
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 9, 2000

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, May 9, 2000.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J. P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.(Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL (Minister of Public Works and Transport)

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

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

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 2, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minutes of the Honourable House of May 2, 2000 have been circulated and subject to any motions which Honourable Members may wish to make for amendments or correction to those minutes, I beg to move that the Minutes stand confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge today the presence of students and teachers of the third and fourth forms of the St. Ursula's School.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

- (1) The Report of the National Insurance Board on the Audit of the Accounts of the Unemployment Fund for the years 1997 and 1998.
- (2) Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (The Tiona Fund Limited) Order, 2000.
- (3) The Exchange Control (Authorised Dealers and Depositaries) (Amendment) Order, 2000.

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, His Honour the Speaker, has recently had surgery and by reason of that he is absent from our meetings of this Honourable House. I think that it would be an appropriate gesture on the part of Honourable Members if a motion is moved granting the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central leave of absence from this House until June 30, 2000 and I move such a motion.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – THE TECHNICAL AND
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
(MISCELLANEOUS
PROVISIONS)
BILL, 2000

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments to the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Council Act as well as the Occupational Training Act is to give effect to a Cabinet decision of approximately one year ago when it was decided that Government would include on the TVET Council, representation from the Training Board and vice versa that

the TVET Council would have representation on the Training Board. So the amendments seek merely to make provision for representation on the respective boards.

This came about as a result of a series of meetings which the National Training Board had in conjunction with the TVET Council. Both institutions agreed that it was ideal that they should have representation on each other's Board. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for some time they were requesting such representations and after a number of these meetings they came up with a document entitled, *A Joint Report on Areas of Conflict between the Technical and Vocational Education Training Act and the Occupational Training Act and Recommendations on how they might be solved.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to admit up front that there are still certain grey areas in which there is some contention as to into whose province and into whose domain these issues rightly fall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the history of the TVET Council is such that it demonstrates clearly that there was indeed a mad rush by the last administration to establish such a council and to bring the TVET Act into effect. I have always said that it struck me that the Act and the TVET Council were rammed down the throats of the last administration and in so doing what that Council did was to bulldoze a few areas which in truth and in fact fell within the province of the Training Board.

The position then was that the Government of the day wanted to have access to a loan very badly and they were not in a position of strength to raise the money and to negotiate the best conditions for themselves so they genuflected and all the conditionalities which were imposed they virtually accepted. Sir, it was indeed a matter of taking or leaving it so these conditions were accepted.

Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the composition of the TVET Council you will realise that the Minister himself had no real input as to who sat on that Council. There were a number of persons who were appointed by the Minister and you will see what I mean. Three members were appointed on the recommendations of the association which represents employers so the employers association representatives were appointed by the Minister.

It goes on to say that these other persons were appointed by the Minister too. Three members were appointed on the recommendations of the courses at the Barbados Institute of Management & Productivity (BIMAP), the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) and the Barbados Community College (BCC). So although these were appointed by the Minister, BIMAP, the BCC and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic said these were their

representatives but these were appointed by the Minister. Two members were appointed on the recommendations of the trade union so the trade unions said these were their representatives but the more actual input came from the Minister.

Of course, if anything goes wrong with the TVET Council, the Minister is called and acts against all of those but he himself had no real input as to who sat on that Board. So the political directorate of the day had no real input as to who sat on the TVET Council.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will see that BIMAP is mentioned. You will see that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College were mentioned. These were the institutions represented on the Board. There is one other major training board in Barbados of significance and that is the Barbados Vocational Training Board. It was noticeably absent from this TVET Council, why not the Training Board, you have the Community College and you have BIMAP, to my mind it was inconceivable that the Training Board should have been omitted. The Training Board is a major player of training in Barbados and perhaps, Sir, in a better position than most other institutions to engage and assess the thinking of most Barbadians and still it was left out. It has good reason to be represented on this TVET Council because it has first hand information of the Skills Training Programme. It has first hand information about the Apprenticeship Scheme and clearly in its own right should have been on that TVET Council. It is the premier council of training in Barbados and I always thought that it should have had a voice on this TVET Council when it comes to Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make a point which borders on being strictly controversial. When we are looking at such situations where we have to have one representative or another, perhaps we should give it a bit more thought of how we should do this.

We have a situation where the Polytechnic itself sits on the Training Board and the argument has always been to me that here we have an institution like the Polytechnic that is running programmes parallel to the Council and still sitting on the Training Board.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members of the Training Board argue further that having one agency privy to information over others could create conflict rather than a harmonious situation. It is like pitting one against the other and trying to see who gets out of a situation first. These are the arguments we have been hearing. I have to say that the person who is fortunately on the Training Board is one who makes a significant policy input and it is really not a personal conflict but the point should be taken that he would hardly be there all the time and that is a situation we need to examine.

Sir, now the other Amendment which is before the House today concerns Section 19 of the TVET Act and it says that the Council may enter into contracts with associations and training institutions for provision of training process. The Amendment today adds employers to that because there would have had to be an oversight that we did not mention employers because whenever you are speaking about contracts, employers are mentioned but in this particular clause they are not. We believe it is an oversight. The employers pay a Training Levy and even now with the inclusion of employers into that section, the TVET Council continues to deal with that and it is only an omission there. Even now, Sir, they make contracts with the hotel industry and they do training programmes for them and also small businesses. It must be anticipated that they have had to do some contracting with employers. But I think, Sir, that this debate also gives the opportunity to speak of the issues concerning the whole question of technical and vocational training in Barbados.

11.40 a.m.

I think that the more technological our society becomes the greater the impact and the greater the importance of the technical and vocational student is going to be. I believe that he will be the one who will be called upon to ensure that we not only adapt to the new technology but that we meet the demands for specialised skills. It is my belief that agencies such as the TVET Council and the Training Board will have to continue to supply skilled and competent workers to meet the ever changing needs of our society.

I am pleased to say that between the Training Board and the TVET Council we have seen hundreds of our young people trained and they have also had access to the Employment Training Fund. I, therefore, would want to take this opportunity this morning to commend the work of both institutions, the TVET Council and the Training Board. You will no doubt recall that during the Estimates debate I spoke at length on the contribution made by the Training Board to the whole question of making a dent in unemployment in Barbados. I said that the Barbados Vocational Training Board is a deliverer of vocational training, that it does skill training and that it is responsible for the training of apprentices.

