant banks to facilitate those large transactions in the petro-chemical sector and the foreign investors who were coming in.

We are not going to have that kind of investment flowing into Barbados that would justify the presence of those operations here but the point is that they have been able to develop that, put in place the appropriate legislation and that has basically been their niche. Barbados, likewise, I think has earned and had sufficient experience in this area that it can develop its own niche in terms of the region, what are the key products that we are going to offer and let the rest of the region know that this is going to be our particular thrust.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to really focus very seriously on the developments within CARICOM to see if you can get the leaders to get a grip or it is going to be difficult for Barbados because they are going to view it as us trying to stop them from making progress in an area in which we had been making progress. The point is that somebody is going to have to bite the bullet and start to deal with this issue and restore order to the situation within the region. So we do not oppose this piece of legislation.

It is prudent that an entity other than the Ministry of Finance itself deals with these issues. The Ministry of Finance is going to have to carry out its own diligence. It is advised by the Central Bank in those matters but the point is that at the end of the day, it is the Minister's signature that goes on the documents establishing offshore banks and the Minister has responsibility under the financial institutions and the other Banking Institution Act, and I assume will continue to have responsibility if more legislation is brought.

The Attorney General's office, or even better still, the development of some kind of institution which would be able to deal with issues of this sort as an adjunct to your national security arrangements, whether it is through the police force or through some other area of Government operations where those matters can be looked into and where you can develop a data base on what is happening within this sector.

Mr. Speaker, we have no problem in supporting this Bill.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Attorney General for bringing us one step closer to putting in full operation this Money Laundering Prevention and Control Act. This, Sir, is a matter of great interest and concern to the Ministry of Industry and International Business. As you would be aware, Sir, the Sector, as Honourable Members have indicated has been under a cloud, internationally. In fact, Sir, there has been a consistent, concerted and well-coordinated effort to undermine the very existence of international financial Centres.

The basic intent, Sir, and the basic drive behind all of this is to stem the flow of international capital. It is believed by the G7 countries and the wider group of the OECD countries that there is too much of the flow of capital internationally. They believe, Sir, that this leads to an erosion of the fair tax base. It renders them unable to collect domestic taxes in their jurisdictions and they believe that it can eventually undermine the international financial stability.

It so happens as well, Sir, that there is indeed a problem of international money laundering but to eliminate money laundering, you do not have to eliminate international financial Centres, that is a matter of competition. We are satisfied and convinced, Sir, that we have to ensure that we beat who are essentially our competitors at their own games.

In terms of the consistent and persistent nature of the attack, Sir, we would have heard recently the United States Secretary of the Treasury indicate what action the United States would propose to take against its domestic companies who do business internationally. You would have heard Gordon Browne, Sir, of the United Kingdom speaking about what actions their Government would take against these companies.

In the Budget today that was a major matter and you can listen for the Canadians, Sir, to do their own thing. There is a mania, Sir, a mania to blame, blacklist countries listed as tax havens. It was never the policy intention of the Government of Barbados to operate Barbados as a tax haven, Sir, and I must remind you and speak for the record that this dates back to a previous Barbados Labour Party administration when we, Sir, in an earlier incarnation took the decision to diversify the economy by way

of establishing a financial services sector.

We always knew the direction in which we wanted to go to attract reputable business, because they knew that that was sustainable and that the rush which some countries were making to get business of any kind and at any cost, would be unsustainable because sooner or later the international community would take all necessary steps to stamp out this for ever.

Sir, the reality is that the matter of the fight against money laundering is a fight in which Barbados has taken the lead within the Caribbean region and through the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. It would therefore have been a tragedy if we were not one of the countries to move to put all of our legislative arrangements and indeed, Sir, our administrative arrangements to be able to prosecute those persons who would want to engage in such activity through Barbados.

Sir, a recent survey done of the international business and financial sector in Barbados indicated that the major concern resting on the minds of investors and professionals in the sector related to the OECD report on harmful tax competition. It has been the reason, Sir, why in Barbados there has been a slow down of registration of companies because notwithstanding, Sir, the fact that the OECD does not have international legal status, it is a leading opinion maker.

Earlier OECD initiatives included, for example, the OECD model on taxation treaties, Sir, the OECD code of conduct concerning transfer pricing and other tax initiatives. They will be implemented by way of individual action taken in some or all of the OECD countries. So that Switzerland and Luxembourg were of the view that they had no right. They were a little feisty and a little uppity in propounding to want to speak to international tax matters.

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Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

The reality is that if one or two of the large member countries which serve as our principal market for these services, go in this direction, that we are in trouble. The survey of the sector indicates that while the cloud hangs overhead, that investment has and will continue to slow.

I want to applaud the Attorney General's Ministry for the effort they have made and their fullest participation in the exercise. I would have as well to commend the public officers, specifically the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, the Director of International Business and one of the Attorneys from the Attorney General's office who have been leading the Barbados delegation in intersections and fights with the OECD in an effort, Sir, which I trust will be successful, to ensure that we are not blacklisted as one of the tax havens of the world.