I did not at that time say much about the TVET Council, and a lot of people, perhaps, do not even know about the TVET Council and their technical and vocational education and training. That is what the TVET is. It is a tripartite body and has responsibility for giving advice on national training policy, for developing national training plans and for establishing TVET standards. It is the premier coordinator with reference to TVET.

The mission of a Council such as TVET is to increase the marketability of the unemployed and the under-employed

in Barbados. It coordinates post-secondary vocational training and it embarks on training plans and activities aimed at promoting and upgrading the skills of the labour force.

TVET also pinpoints national needs and priorities in an effort to ensure gainful employment and occupation in all branches of economic activity in Barbados. I have to say that as part of that thrust TVET will strive and endeavour to set levels of attainment by developing the standards and NVQ, national vocational qualifications. It also has responsibility for supervising the training fund which provides the vehicle for the realisation of this training.

Again, Sir, I have to admit that the responsibility for TVET programmes generally has never been pinned down to a single Ministry, and I am sure that the Minister of Education if she speaks to this topic will address some of these issues that the responsibility for TVET has never been pinned down to any one particular Ministry.

It is a kind of unnatural separation and there has been ongoing dialogue between us to try to iron out any possibility of collision between the Ministries.

The Minister of Labour has responsibility for the TVET Council and for the Training Board while the Ministry of Education has responsibility for the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College. Very often, there is discussion as to which body will be the accreditation body for TVET, who will set the tests and who will be responsible for the certification. These are things which we are always discussing. Obviously there is need for us to build a bond between education and labour because we feel that the whole question of technical and vocational education and training must become an indispensable part of this country's education agenda; and the sooner we realise this, the better.

We have to cater to all of our people. All of us will not end up being what we want to be. If that were to happen it would be a very boring world where there would be no effort and no challenge if we could all become what we want to be.

I believe that as a nation we have the duty to reach as many youngsters as possible and to assist them in developing their particular interests. We cannot all be lawyers, doctors and accountants. In this respect, Sir, I am speaking strictly on vocational training. I must say that the world of tomorrow will not be limited to computers. There is a lot of talk, and justifiably so, about this being the computer age and so on, but I think we must continue to place emphasis on other skills related to industry and that should not escape us that we need to build these skills for industry.

The generation of tomorrow has no option or alternative. It must become skilled. Our foreparents might

have been able to exist without skills. They could survive without one, but I do not believe that it would be virtually impossible for our children to do so.

So we have a responsibility to prepare our young people with an education which would empower them to participate in what I like to call the human-built world of tomorrow. I recall when I was on the school bus a friend of mine a form or so ahead of me was boasting when he got eight "O" levels. He is a chap who is very well-known to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. He had a brother who was a mechanic. Eventually, the two of us met at the same schools in St. Philip and I lived to hear him say that his brother was 'more man' than he, meaning that the mechanic was 'more man' financially than he was.

We have to realise that in the world we live in, that is considered to be human-built, that the homes we have are built with hands and tools and the vehicles we drive are kept running with the help of the technical knowledge of our mechanics. My comments, of course, should not be interpreted as saying that you should not be academically inclined, far from it, of course, there is a need to mesh the two things.

11.50 a.m.

I have always prided myself as a teacher and I like the academics. It would be an extremely interesting exercise, believe me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we could carry out a student's satisfaction survey to see the number of students who consider themselves to be school failures or to be vulnerable – not so with the emphasis on academics – because of our down-playing the importance of technical and vocational studies. I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some of those very students will admit to you that they can read and appreciate poetry and that they can recite long passages from Shakespeare but that they do not possess the skills which will enable them to survive in this world. In other words, for many of them there is still a void in their education and they are now finding out that they need skills to cope with everyday life.

In Barbados, Sir, we have to stop placing so much emphasis on learning by rote and my memorization. We have pay a bit more attention to the activity based curriculum. I will always say that one of the best projects we ever had in Barbados was the Eden Lodge Project which the trainees of the Training Board built. I think that is a classic example of what I mean by an activity based curriculum. We need to have a bit more of this. I think, Sir, that that is a resource hurdle that we definitely have to surmount if we want to change the habits of working people. Get them into the activity based programmes and I am sure that we will change the habits of many many of them. Students just have to be told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is no disgrace for them to use materials such as metal, plastic, ceramics, leather, wood and so on.

Let me admit to you, Sir, that at the Training Board textbooks are really used to compliment the hands on activity, that is the way we always look at it, that the text books are there to complement the hands on activity. There is no excessive lecturing or rote learning and there is no dominance really of text books. It is about 20 per cent lecture on book and about 80 per cent of the hands on activity. We do not believe in a diet of lectures. A large percentage of our Barbadian children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not thrive on that method of teaching either.

About one month ago there was a fuel injection course for mechanics and it was done hands on. What happened is that a lot of the mechanics realised that the fuel injector had really replaced the carburettor and that they could not handle it. In fact, one mechanic actually told me that whenever he opened the car bonnet and he saw it was fuel injection he actually shut it back. The Training Board decided that they had to help these people along and, therefore, they held this course and it was extremely successful and the private mechanics are continuing to update their skills. In that particular program that they put on, they went outside of the trainees and went into the districts and called in the mechanics. I have to say that Government is making an effort to clear the hurdle.

When I assumed responsibility for the Training Board I have to say that it was chronically resource prone and it was failing because of lack of funds. It was in a very pitiful shape and since I have been there, there has been constant increase and Government continues to fuel the effort.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all my years as a teacher – and I always pride myself as being the most experienced teacher in the House having taught, Sir, at Princess Margaret, St. Leonard's Boys and Girls, St. George, Community College, Turks and Caicos, Cayman Island – and the point I am making is that I have never seen a school, Mr. Deputy Speaker, pushed Industrial Arts like Princess Margaret School did. My first teaching experience was there and the last school I visited was Princess Margaret and I have never seen a school...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is misleading the House, Sir. The record and the evidence will prove that the most developed school when it comes to that aspect of education happens to be St. Lucy Secondary School and the records speak for themselves and second is the Coleridge and Parry School.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said that I have never seen a school, and I challenge him to prove me wrong, that has pushed Industrial Arts like Princess Margaret School had done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just the other day a delegation from the United States of America came to Barbados and they were trying to evaluate the standards and the level of technical and vocational education in Barbados and they were sent to Princess Margaret School.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I want to make is that at Princess Margaret School, all of the machines in the workshop are hooked up to a vacuum cleaner type dust collection unit so that the saw-dust and so on would not really interfere with the students because that used to be a concern for the students especially the ones who suffer with asthma and who have other respiratory problems. 12.00 noon.

This is the point that I am making, I believe that schools must be designed to meet the environmental and the community needs. As the Honourable Minister for St. Michael South Central said, they must be environmentally friendly in the area of technical and vocational education. Students now dress in their overalls and protective clothing, something which never used to happen. The child whose clothes used to become very messy was a concern to the parents and the parents would say to the child you have to forget it.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I think Industrial Arts has been designated as their area of excellence.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Overall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there still seems to be very little evidence to support my theories for technical and vocational education. I think that parents need to be informed about the developments in our country and about the future skill needs of Barbados. We need the support of parents for technical education and training.

The Barbadian educational culture is such, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have consistently treated Vocational Training and Industrial Arts in a most condescending manner that there are persons in our midst, in these modern times, who do not like the idea of cement dust in their hair, sawdust in their children's hair, paint on their clothes, the grease and dirt under their finger nails. The parents just cannot take it. There is a conception about the teacher who always picks out and stigmatize children and say that they are the dumb children so they can go and do Industrial Arts and so on.

I believe, Sir, that our teachers and our policy makers, perhaps even without realising it, have consistently

dismissed this area of education as being unimportant. The very societal stigma that we attach to text books, I believe, Sir, is carried into the labour market because you get a skilled artisan who spends three or four years, lets say, at the Polytechnic, and is trained and then he comes out and he is working and you offer him \$350 a week then you take a chap with five "O" levels, no training, and he goes into the Service and he works for \$1,700 a month and it sends a message. There is a perception there as to who is better than who.

Another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we have to do whatever is necessary to accommodate Barbadian women who want to attend the TVET training programmes, even if it means that we have to go to the extreme, perhaps, even if it means offering programmes outside the traditional hours or maybe, Sir, we might even want to go to day care facilities or something similar, close to where they are doing their training but we have to encourage the females to get into technical and vocational areas.

At the Training Board we are trying very hard not to restrict access to vocational training to men only. There are no gender barriers whatsoever to any of the courses. Obviously, we realise that we are fighting against the social and negative actions against women in vocational training.

The problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of female teachers at our primarily schools cannot be denied. It is of importance in our primary schools and in our secondary schools, Sir, when you consider that. Look now and you will see that there are very few female teachers who teach in technical and vocational areas, very, very few. Even when they do they do so in the traditional female areas, such as the domestic science, handicraft, embroidery and the food preparation areas. Those areas are the traditional areas in which they teach.

I believe, Sir, that the more information that we put in the public domain, the more we will assist young women in their decision making. I would like to see public relations programmes which would identify the success of a few key women who have been successful in non traditional vocational areas. I think, Sir, that these women could be held up as role models for others to emulate, and I am sure that if you do this it will encourage a few more young ladies to opt for vocational training.

Nowadays more women are seeking to be economically and financially independent because they realise that this is a changing world and they cannot continue to be housebound.

12.10 p.m.

We must acknowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the contribution which women make to the economy. In some parts of the world, Sir, they are not even allowed to work and

whatever we do, we have to keep the door open for our working women.

The day is approaching, in fact, I would not say it is approaching, Sir, the day has passed – it has arisen today – when the young Barbadian women will have to look at areas in the construction industry for jobs to sustain themselves such as tiling, painting, steel bending and so on...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that the TVET Council is encouraging women to do tiling, steel bending and so on. Women have been doing these things for years now, Sir and I do not want the impression to be given that because we are bringing this Amendment today that women will now be able to do these things because they have been doing these things before, Sir.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: This is a point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which was made by the Governor of the Central Bank quite recently and when we realised the demand for construction workers, the National Assistance Board trained some 600 people strictly in the area of construction. Sir, quite a few of those persons that we trained were females. I believe that was the best response at that time for females wanting to be trained for the construction industry and that was the point I wanted to make before the interruption came.

I want to say that it will be very, very difficult, almost impossible to find anyone of those young ladies that we trained unemployed today. They are working in the construction industry and that is the point I wanted to make so we are actually seeing them employed at the Training Board. The Training Board is also witnessing an increase in the numbers of females in carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrical installation and steel bending, really, in all areas of the construction sector, even in the bob cat and backhoe classes, we are having females.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Yes. Even more important, Sir, when I spoke to the Director of the Training Board, I was informed that in many instances, they were performing better than their male counterparts. I look forward to the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the short fall of male workers in our construction industry in Barbados can be competently filled by the availability of skilled females in construction work.

I have to say, Sir, that I do not consider those who work on the assembly lines or at the processing firms to be involved in the types of technical and vocational work which

I am speaking about. On the assembly lines and in many of the garment factories there are young women who have been working there for eight and ten years, who have only performed one repetitive function for that long period of time. After many years, those young women have no real skills which they can take to another country. Indeed, they will even encounter problems in finding other jobs if they leave. Worst of all, we are now talking about the movement of skilled persons in the Caribbean and if they do not have skills, they will not be able to find jobs.

In a way some of these young people become unemployable simply because they have literally snuffed out ten years of an opportunity to get skills. The really big problem to my mind now is that there is a mismatch between the skills of the unemployed and the skills which the employers want. The employers want specialise skills and many unemployed persons do not have any and some of the unemployed persons in Barbados and perhaps a disturbingly high proportion, have no real skills or aptitudes to offer the employers.

You will remember, Sir, that during the Estimates, I spoke about the whole question of the apprentices, how they work in the same areas that they were trained in. This is what I mean by having a good marketable skill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, coming to the question of skills recognition, I have to say that skills recognition is a sadly lacking area in Barbados. In many parts of Europe, they have actually already implemented their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). We believe, Sir, that the same way we know that everyone who has an old-aged pension card is 65 years old, we will believe that anyone who says in Barbados, "I am a plumber," "I am a tiler," could have a national qualification that we could all look at and say, once you have that we know you have met the required standards. The TVET Council is presently working on the trade mark for Barbados.

The whole question of equivalency, and I am sure the Minister of Education is going to address this, shows the skills of the Caribbean. We have to know that if you have a qualification coming from Antigua or Jamaica and you come to Barbados on the movement of skills, we have to be able to look and say that well, we will accept that as reaching this particular level. Otherwise, we are going to have a situation where we take people who consider themselves skilled craftsmen and so on and we have no barometer by which to measure how good they are.

12.20 p.m.

In this day and age and with so much competition, the issue of vocational qualifications must come to the fore because a lot of these things are the subject of lawsuits.