We are satisfied, Sir, that with initiatives such as this Money Laundering Bill that we will come a very long way to proving what we already know, Sir, but what the international community wants to see in black and white, Sir, that is, that we have systems in place to deal with these particular recommendations.

I want to give this Parliament the assurance that the Ministry of Industry and International Business is very much on top of the issue, that we have for the last 15 months and longer, been involved and leading the body of opinion amongst small states in all of the international forums in order to ensure that this matter comes to a happy resolution. I therefore want to strongly support this Bill, and on another occasion, Sir, I am sure that we will be able to give Members an update.

In June this year the OECD will give the determination of those countries whose systems pass scrutiny and whose systems do not, Sir. By then as well, this Financial Action Task Force initiative would have gone full circle. We proposed, Sir, as indicated by the Attorney General, to use the opportunity of the United Nations Forum on international business sector on money laundering and related matters to put Barbados' case of which we have the greatest confidence.

In relation to the matter if the lack of harmony in approach concerning the use of trading within CARICOM, my Ministry has already raised that matter with the CARICOM Secretariat and with our CARICOM partners. I hope as well, Sir, by the middle of the year, to be able to give the House a Full report on the outcome of those matters. So once again in conclusion for this previous intervention I just want to indicate that we in this Ministry are very happy with this step that we are taking. I look forward to the Attorney General appointing the actual money laundering authority so that we will be able to report that this is one other means by which Barbados is maintaining the pristine nature of this jurisdiction, I thank you, Sir.

Speaker: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE:

I would like to make a few comments on this matter and in relation to some of the issues on which Honourable Members have spoken. First let me begin by saying that since we activated in the 1970s the financial services sector, that Barbados has made tremendous strides and has consistently maintained an excellent international reputation as a financial centre.

There has been very few allegations about Barbados about the laundering of money through Barbados, not that they haven't been several attempts, but the vigilance of the central Bank in particular, in the manner in which it deals with applications and the vigilance of the Ministry of Finance as well, as an exchange control, have assisted us in weeding out some of the worse money launderers that have surfaced on the international scene. That is why Barbados has not had the type of cases before its courts that we have seen in other jurisdictions. For instance, in one Caribbean jurisdiction up to a few months ago, a battle was raging in the courts over the ownership of US\$100 million which was being laundered by a former Deputy Prime Minister or President of the Ukraine and the banks involved included the Bank of New York. A tremendous amount of the laundering took place within the United States itself and some of the funds that were being used was money that was being lent by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to resuscitate the economy of Russia.

It is absolute hypocrisy, absolute hypocrisy, on the part of the OECD countries, including the United States of America, to be pointing fingers at small jurisdictions such as Barbados in circumstances where the level of money laundering within their own borders has exceeded anything that one has seen within the Caribbean jurisdictions. That is one of the difficulties I have with globalization. It is too ... and it poses a tremendous problem for those of us who have had to fight trans-nationals in another forum, back in the 70's and the early 80's. So, I commend the Government and the Government agencies and the four Ministers who carry principal responsibility in this field, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of International Services and the Attorney General for the excellent job they have done to defend Barbados' reputation whilst preserving Barbados' niche markets in international services.

I must express great disappointment about our private sector people. At sometimes I wonder if they are really thinking because when I hear statements and read articles in the Business Authority and otherwise, coming out of some of the private sector agencies about what is happening in the economy or international services, I wonder if they are in the real world or if they have the capacity to think and to rationalise what is happening.

In one article I noticed that one of the leaders in the accounting world, whose firm has benefited most from the initiatives taken by successive Governments and particularly the Labour party, in financial services, he is now saying that nothing has been done, I could not find one concrete suggestion in his article, as to what should be done but he is an authority on nothing has been done, without analysing the actual practical steps that have been taken by the Governments, and I mean the DLP as well, to modernise and to keep ahead in relation to financial services in this country.

Secondly, he makes the most outrageous suggestion, not understanding the competition in the world, that we should open our doors now for lawyers from all over the world to come and practise in Barbados because that would improve our financial services. I have difficulty with that. I have great difficulty with people like that - and I believe he lives in my constituency, so he can go and vote for me or against me, people who hold themselves out as leading public opinion and who influence the type of editorials that you get in Barbados today which sometimes is not based on the sort of thinking of which Barbadians are capable. I have great difficulty with that, Sir.

I say that Barbados is willing to open its markets including in services and professional services, provided other countries do similarly to us. There is no Barbadian lawyer, qualified at the University of the West Indies, even getting the highest first-class degree, who can leave here and go and practise in Canada, the United States or the UK so why should we open our markets in that way so that they can come and practise and we cannot have reciprocity. This was built in legislation since 1973. The idiocy of some of the people speaking on behalf of the private sector today amazes me because if that is the analysis, that is required at this time of our history, that is exactly why I do not care what editorials they write, whenever it comes on matters of this nature, I expect a higher standard of performance from people who claim that they are leaders in Barbados.

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Continuation of Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE:

Asides.