Right now in Turkey there is a big lawsuit in this area because you will recall just less than a year ago that there was a massive earthquake there where a particular residential area was virtually wiped out and this was put down to bad and faulty construction by people who perhaps were not qualified.

Therefore, we cannot continue to have a situation where we do not know in Barbados whether or not someone who is coming in from overseas will have the necessary qualifications which we will readily accept. Certification now has to be seen as a stamp of capability and we have to set competency standards. I feel that it is very unfair for us to continue to allow technical and vocational competencies to go unrecognised.

I recall reading of a South African situation where last year they were assessing workers for a bricklayer certificate. They had a testing process that was largely based on work experience and there was a gentleman some 62 years old who was being assessed. He was working in the industry from the time he was 16 years old and when it came to his turn to be assessed, it was proven that he was more qualified for the bricklayer course than the person who was actually assessing him.

We have a situation where people sit CXC's and so on and they get a grade 4 and still they get a certificate but we have people in the technical vocational area who are qualified without having any recognition at all. So, Sir, in the area of certification, I share the view that TVET should be involved. TVET does not have to be the agent to actually award the certificate but since TVET is positioned where it is, it should have the responsibility for ensuring that the integrity of the course is there and they should know what their tutors will be teaching and what responses the tutors will be looking for.

Sir, I see TVET as a facilitator, using agencies and resource persons. TVET may not be a deliverer but it should have a final say in what it wants and how it is done and it should have a final say in what the content of the course should be and what the objectives of the course are.

I, therefore, agreed that TVET should have a wider participation in the certification process. At the very most, I believe that TVET should be a party or one of the parties to the certification process. What TVET should be saying is they want the certificate to carry not only the Barbados Community College (BCC) or BIMAP logos or not only the Ministry of Education stamp but they want TVET to be there as well. This is not unusual because this type of partnership happens all the time. It happens here and it happens elsewhere. So TVET, as I have said, does not by

itself have to be the certifying agent. Another institution can say they accept this particular level and it does not have to be TVET by itself.

One of the things which we should do is a comparative study as to what obtains in other jurisdictions outside Barbados in terms of their certification and accreditation processes and see if we can model ourselves on one of those jurisdictions because, as I have said, I would rather be part of the certification process than to seek to take over the certification process by TVET.

I had given the assurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my colleagues that I would speak for exactly one hour and I think I began to speak exactly an hour ago and I am a man to my word. Therefore, I think that I would have been able to bring a few issues which will be confronting the whole question of technical and vocational education and training to the fore and I would hope that what I would have said would have encouraged some debate on this particular topic.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North gave the assurance that he gave to his colleagues but I do not think that he should put a time limit on his speech, although I believe that if someone runs out of information to add or issues to raise in any debate that they should graciously take their seat.

I think what has been absent in this debate from the Honourable Member presentation was a clear focus on the objectives of the technical and vocational education and training programme. I think we are well past the age old and time worn debate about whether the Barbados Government should have or had to accept the conditionalities from the World Bank which were onerous. In any event, the person who would have the facts on that matter spoke at the Honourable Member's branch meeting just a few months ago and instead of talking about himself he should have taken the opportunity to either contradict or support the new initiatives which would advance the interest of young people in Barbados.

This programme was launched by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) under the former minister responsible for training, Mr. Johnny Tudor. At that time, I believe in a speech in this House he extolled the virtues of the programme that he was implementing and outlined the source of funding and the major training revolution that was going to be undertaken.

I was, therefore, mildly surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, his good friend, would come to this Chamber today and give the impression that the entire training programme was in a shamble and that he had to rescue it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is no wonder why the

public lacks confidence in and sometimes fails to trust politicians. It is for the simple reason that many of them are able to speak out of six or seven sides of their mouth at the same time and this speech today would have been an example of that – at least the commencement of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to have a strategy. It does not make sense to come in here to throw out clichés and shibboleths and give the impression that you can so compartmentalize education and training that you can make such a sharp and crisp distinction between academic training and training that requires books and lectures and non-academic training which requires hands and not minds.

It is precisely because of those artificial and non-sensical distinctions that there are people who believe that when you compartmentalize them under the headings of technical, vocational or industrial arts that what you are essentially saying is that they do not have to use their brains or a book that they only have to use their hands so they resent it. Therefore, for the Minister of Training, a man who has had experience in this field as a teacher for a long time to perpetuate such neanderthal approaches to distinctions between academic training and the academics – as he would have called it – and vocational training is extremely unfortunate. Because I think there is a sense in which every human being has to be exposed to a variety of training whether their outlook and experience are essentially like a lawyer or even somebody involved as a university lecturer, who may be then called upon to apply many of the new technologies to the task at hand and that too may include politicians who we assume use our brains, but for the average man in the street they assume that we do not. We may have to use new forms of technology and be trained to use those new forms of technology. So if you make the distinction lower down in the system, it is antediluvian and neanderthal to make that kind of distinction in a debate of this sort.

12.30 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never made any distinction. In fact, I was careful to say that we are not playing down the academics, Sir. I was careful to say so. I never made any distinction because regardless of how good you are as a plumber or what have you, you still need to have some kind of academic mind to calculate. Anybody that gets up and makes that speech, Sir, would not be a person of any mind period.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will not throw me off. The Honourable Member clearly decided to speak for an hour and lost his way in that hour. He does not recall that during the course of his speech in here today he said that he was very happy that the Technical, Vocational, Educational and Training Council and its programme de-emphasizes academics, de-emphasizes lecturers and text books and 80 per cent of its training is hands-on.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. No, no, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said that they do about 20 per cent in the text book and the majority of it is hands on. So that does not mean that it does not have any academic input or that the two do not complement them or that they do not have the teaching of English up there.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be happy to sit down for half an hour if the Honourable Member wishes to complete a sensible speech in here on this subject. I will be happy to give him a half an hour more that he can come to grips with those concepts because the point we are trying to make is that distinction was emphasized. The Educational, Vocational and Technical Programme caters not in terms of the context of the individual who leaves and is not involved in any form of education and training, but it caters to the kind of person who (a) is going to have a hands on profession or (b) the kind of future worker who is going to need to understand technology. I am saying that is neither the cart before the horse.

As I understand it, what the technical and vocational training is to be focused on at this time is those young Barbadians who without more would have less schooling and by and large they come from poor families in Barbados at age 17 or so and who between that age and about age 23 to 25 are involved in no kind of training, education, work, apprenticeship or anything else.