Now, Sir, he talks to people who do not know, but those of us who have been in practice understand the position. I can practise in the United Kingdom (UK) because I was qualified there but all of those lawyers who have obtained their qualifications from our University cannot practise in Canada, Britain or the Channel Islands except in the Privy Council without qualifying there by way of further examinations but they face the difficulty of gaining admission to take the examinations.

We must understand that this is a strong economic battle that is going on for those who have in the developed world to take away from those of us who are trying to improve ourselves in the developing world.

I have had the honour of being the foreign minister of this country for many years. I understand the battle very clearly and I have never lost the focus of this country as expressed by successive Governments about our stance in international relations whether those international relations be political or economical. I want to drum home to our people again particularly at this time that we must be careful how we fall prey to the sort of views being given in the name of globalisation.

I join with the Honourable Member in calling for greater harmonisation and coordination of regional financial services. Having said that, I am realistic enough to know that the standards obtained in some of our Caribbean countries are not as strict or not as high a quality as in Barbados.

Some years ago, Mr. Hilford Murrell of Barclays Bank PLC, another Barclays Bank advisor and I did a report for the Government of Antigua and produced legislation for the Government of Antigua in order

to set up their financial services. When I saw the legislation on the book it differed tremendously from what we produced because it did not have the safeguards that we thought was necessary. It was explained to me that the main players there were from outside and this is what they wanted. Antigua was then trying to build up its financial services and they have gone through a very difficult period because unfortunately some of the best practices of which the Prime Minister spoke did not apply in some of their legislation.

I am not as completely hopeful as the Honourable Member for St. John that we will achieve that coordination and harmonisation of either of the legislation or indeed of the regulatory practices. Barbados gave a lead when we reform our Companies Act and we have now got many countries in the Caribbean taking our Companies legislation as a model. What we have to do is to continue to develop our legislation and try to harmonise - because they have not got the same expertise - the legislation as much as we can along that manner so that those countries who want it, would take it, but I am not as hopeful about that.

I believe that is something that we should be pressing for but I really doubt whether we will be able persuade some of the smaller jurisdictions who are fighting their way into financial services to go for what they consider the rigidity which we demand in order to maintain very high standards.

Sir, I want to speak a little about the necessity for improved training in financial and capital market matters. I believe that the University of the West Indies has to play a greater role in training the future professionals to handle financial and capital services. Asides

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE:

I will repeat as the Honourable Member is asking me to do. I believe that the University of the West Indies has to play a greater role in training and preparing those of our people who must handle our financial and capital services in the future. They have managed to produce quite a few people in management. They have to switch a little of the emphasis a little bit wider than management. At the moment, I think we have produced several accountants.

I regret very much that the training of lawyers has not been extended to the sort of subjects that are necessary today if we are to be equipped to deal with the problems. For instance, securitization and the whole area of SWAPS and Options, very little of this you can get coming out of the degree courses at Cave Hill. I hope that with the establishment of the institute of international services shortly at the University of the West Indies that these omissions would be corrected.

We must also improve our human resource base as well at a level below that of the professional at the top; at the para-level. We made some attempts at this in the legal field at the Barbados Community College (BCC). The time is right for us to do this for international services whether it be trust officers or others at the Barbados Community College. In the Channel Islands, they have the training right up and it is not necessary for them to import people from outside except that their business is so much that sometimes they need extra personnel. I want to see that training here so that Barbados will be capable of managing its own financial services at the human level and that we are producing people with the expertise who we can even export as part of the way of earning foreign capital for ourselves.

Likewise, I believe that the Government is going to have to face up to spending more money on the

Judiciary. I want to make this point, it is a mistake to assume that you can become a leader in economic affairs particularly international economic and financial affairs if your domestic judicial scene is slow and does not have the necessary expertise.

We cannot have a situation where applications for Mareva injunctions and Anton Piller Orders are going to take months in order to get decisions and to get adjudication. We cannot have that because once that happens, we are not catering to the needs of those people who want early decisions and efficiency in doing their business.

I will support the Government anytime the Government brings legislation in here or whatever measure once I believe we need an increase in the Judiciary. I believe that we need an increase. We have no room unfortunately at the moment. I can assure the Honourable Member that we are going to help through the National Insurance Scheme in a group to construct the judicial centre. I hope that we could begin construction of the new judicial centre in June this year as requested by the Attorney General ...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

On a point of order. The Prime Minister has set the date of June 1, 2000 for the National Insurance. When we met with them, I said that the judicial centre at Whitepark should start on June 1.

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HON. SIR HENRY FORDE:

What will happen is that the country can rest assured that the finance for the judicial sector is available through a combination of investors of which the National Insurance Scheme would be one of

the investors. Therefore, when that is available I believe the Government will follow through with increasing the number of judges that we need both at the level of the High Courts and the Court of Appeal. There has already been planning, and the Attorney General must take credit for this, to improve the other skills that are necessary and the technology so that we can be a first-class jurisdiction at all aspects and at handling the disputes that come before our country.