I am making the assumption that the design of this programme is to seek to capture those Barbadians and there are a large minority, not majority, of Barbadians who, therefore, should be captured by the programmes undertaken by the Technical Vocational Educational and Training Council, Sir, so that when the expression "text book student" is used, it should not be used to describe to the individual a perspective that there are people who work with their hands as distinct from those who go to the academics. It should be used to describe a student who is involved in some form of training, work experience or education but who is not within the formal educational system run by the Ministry of Education. Of course, if the two entities are together that distinction would not apply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is also unfortunate that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Technical Vocational Educational and Training Department has not been able to tell us whether the policy document that it produced sometime, I believe, in 1997 entitled "Investing In Our Future" has met its goals. In fact, it is a policy document that I do not think has been laid in the House of Assembly and which Members of this Parliament would have benefited from had the Minister been inclined to raise the level of debate to get to the substance of the issues in relation to training that are critical.

What is the actual amount of funds, for example, that have been allocated by the Government to these programmes and what is the actual amount that has been received. If you read the reports of the Council, you will see that there is often a significant disparity between the amount that we vote for in the Estimates, when the Honourable Member will be in full stride praising vocational and technical training in saying how wonderful it is, and the amount which the Ministry actually makes available to the Council to undertake the training programmes in Barbados. A quick perusal of all of the reports that have been made available to the House in recent time will show that there has been a disparity between those amounts. I think that the Minister needs to tell us how much was allocated in 1999 and how much was utilized in the programme of training.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it is also important for the Minister to compare that to resources that were made available over previous years, the kind of training that is being undertaken, and the number of persons who have benefited directly from the training that has been undertaken by the Council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is still a large percentage of young Barbadians between the ages of 16 and 18 and then beyond that who are not involved actively in a programme of education, training or employment. Between the ages of 18 and 23 can be some of the most frustrating years for them. Therefore, the programme should be focused essentially on trying to capture those individuals. There may not be as many men in those categories because of the fact that they may be involved in the construction sector at this time but there are certainly a large number of women unemployed, as I constantly say sitting at a dining table all day long, some of them may have children already but who are extremely frustrated and marginalized in the Barbadian society.
12.40 p.m.

It is a programme like this which needs to go and seek out those women, get them actively involved and on some kind of personal funding for the training which they are undertaking to support their needs for bus fare, lunch money and other incidentals so they can carry out the programme in some kind of comfort.

On this Side we want to urge young people to get involved in training and to make sure that those years are not wasted because without them being involved in a programme of training and education in those potentially wasted years, it means they are going to end up later in life in low pay occupations and further frustration, lack of job prospects and lack of mobility in the labour market.

You could find that the untrained person in a world in which technology is going to be playing a greater role may end up remaining in a job at the same level throughout their entire lifetime which leads to great frustration. Most of our

young people in Barbados would benefit from a smooth transition from secondary schools into the job market.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I can repeat it. It may show that we are more familiar with material than the Minister. The mere fact you are saying it is all in there, whatever that may be, and the Minister did not say it, tells us that the Opposition is more in tune with the critical issues that affect young people and training in Barbados than the Minister, and that is not my fault.

The point I am trying to make is that for the majority of those persons who have benefited from a sound education, there is a very smooth transition from school to work but, at the same time, there is also a large minority who lack support or guidance. It is extremely important for us to focus on that group of individuals to create and ensure that they have access to good jobs and career opportunities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the aim of this programme should be a better life for young people. The aim of the Minister's presentation today should have been to identify how he is going to save them from unemployment and underemployment and, in particular, the large number of women since our employment statistics show that the number of unemployed women is twice that the number of men.

The Minister also has to understand that an effective technical, vocational, educational and training programme at the end of the day also saves the society from paying later on welfare bills for persons who are unable to work because of their circumstances. It also contributes to lower levels of crime. All of these, basically, are the end results and the objectives of such a programme.

The Minister's programme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should be to encourage young people to stay in education, training, or even work with a strong training component up to and beyond the age of 18 years for staying at school beyond 18 is a different issue. What you may very well find, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that because of the overburdened curriculum in the secondary schools in Barbados and even in the primary schools in Barbados that for people to acquire specialists skills in many areas and sub-professions in information technology and so on, will require them to remain in active training or education at least up to the age of 18 and beyond.

Therefore, whereas in the past when I was younger and even now, there is a group that would stay on at the Community College to do "A" Levels, stay on at the "A" Level schools to do "A" Levels, it will almost become mandatory for our other children to be involved in some form of education, training or work related training up to and even beyond the age of 18 so that they would obtain the critical skills that are necessary to interface with technology and also a changing world of work.

What the Minister therefore needed to do, and I assume the Minister of Education will do since she is obviously more familiar with the material, is to identify the difference between the clear structure in Barbados for those who do well in the educational systems, who go right through secondary school, may even do "A" Levels or some kind of short professional training afterwards, go onto university or professional training and then secure a job.

Then there are those who stay on for about a year to get some training, let us say, the women who leave secondary school and go and do secretarial or accounting programmes privately at the "O" Level Institute, or other training institutes, who get involved in the middle tiers in the labour market in Barbados. Then there are others who may stay in some training but cannot last through the entire training programme. It is that group I think the Minister responsible for technical, vocational, education and training needs to speak to. He needs to tell us whether there is a high drop-out rate from the programmes which the Council had undertaken, whether the young people complete the courses, whether they are in a cycle between, let us say, the ages of 18 and 23, where they are involved for some time in work, some time in training, some time in non-economic activities, as I say, some time in unemployment. It is that kind of information that would have been critical to this debate so that members in the House generally could understand the contribution technical, vocational, education and training is making to Barbados.

The Minister gets up with the most absurd platitudes. We had them in the Estimates debate and we are having them again now, as if he is teaching a class of second formers or first formers, how wonderful it is that all of these young people have been trained in masonry and carpentry and how great he feels in his heart when he passes down on the major construction sites in Barbados and see these young men and women involved in carpentry, masonry and construction as if their life ambitions would have rested exclusively on leaving a secondary school in Barbados going into a training programme up to the age of 23 or sometimes between 16 and 23 to spend the rest of their lives involved in carpentry, masonry or those individual skills without again having access to further courses of training which would move them on either to new skills or carry out a continuous programme of training to enhance the use of their tools and technology in the process.