The last thing I want to talk about is the domestic capital market. The Prime Minister has said that we would have a new security exchange legislation bill before Parliament and I look forward to this. We have been coordinating with the other jurisdictions, particularly Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica and The Bahamas the way in which we manage the capital market so that cross-border trading can improve within the jurisdiction.

Once again, I want to say a word to the private sector, because I understand the private sector, I believe, as well as the private sector understands itself. I have served on private sector boards and still do.

Asides.

HON. Sir HENRY FORDE:

That is right. You have to learn these things and pass them on. I am passing the knowledge on. Anytime the Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants lessons I will give him free.

Sir, let me say there is no reason why we should not have more trading on the Security Exchange of Barbados. There is too much hesitancy on the part of some of the companies to privatise and to go public. The Government has expressed the intention of privatising the banking sector and of privatising the insurance sector.

There are companies who are operating regionally, local Barbadian companies that seem to be frightened to throw their shares open and to raise capital by increasing the number of shares, by issuing more shares and raising capital so that ownership of those shares can go into the hands of workers and the public so that we have wider share ownership, greater influence, and we can build a cohesive society and get away from the allegation that only people of a certain class can have ownership in Barbados. That is what I want to hear the private sector concentrate on. Talk about those things and come up with concrete proposals on what incentives they want, what legislation they want. That is what they should be concentrating on at this stage in the country.

If the media understood what was happening in Barbados, the media would be chiding them for not concentrating on that rather than painting politicians every day heedlessly. That is why I want at this stage to say that is how we will improve the economy. That is how we will have confidence to see that Barbadian companies in services, business and in trade can penetrate Latin America and the opportunities that are there in the wider Caribbean and can compete with others. That is what we want to hear from them today, Sir.

Despite the fact that we have a small market, let me say that there are a few companies that have looked outside and even in the capital markets. I declare an interest because I have been a director of the Barbados Mutual Life Assurance Society for many years. That company has been raising capital not

only for institutions in Barbados but institutions in other CARICOM countries. We have been raising it in the Trinidad market and we have been raising it in the other markets. We even raised money here for St. Kitts and other countries.

We are in competition with City Corp out of Trinidad. We are able to make placements and I am saying to the private and public sector in Barbados when they want to raise funds use some of the local institutions here. Life of Barbados has been doing the same.

One of the reasons, and I think the Honourable Member for St. John will agree with me, why we have not travelled as fast and as quickly as Trinidad is because we do not have the strength of the indigenous banks that Trinidad has. When the Trinidadians decided to buy out Barclays Bank and form the Republic Bank, when they decided to buy out the Royal Bank of Canada and form the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and they decided to buy out the Bank of Nova Scotia, they moved along the right lines. Therefore, their indigenous banking sector is stronger than ours and has greater understanding of what is required.

I also want to make the plea for strengthening the indigenous banking sectors in the Caribbean and for greater coordination. I look forward to the time when Caribbean banks, not merely the Republic Bank of Trinidad & Tobago and the Royal Bank of Trinidad & Tobago, but when Caribbean banks are in the position that we could compete with the Americans and get a licence to compete with the Americans within their own jurisdiction and to compete also in the United Kingdom. I believe it was a retrograde step when we had to close down what was originally the Savings Bank and the Barbados National Bank window in the United Kingdom. I know the reason for it, but we must aim to reopen a Barbadian bank within the United Kingdom and also to have Barbadian banks operating in New York, in Boston and in Toronto and Miami, wherever we have greater interests. This is how the private sector in Barbados must learn to think. They must not shoot themselves in the feet.

I have never seen a group of people who shoot themselves in the feet more than some of the private sector in Barbados does through the Hotel Association. Every day, they tell you about crime in Barbados and it is on the Internet. They shoot themselves in the feet without recognising that they should be defending our interests not to deny where we are making mistakes and to give advice but to have the foresight and common sense to know that unless they defend their own vital interests they will eventually destroy the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Sir, I will have another opportunity to speak when the other interesting Bills are introduced in this House but I wish to lend my support to the Government and to the Ministers with this heavy responsibility and hope that the country recognises that we look beyond the immediate in planning what we hope would be an exciting future with the confidence that is built on our national anthem because we Barbadians believe that we have as much ability as anybody else in this world to be strict guardians of our heritage and firm craftsmen of our fate.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the speech from the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has been a wonderful one, but it is 20 years too late. If it was said 20 years ago it would have made a great difference to Barbados. I believe that people like himself needed to speak out earlier, and not in the late days, in these types of discussions. I also want to say to every member that when we were discussing international

loans I warned this Parliament of the international institutions whose interests are not to be seen in the Caribbean but must be seen in the G7 grouping.

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

I am glad to hear today that the OECD lashes that are given to Barbados has suddenly brought to light the type of problems that countries like Barbados are faced with by these international organisations and so on. It is rather interesting that the UNDP Report for 1999 on human development has stated that in time of globalisation that crime and money laundering is going to increase. It is a rather interesting point and people must recognise that if the UNDP Report could acknowledge a point like this that it is quite obvious that countries like United States, Britain and Canada that they are going to believe that they stand to lose a share of the market that they once controlled. It is also rather interesting that a place like the United States Department would rush Barbados into a Money Laundering Act...