I think the Minister also needs to identify in this debate, since it has social implications, the percentage of those students who are involved in these programmes who essentially come from poor backgrounds in Barbados and who, therefore, need to have the kind of guidance after they leave school to get involved in determining a clear career path and matching the training which the TVET Council provides to the career path which has been identified.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you do not address those kinds of issues, it means at the end of the day that the Minister opens himself to the criticism that he has not come into contact with either the lofty or even the mundane objectives and principles on which the entire TVET Project was redesigned.
12.50 p.m.

When this Government came to office they went into convulsions about the original design of the project and how they would make major changes and how they would be delivering on a training programme that would see thousands of young Barbadians well prepared and trained for the labour market. They did not say carpenters and masons, that was not in the presentation. What they said was that they were going to train thousands of young people to be involved in high skilled jobs in Barbados, particularly in the information and technology areas. At the end of the day, we heard that that was the sector which was going to provide the greatest growth and opportunities for the creation of jobs in Barbados. That strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, has failed because when one looks at the large number of companies that have closed down in Barbados, and if you listen to one of the young men who is involved in that kind of information technology activity, he is facing great difficulty sourcing persons who have had tertiary training at university or even training through Government established training programmes to be involved in a variety of tasks which persons outside Barbados require and which could be performed in Barbados.

If the Prime Minister in his Budget debate had said that the TVET programme was designed essentially to provide training for a 10-year construction boom you would be able to say that, assuming that it is TVET that trained most of the young people who are involved in the construction sector, it was successful. But that was not the objective that the Government outlined when the entire programme was redesigned, when they said major funds would be invested to train young people in Barbados and that the focus of our programme would be to ensure that young people were placed in high skilled good jobs in Barbados and that there would be a severance of the past approach that the Democratic Labour Party had adopted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is against this background that today what we discuss in this particular Bill are cosmetic changes to technical, vocational, education and training. Even with those cosmetic changes to the Bill, the Minister has not been able to identify his own vision, the Ministry's vision or the Government's vision for this area of activity in Barbados.

I believe that there will be very many young people who would be disappointed at the failure of the Government to focus its energy on those new areas that need to be identified for training whether in relation to technology

training in what the Honourable Member calls the use-of-hands skills which, he said, were so important and desirable where text books only complement the hands-on activity and training and which obliterates rote and memorisation and de-emphasises rote and memorisation and then basically focuses young people on what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North called activity based curricula.

I think that we have basically been treated to a very disappointing in the introduction by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in this debate.

We will be supporting the legislation because as I said it is cosmetic but we would have hoped that there would have been something more substantial and significant that would have been brought to the House of Assembly at this time.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if one considers in its historical context the movement towards the education of Barbadians one would notice that there would have been certain signals in the period before 1838 and then between 1838 and 1938 by a process of very slow evolution some development did occur. In terms of the modern thrust towards educating Barbadians in the period after 1938 is very much the period where exciting developments have taken place.

Forgive me Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I have been using the term education and training in the context of what I am about to say as one and the same. I am aware of the fact that in the real world there are those who speak of training as being one thing and the design of a particular practical nature about it whereas, education is deemed to be more of a global textual thing. I will treat the question of education and training as being one and the same.

Under the Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and Mr. Tom Adams the

philosophy guiding education in the post 1950 period was a philosophy where those thinkers believe firmly that the development of Barbados could only be made sure through education and through training.

The Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams, with limited resources at a time before Barbados achieved nationhood, set about the task of spreading education universally throughout the length and breadth of Barbados. His task was continued by his successor and in recent times, we have both seen a relatively new approach but building very much on what had transpired before. At the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us who love this country must, certainly as we support what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is doing raise particular concerns about where we are in this Barbados.

I am concerned that a situation where both the Ministries of Education and Labour have a clear commitment to developing our young people and there are disturbing trends out there which have nothing to do with the system, structure, or style of Government but which are trends which could very well defeat the purposes that this Government has set its mind to in terms of setting out to achieve for Barbadians what we know is good for them.

We have come to an interesting situation in this country where there are those who speak loudly about education for the marketplace. There are those who say that the primary purpose of education should be to prepare and train people for the world of work and those who put that view that the primary purpose of education is to prepare people for the world of work, sometimes do so and appear as they do so, to be excluding other purposes to which education can be put.

There is also the view that education should build the total person and that there are certain core Neozoic skills, core intellectual skills and core abilities that have to be developed before people go on to be prepared for the marketplace.

Mr. Deputy speaker, I shall touch briefly on some of these things but if you consider where this Barbados is in the year 2000, where so many millions upon millions of dollars have been invested directly to support the school system and invested to train not only the youth and the students but to train the teachers, we have at this particular point in time to begin to evaluate where we are. The process of taking stock of where we are going or where we are started.

Shortly after 1994, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East got hold of information that she did not like. She saw a clear pattern where despite the millions of dollars injected into the educational system that not enough people were benefiting to her satisfaction. What did she do? You will no doubt recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Honourable Members will remember the famous Education White Paper. Even before then our Minister of Education

looked to see what factors there could have been inhibiting learning and inhibiting student growth. She set about correctly in my respectful view looking closely at what things were happening in the primary school in particular that curbed and constrained growth. She discovered that some children had hearing problems and that some children had problems with their vision and that there were others Mr. Deputy Speaker, who were not achieving because of a number of forces holding them back and she set about rectifying that with the resources at her disposal to ensure that those children who were not benefiting from the educational system could be rehabilitated.

When we consider education, we have to consider the forces that touch a student's life do not occur exclusively in the school system. I am going to go back to a happy period in Barbados' history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look to see what is happening among those persons who are in our student population we have to begin wondering whether the type of harmony that ought to exist between home and school is really existing in the way and to the degree and in the fashion that is desirable.

2.10 p.m.

Last week on the radio waves in this country a head teacher, almost in tears, said that he had problems in his school when the students were not doing homework and did not appear penitent about it at all. He said the problem was that they were not learning because they were not doing homework. He called them up and they looked at him and started to mock at him. He could not understand why they would not do their homework. He sent for their parents and the parents, all to one person told him that they told the children if they did not feel like doing homework not to do any.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question is, is the harmony that should exist between home and school really in place? There was a time in this Barbados when the home sought to inculcate discipline in the children and the school sought to inculcate discipline too and by discipline I do not mean punishment, I mean setting in train a programme where the home was in support of the school, where the children were taught that education had an inherent value, where the children were taught about character building, where the children were taught about respect for authority, where the children were taught about reverence for human life – the Honourable Member for St. John came close to saying – and where children were encouraged to see education as a process and not as an event.

Let me comment on these things, beginning with the last one. Too many Barbadians see education as an event including past the secondary stage. I mean they go to an institution, they do something, they get a certificate – slam bam, finished – an event, something that happened and it is over with – preterite tense.

In my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, education should be a process for reasons that will become obvious towards the end of my speech. Why do I say that education should be a process? We live in a world hit by the dynamics of change. The security in the workplace that a person had in 1970 is not there anymore. A thinker call Chhein said that by the time a student gets into the workplace his or her primary preoccupation is security. Chhein said that a lot of workers see security as that which is conferred on them by a system or by an institution.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph once told me that there is a difference between being given something and earning something. The future generation of workers in Barbados are going to have to earn their security at work through intensive training. For the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons who are going to work and work for twenty and twenty-five years are not going to be persons being easy beneficiaries of a security at work conferred on them by which they are given long tenure, by which their productivity is not measured or by which they are not evaluated but the type of security that I would want for our people is a security where they are so well-trained and have such a healthy disposition to work after having come through the school system successfully that they can demand and earn their pay, demand and earn their place in the workplace.

I am therefore, notwithstanding what Chhein said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, differentiating between the type of security of tenure at work where people come into a system and remain for twenty years and where the system itself encourages them to remain, irrespective of their productivity, irrespective of their attitude, but I am looking at a better system where people are so well-trained and are so skilled that by their fitness for work through qualifications, attitudes and such, they can demand a place and the dynamics of change they can always adjust to fit.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, when he was not yet the Member for St. Joseph mentioned to a group of us young people in the Barbados Labour Party in 1977, that we had to develop a system of training and apprenticeship where we would give people the opportunity to go to school but then shortly after, train them for the world of work. He, consistent with his belief, that you should earn your way in the world, was indicating quite rightly that persons who prepared themselves for the world of work should not just go through a system and end up asking around for an opportunity but should, consistent with what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, be good enough and in a proper enough condition to demand a place out there in the factory or on the job market.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North was saying that one of the primary objectives of the Technical Vocational Education and Training Programme was and is to make those who are unemployable employable, and is to

make those who are under-employed employed and employed over a length of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having mentioned these things to workers security and work I would like to go back to the very educational system which is going to come under scrutiny in this debate and mention that when we see what the threats are to learning, indeed, what the threats are to the integrity of the society, there are indeed some disturbing trends which we are going to have to deal with.

If we look at education as teaching and training one way but also as passing values on the other hand, I would like to see us re-affirm that old fashioned Barbadian commitment to respect for authority, to character building and certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to reverence for human life.

I had the unfortunate experience where I saw a girl no more than seventeen come down to the beach with five little children, the oldest of which could not be more than four years old. She ran into the sea and left the four children on the beach. They were bellowing and craving attention. She remained in the sea for as long as she wanted to, the four children continued to crave attention while she was enjoying herself. When one child ran to the sea she confronted the child with such a violent attitude and language that I wondered if she could have been a fit and proper parent.
2.20 p.m.

I see people carrying children to school and sometimes when the children act 'a little stiff' they threaten them with violent language and violent behaviour. There is a difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between discipline and violence.

Too many people who have little children, sensitive and impressionable little children are too violent with them. And if I am mentioning that part of the culture that we want to encourage in the Barbados education system it is respect for human life and reverence to human life. One is tempted when one sees parents abuse children violently and distort their personalities, one is tempted to wonder whether if it takes a birth or baptism certificate, two passport size pictures and a testimonial to recognise some people as parents, whether they could really be parents even if they have had one child before.

There is nothing called a fitness test to be a parent. But when you get bad parenting that emphasises violent treatment of children in this country you can very well, not you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but a person treating little impressionable children with violence, could very well be setting the stage for warped personalities, for interfering with those children's capacity to learn, indeed, to interfere with those children's capacity to have reverence for human life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another vital and disturbing trend in the educational system, is that there are those who seem not to understand the inherent work of education. I am now hearing the people who supported free secondary education in 1961 and 1971, all of a sudden saying that they are wondering if they are ready for education now. Sir, I know of nobody here in this Government who is against free secondary education. I am not deaf, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have heard people outside there in the community who were supportive of free secondary education, making bold statements that too many people are disrespecting the education system and not trying to benefit from it.

I do not think that any Honourable Member in this House would vote in favour of the abolition of free secondary education but at the same time, it is a fact that statistics revealed, on the Floor of the Honourable House between 1995 and 1996, suggest that a lot of the students who go to secondary school are not achieving the way they should. A lot of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, possess commonsense and are intelligent and we now have to find out why it is that they do not make any effort to cooperate with the school system.

I have already mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the tension between home and school. The worst thing for a teacher is guiding a student along a particular path and the home and the parent pulling in the opposite direction, that is the worst thing that can happen to a child. The child is confused, the teacher and the parent inevitably will come to war and as a result the social problems that we see out there in this community.

There is another disturbing trend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about 15 years the coming of the social popularity of the videos at home and the foreign TV programming. I know a lot of money is spent in society in education. I know people who, woefully prepared for life, succumb to the temptation of putting entertainment ahead of education.

There clearly is a role for entertainment and by entertainment I do not mean ordinary cultural entertainment. I feel that every individual does deserve some kind of entertainment but when a community stresses entertainment excessively ahead of education, the temptation is to wonder if they should relax before they work. Those who have gone the way of putting entertainment ahead of education are in danger of relaxing before they work and we cannot have that in a community that has developed through the work ethic, so let us get back to the work ethics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we get the homes working with the schools, when we get people focussing on seeing education as leading to character building and preparing them for citizenship, when we see people come back to true patriotism, then we would have achieved what we wanted to achieve.

In the meantime some of the stresses out there are clearly the result of the very problems that I raised. If I did not raise them directly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then I raise them again. Implied in the list of objectives that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioned as his objectives behind the TVET programme, is the fact that a workforce should be skilled and should be encouraged to be skilled.

You will recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I said that I was going to view education and training as a skill. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said already that the world is changing. A person who went to work with three or four O'levels in 1965 could not have anticipated how the world would be in this Barbados in 2000. With the pace of change, the evolution of technology, the fact that right now in the year 2000 five or six O'levels cannot be enough. Eight O'levels, two A'levels and a degree right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cannot be enough to the Barbadian for the future and from every utterance and every deed, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is correct. When I said from every utterance and every deed I am coming now to deal specifically with the EduTech programme.