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Nobody rushed Barbados into any Money Laundering Act. In 1992 the then Government of the Democratic Labour Party joined the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force in Kingston, Jamaica and ever since then we should have had a Money Laundering Act. We will recall that in 1990 the Democratic Labour Party passed the Proceeds of Crime Act which is the precursor to the Money Laundering Act. All that the Money Laundering Act that we did in 1998 did was to take out some of those parts of the Proceeds of Crime Act. Nobody rushed us into this.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the morning right after the Money Laundering Act was passed in this Parliament the United States department issue a news item on VOB questioning places like Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Yes, honestly. In the 730 news the same morning, you can check it. It is a serious matter and I had to say...

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I really do not think that it should enter the records of the House, conjecture masquerading as facts because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying that United States Government issued a release on Voice of Barbados. I really believe, Sir, that to have the Voice of Barbados treated as the mouth piece of the United States Government is a little bit untoward. Unless the Honourable Member can produce evidence, we have to strike it from the record, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I heard it in a news report on VOB and I glad that the Prime Minister has jumped at this because I felt at the time that a Member from the Government should have issued a statement pertaining to the same thing. I remember it well but let me move on, Sir.

I am glad that something like this has occurred now and we need to join forces. I remember when the country was trying to develop the cotton industry that we were faced with a problem similar to this and we did not come together the way we should. People must recognise that in the world there are people who feel that small countries should not develop and that as long as they see them growing a crop that can put them with certain standards within their own country, they do everything in their power to destroy that small country.

That is why, Sir, you will recognise that the World Bank and the IADB sometimes advise countries to borrow loans that they honestly know that it is not in the interest of these countries. That is why whenever the Japanese Yen is low you can get the World Bank and the IADB...

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot enter the records things that are so misleading and obviously untrue, Sir. The World Bank, the IMF nor the American Government did not have anything whatsoever to do with the problems that were encountered in the development of a cotton industry in Barbados, Sir. The Honourable Member should really seek within his own ranks but on this occasion the international community is being falsely accused.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is institutions like the World Bank who advise countries to borrow Japanese loans when they know full well that the rate of the Japanese Yen is low. You will find, Sir, that most of the times when the Japanese want to lend large loans, they lend the loans when the rate is very low but they always lend them when they feel that the rate is going to increase. That means in the long run that they end up lending you less U.S. dollars but when you come to repay they get a large sum of U.S. dollars. The evidence is there. The front bench can behave anyway they like because we have the evidence and I can give you an example, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Sir, I can give you an example. In 1992 the CDB borrowed money from the Japanese Government - a yen loan. They turned around and lend that loan to the sugar industry. The time when that money was borrowed the yen was .004. I will never forget this, Sir. When the sugar industry had to pay back the

principal the money was as high as .16. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows well about this.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

This is a serious matter. You found a situation that even though the sugar industry borrowed a loan and when they borrowed they were paid in U.S. dollars and when they had to repay the loan they had to repay that loan in the yen. For the simple reason that the CDB knew full well that the Japanese yen was going to increase and they wanted to pass that loan over to a private company. I am warning Government that sometimes you cannot only look at the interest rate that you are getting on a loan but you have to look at the appreciation and the currency that you are borrowing at the particular point in time. This is a serious financial matter. This is a matter that people must understand. That is why I have always argued in this Parliament that you can talk whatever you like but one of the best loans that were ever borrowed in this Parliament, do not mind the other terms and conditions, would have been that Euro loan. For the simple reason that the Euro loan when it was borrowed was when the pounds gave us BDS\$4.00 to a pound. If anyone takes up the statistics today and recognise the rate of the pound one would recognise that we would made a foreign exchange gain on that particular loan. It is true that the interest rate might have been high but you cannot only look at the interest rate, Sir, one must also watch and see what is happening to the currency market at the particular point in time. That is the mistake most Government makes. They only look at the interest rates but they keep forgetting that the Barbados dollar is not tied to every single currency. The only time that you can defeat an argument like this is when you borrow on the US market because the principal amount remains constant. As long as you borrow on the Euro market, the Japanese market or even the Canadian market you have to take into consideration what the currency is doing at the moment and the long term expected rate of the particular currency at the point in time. That is an error that most Caribbean leaders have been making. I hope that Caribbean leader from Barbados will not make that error because he has been advised today. I warn him that when he seeks that particular loan that he might be seeking that he takes these matters into consideration and I will not charge him consulting fees for this.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Sir, I agree with most of the speeches that have been made but I just wish to make two points, Sir. That it has now been clearly identified the area of concern that the Caribbean and other low tax jurisdictions or tax havens in the rest of the world have to address. I am satisfied that we in Barbados have addressed most of these concerns and that we should pass the test which the OECD countries have set for acceptability of the jurisdictions.

There are one or two gaps based on our own experience which I suggest that every effort be made to plough them.

Barbados is a peculiar jurisdiction.

7:55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Barbados is a peculiar jurisdiction in that people abroad do not understand how it is that we have a small section of our country which can command such large sums of international capital in the form of investment. People have been saying that genuine investment that has come into Barbados is in truth and in fact, investment which could possibly be the result of money laundering. I just want to caution the Government and I know the Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance has spoken about it that is, we must look at our exchange control forms and the information base that we require as a condition of allowing investment in property in Barbados.

I have repeatedly said, and it is in our interest to ensure, that anybody who wants to invest money in Barbados, must disclose the beneficial ownership. Secondly, Sir, the same thing comes with the amendment to the Companies Act. No company that is not incorporated in Barbados should be allowed to be registered as an external company without being required on an annual basis, to file returns including changes of their beneficial governors.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:

I do not care about the accountants. My views on the accountants in Barbados have been recently confirmed in the United Kingdom and in many countries. The greatest people for tax evasion, for money laundering and all of those things are banks and accountants, some lawyers too, that is a fact. Luckily, the Directors of Public Prosecutions in many countries have discovered an old common law offence called "Cheating the Government" and they are prosecuting accounts, lawyers, financial agents on that old common law offence of cheating.

So that our position is, Sir, that I commend the Government for its efforts to ensure that it has followed the money laundering codes, but I just would like to say, Sir, that we have some more work to do in the two specific areas that I have mentioned. Whenever I am arguing this point and all of us have to argue with people who we meet abroad about the quality of our jurisdiction, whenever we get the opportunity to meet a Member of Congress in America, to meet a Member of Parliament in Canada, to meet a Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, we argue fully about what we have done. I would like to see those gaps plugged so that they cannot be any question or doubt at all that with our legislation as it

is, and with the improvements that are taking place to the legislation, with our information exchange agreements, with our double taxation provisions, with our recognition of foreign judgements that we are a jurisdiction that can stand up to scrutiny.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank all Honourable Members who spoke even the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I think it bears repetition, but I heard a phrase on the left of me, Sir, which I have to share with my colleagues. When the Honourable Member was floating through his speech, I heard some words, Sir, "He is a model of exquisite incoherence."

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, the point made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, I thought I said it in my opening that we are aware of a few gaps in the legislation and the Committee with the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of International Business, The Attorney General's Office, that is looking at the criteria sent down by FATF will identify any loop holes and make recommendations for legislative amendment.

I wish to say, Sir, that I do not think I have ever had to say this in the last six years, but truthfully I am only aware that since I have been Attorney General September 1994 - put aside the case of Blair Down, everybody knows about that - have only been aware of two instances where there was money laundering in Barbados of any magnitude.

The first related to an Italian Company that was established here in 1987 and some of the shareholders or directors of that company bought property - two condos at Glitter Bay, land in Maxwell and land up by the airport. In 1996, I think it was, could be 1997, the Italian Government contacted me and gave me certain information and asked for Barbados' assistance. We responded and were able to produce for them title deeds to these properties, that was one.

The second one was a bank which laundered about \$10 million of Russian money, through Barbados in about 1993, that bank was closed by the Central Bank about two years ago. I have been in touch with officials of the Russian Government and the Ukraine Government but all we can find is that about \$10 million may have passed through Barbados.

Those are the only two instances, put Blair Down aside, because everybody knows about him as a big international fraudster but those two are the only two that have been brought to my attention in my capacity where mutual legal assistance was required. By and large Barbados has a very clean jurisdiction and a clean reputation.

I would not say anything about the judicial center, Sir, I will have an occasion after we return from recess to speak about that, but just to say in answer to some of the concerns of the Members of the legal profession in the House, there are a number of initiatives being taken to modernise the Administration of Justice in Barbados and in indeed in the region. I am not going to go into them in any detail now but

just identify in bullet points, Sir.

Tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. I have to address some stakeholders meeting at the Island Inn in relation to the project which Barbados is putting forward to raise money to take out a loan with the InterAmerican Development Bank to modernise the administration of justice and the new penal system, that project is on its way. There was a stakeholders meeting Saturday. It is that meeting tomorrow that I have to address at 930 a.m.

About the 24th or 25th of April, a mission from the InterAmerican Development Bank is coming to Barbados as a follow-up to an initiative which we took in December on a regional basis to set up a centre for judicial development in the Caribbean. The International Development Bank and the World Bank are committed to assisting in that.

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

It has come out of a study done by a Canadian judge, Sandra Oxner, working for the IADB and that will provide training and education for judges of the region and at the same time help all countries in the English speaking Caribbean to modernise their systems. So that there is a lot that is going to be happening, Sir, for the modernisation of the judicial system apart from mere physical infrastructural development. I will get an occasion after we resume to go into some of these and perhaps to report on the meetings with the InterAmerican Development Bank which will take place on the 3rd week in April.

I wish to say to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that he must not expect anything from this question of representation. He must never have any expectations as a politician that anybody appreciates anything that you do.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

In other words you want the Press and the private sector to write good about you, do not expect it. You must come in here to serve. Do the job you have to do and understand that this is the most thankless job in the world and nobody appreciates it.

8:05 p.m.

Tuesday, 21 March 2000

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

Once you have that in the back of your head you would not get upset by editorials or whatever. What they want to write, let them write. Nobody cares what is the output, what you are doing for Barbados.

You are talking about the Business Authority, and we have been out there battling. I am the first person in Barbados who raised this issue of what the OECD was doing to the region in 1998, nobody took it on. I went to the UN and talked about it. Where are the people in the private sector who make all of the money in the offshore business? I have never seen an article from any of them. I was shown on television addressing the UN about this. Not one of them has ever called and said, what can we do to help the Government, never. You have to go out there and battle to make life comfortable for them, but I must say once you do not have expectations you cannot go wrong. You are just here to serve. That is what the Lord put you here to do serve for a time and go on. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. Simmons seconded by Hon. B. A. Miller the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. Carter in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

This Honourable House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr.

SPEAKER, resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Act, 2000.

ORDER #6

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF THE SUM OF SIX MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN DOLLARS (\$6,772,937.00) FROM ANGLOCO LIMITED AND TWELVE MILLION AND NINETY-THREE THOUSAND LIMITED AND TWELVE MILLION AND NINETY-THREE THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN DOLLARS (\$12,093.316.00) FROM NSG EXPORTS LIMITED FOR THE PURCHASE OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE VARIOUS AGENCIES OF THE BARBADOS GOVERNMENT.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago we came for the money Resolution to pay down the deposit of 15 per cent to two suppliers who are offering credit to the Government to facilitate the purchase of vehicles for the Police and Defence Forces, the Prison, the School meal Service and the Fire Service. This Resolution is the Resolution brought in pursuant of the Special Loans Act and indicated at the time that the supplementary was necessary to be paid as an advance and deposit and that this Resolution would come. We had a long debate then Sir, and a full debate on crime. Without any more ado I beg to move that this Resolution, which is ample in its terms do now pass.

Mr. SPEAKER:

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

ORDER #7 - TO MOVE THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

The House is in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Chairman, Sir, during the course of the financial year the Personnel Administration Division was relocated to Carlisle House in Bridgetown and the amount of \$11,994.00 is required to assist in meeting the cost of utility that has been associated with that move from its former place to Carlisle House, and more especially, Sir, for the upgrading of the PBX System and the increased electricity cost that has been associated therewith, Sir.

I beg to move that this Head do now stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

HEAD 25

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Chairman, this Supplementary provision in the sum of \$637 101.00 is requested to meet expenditure associated with the cleanup operations and other remedial action related to the "Fish Kill" incident.

Mr. Chairman, you will recall that toward the end of last year - I think it was early September - a very strange phenomenon occurred in Barbados called the 'Fish Kill' phenomenon which resulted in severe economic disruption in the fisheries sector.

This 'Fish Kill' episode lasted until about mid October and during that period a number of fisherfolk, be it fishermen, vendors, processors or retailers, all suffered great loss in income due to the widespread reduction in the sale and consumption of all types of local fish.

Early into this episode when Cabinet realised that there was the possibility of persistence to this event and the consequential disruption to the lives of the fisherfolk, a decision was taken and Government gave an undertaking that it will provide some level of compensation to those severely affected by this phenomenon.

Mr. Chairman, considerable work had to be undertaken to dispose of the dead fish which were washing up on the beaches mainly around the east coast of Barbados and it required a concerted effort on the part of a number of Government agencies and community spirited individuals to help with the disposal of the dead fish. We are seeking here, Mr. Chairman, sums of money to reimburse those agencies involved in the exercise. These being the National Conservation Commission, the Environmental Engineering Division of the Ministry of Health and the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

As listed here, a sum of \$164 726 will go to the Fisheries Management and Development Subprogrammes 173: Fisheries Services. The lion share in the sum of \$469 775 will go toward the compensation of those affected by the phenomenon. One thousand dollars will go to the Fisheries Development Grant to nonprofit agencies and for professional services, a sum of \$1 600 is requested to cover the cost of eight days work to Dr. Hugh Fergusson, the expert from the University of Sterling who provided tremendous service in identifying the particular cause of this 'fish kill' phenomenon.

With those few remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be too long on this particular Head. Firstly, I want to congratulate the Ministry for the clean-up job they did. As you would have been aware, Sir, the 'fish kill' for some reason affected the constituency of St. Lucy in a meaningful way.

I would also like to say that I think it is very regrettable that some seven months after that, the poor fisherfolk are now being compensated for their loss of earnings.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I feel that the Minister of Agriculture in future must impress on the Minister of Finance that whenever he is requesting funds on behalf of the fisherfolk of Barbados that they must be some urgency in this particular matter because one must recognise that during what we called the hurricane season that those fishermen depend on those earnings for survival.

Honourable Members who are fortunate enough to represent constituencies where those fisherfolk operate understand the particular problem that I am discussing and would recognise that those people would have been out of pocket money for a long period of time and would have lost large earnings. I would expect that in future, the Government would make sure that a speedier plan is put in place to compensate those folks.

I recognise that the Attorney General might not understand much of what I speak of because he is not fortunate to have the same problem as those of us who have constituencies which are surrounded by the sea coast. I am hoping that this particular happening will not recur and that at least by December that the fisherfolk will be compensated.

I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Christ Church East to thank the Honourable Minister for bringing this relief to a substantial part of this rural constituency.

Sir, fishing activity in the constituency of Christ Church is not centred only around the Silver Sands area which is my constituency but in fact surrounds the entire Christ Church area which includes the areas represented by the Honourable Members for Christ Church South, Christ Church East Central, Christ Church West Central and Christ Church West.

The network of economic dependence on the fishing industry is very clear. In fact, in my own estimation, one in every four individuals in the coastal areas of Christ Church and even deeper into the heart of Christ Church depends directly on the fishing industry and all the rest of them depend indirectly on it for their survival. In fact, this matter of the fishing sector is one in which economic activity is not often fully captured in all of our statistics because while those persons who operate will boast, the information is readily captured by way of the weighing of the fish landed at the jetties.

The persons who were most affected were those persons who are into reef fishing. Reef fish is what is known to all Honourable Members as 'pot fish'. That is the kind of fish we are talking about. That fish with all the groyning and so on that goes on along the reef. It is their only source of income during the off season for the flying fish, dolphin and the like. So that you could understand the tremendous hardship which would have been wrought upon the normally strong independent fishermen of Silver Sands and throughout the Christ Church area who suddenly found that as it came onto September for their children to go back to school, they were not able to supply them with the back to school books, equipments, uniforms, etcetera. They found that their normal independent path in terms of providing for their families generally and providing for what is their usual robust form of entertainment in the various shops and other places of entertainment throughout the Christ Church area were weakened.

Because of the interconnection of economic dependence even the shops in Christ Church and indeed in St. Philip suffered losses. Economic activity generally suffered because the fishermen no longer had disposable income. In fact, the start of the normal fishing season was delayed because they had to wait on the all-clear before they could go fishing and also because for a while many Barbadians were weary of the consumption of fish.

I am pleased to say that within the community of Silver Sands, the community solidarity which was displayed there was one means by which the fishermen were able to keep going. I am pleased to say as well that we in the Silver Sands area never lost our faith in the consumption of fish and the regular once or twice a month fish fries which are famous at the London Bar of Round Rock fame, Mr. Nurse's establishment on round rock...

Asides.

8:25 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

I will want, Sir, in closing, to urge the Honourable Minister to have a greater focus on the fishing sector within the programme of the Rural Development Commission because there are substantial pockets within the rural community that depend on that branch of agriculture, which is fishing. I would want at another point in time to be able to relate more fully on that particular aspect of rural development.

I really wanted on behalf of my constituents, as they have asked me to do, Sir, to thank the Honourable Minister and the Government for considering them in their time of need.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Mr. Chairman, I just want to reiterate the sentiments that have been expressed and to say to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that although help may be late in coming, nevertheless it will be most welcome.

I also want to say that the attitude of fishermen to life has been really, in my opinion, judging from my discussions with them, conditioned as a result of this experience. Many of them are now saying to themselves that they realise that it is necessary in good times to put away something in case bad times come.

I would hope, Sir, that they would follow the advice they have been given and the conclusions they have come to and in the event that the disaster that took place ever takes place again, God forbid, I would never like to see it take place again, they would find themselves in a much better position than they were in when this disaster took place.

Hon. A.P. WOOD:

I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 33 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SPORTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Chairman, in an effort to ensure that Barbadian public servants are the best trained public servants in the Caribbean, the Training Division, over the last financial year, encountered certain expenses which were not anticipated, expenses to do with electrical renovations in order to accommodate the computers and so on at the Training Division, also for the provision of refreshments as well as to pay certain deliverers of training who did that on behalf of the Training Division.

In the circumstances, Sir, we are seeking the supplementary provision of \$149 040 under this Head. I therefore beg to move that Head 33 stand part.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS

Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

The sum of \$41 115 is required to purchase among other things, a cellular phone for the Chief Housing Planner who is a member of CERO. It is also required to purchase a stove for the Chief Justice. The sum of \$30 000 is required to finance the outfitting of the Census Office for the Statistical Department.

It is agreed that the 2000 Census which is now being conducted that the building from the S.P. Musson Ltd. be leased and outfitted for the sum of \$30 000. It is also required to help with the accommodation for the Ministry of Labour, the Pan African Affairs and the Cooperative Department Building.

With those remarks, Sir, I beg to move that Head 38 stand part.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**SCHEDULE 11 - AMENDMENT TO EXPLANATORY NOTES
HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE**

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the amendment to the Explanatory Note, Head 34 be as provided for in the Schedule.

Hon. G.W. PAYNE:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LANDS

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Note to Head 38 be amended as provided for in the Schedule attached to the Resolution.

Hon. G.W. PAYNE:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

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

On the separate motions of Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. G.W. PAYNE, the Resolution

was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for today. I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to May 2, 2000 at 1100 a.m.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

8:35 p.m.