The Barbadian for the future between the ages of 17, 18 or 19 must, Mr. Deputy Speaker, be multi-skilled. Since then the biggest factor in a worker's life is security. I said here that for the worker to get security, that security must not be conferred on the worker but that security must be earned by the worker's own efforts and the worker's own preparation.

We must have the multi-skilled Barbadians. One reason for this Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there are so many thousands of Barbadians, notwithstanding all that I have said, who are very well-qualified but who cannot bargain in the workplace. Another reason for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the economies of the world, including this one, are going to be compelled to practise painful deficiencies and as part of that culture of painful deficiencies, this is going to be a culture devolving in favour of the worker who not only can work but who is flexible in a job and in a situation where the economic dynamics have seen turbulence in the economy, I am not talking about any turbulence now, Mr. Deputy Speaker...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I am saying that a person 17 years old should think about a possible 2 or 3 careers to bestow security on himself. What we take as valuing education is something that can pay but one which can build. Education can train, yes, but it also should build. In that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am most disappointed by the relative decline in reading in Barbados, but I am heartened that the Ministry of Education is doing something about the problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point has to be made that when I talk about multi-skills, I do not mean going to be trained as an accountant, architect and lawyer. You can be multi-skilled as a steel bender, mason, plumber and an electrician.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. We might share different political parties but we are on the same level.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I will forgive the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. It seems as though he has been sobered by the contributions made on this Side so far today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a working class Barbadian who knows of the existence of the Training Board, who knows of the existence of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, who knows of the existence of systems by which you can go and get work experience, can very well go and train as a mason, and later train as a carpenter, train as an electrician, train as a plumber, that way, whatever happens in the labour market that person can bargain better than by just having one skill. Any person today who is a specialist lawyer at 22 or 23 had better look out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while talking about a specialist lawyer at 22 or 23, there was this lawyer who used to pine, he said that his wife was about to leave him, he could not pay his debts, he was not making money. He was complaining in front of a plumber, saying that he was not working for enough and things were hard and he had no savings. The plumber looked at the lawyer straight in the face and said, "Boy, I used to have those problems when I myself was a lawyer."

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The point is this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the labour market, you get downturns.

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I believe there are times. Between 1992 and 1994 specialists in conveyancing had hard times in Barbados, ask the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. Between 1992 and 1994 specialists in conveyancing had hard times because the Democratic Labour Party had seen to it that there was a credit squeeze, the foreign reserves were down to between \$12 million and \$30 million and people who had to rely on banks, both for finance and rely on banks indirectly for career earnings were in trouble. A lot of specialists in conveyancing had to get up and go to court and ask relative juniors how to proceed in court. It was a threatening time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point is that if you are so possessed with marketable skills as we are encouraging, if you see learning as something that should go on and on as a process rather than an event, you will have to appreciate that the way things are right now, we have to encourage our youth to be multi-skilled but at the same time engender those old-fashioned values. By old-fashioned values we consider values like respect for others, respect for oneself, reverence for life, we have to get back to that.

We are seeing signs in Barbados that there are those who are irreverent when it comes to their own lives and other people's lives. I cannot develop the point, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that as I welcome the policies by which the appropriate institutions should be represented on TVET and I am going to be very charitable. The Honourable Member for St. John did not go on but one thing he said that really caught my attention is that with education you should go on...

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: He said so. He did not develop the point sufficiently but we have come to the stage where we cannot abandon education for entertainment. Entertainment has its place. We have to get back to self-sacrificing values. Some learning is inevitably in our favour. Some learning is inevitably giving up ourselves, ironically, for ourselves, some people do not understand that. We have to see the educational system as being something that has been denied to Barbados before 1838. The educational system for everybody took off after 1938 but it is a system which needs refining. It is a system in which millions upon millions of dollars have been invested. It is a system, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which our people have to learn to value.

I am going to conclude by once again calling for a greater harmony between home and school. I do not like when head teachers say that when parents come to them, the parents make bold to say that they instructed their children not to do the homework, that is sending the wrong message, not just to their children but to the other children out there. I do not like how bright people, intelligent people go to school and hibernate for five or six years and then come on the streets and they try to catch their lives back.

The Honourable Member for St. John told politicians to go on the streets and speak with the boys. It is a fight. It is going to be a struggle. I went, obeying the Honourable Member for St. John, I spoke to a few young fellows and they looked at me as though they do not understand when I try to tell them that they have to train and they have to work. Only this weekend, when a fellow asked me for help and I told him I am going to get him to work, he looked at me as though work was the most remote thing for him. I am going to have to go back and check him to find out why he has

drifted. But, a culture that deals with that early in its development which has not impressed on its youth that achievement is made through struggle, is a culture that could be looking for danger.

There are visual signs of prosperity in Barbados, that prosperity has been accumulated through the efforts of many over time. Today's youth must understand that they have to achieve through hard work and sacrifice. Many people burned midnight oil for this generation. I do not want to see us lose them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want us to be able to embrace them as part of our people. I want to be able to encourage them to study hard and work. Above all, I want to encourage them to take in opportunities for as many skills as they possibly can. I want to be supportive of any measure that will bring order, structure and certainly encouragement to those in need of it.

With these few humble remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this particular Bill. I want to say from the outset that it is very good for us to get in here and speak with forked tongues but it is another thing to be out there in the real world.

I want to warn the Government from the outset that it is okay to train people but at the end of the day you must have something for them to do. I am not sure, Sir, after listening to the Minister that the Government really has a policy on this particular training programme. For the simple reason, it is okay to talk about making some person a good mason or carpenter but it is another thing for that person after the jobs in the particular areas have been absorbed to find alternative work. That is, we might have a situation in this country where construction might be the thing to be in at this present moment but there is no guarantee that one or two years from now that that particular sector is going to be the sector to lead the job creation.

One must ask oneself, whether the Government should not look at the amount of expenditure it incurs in particular areas and see how they could help to implement a training programme to make permanent job creation for the youngsters when they leave school, instead of looking at certain areas which can be regarded as seasonal areas.

A couple of days ago, Sir, I saw a picture in the newspapers where the Ministry of Public Works seemed to have some good real estate and that good real estate was all taken up with derelict vehicles. One must ask oneself, how

come a Government that collects over \$19 million a year for training cannot see it possible to use some of that money to help some small business people who are involved in having good mechanic shops, good body work shops and encourage those people to train these youngsters, whether it is by the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polyclinic, whether it is at the Barbados Training Board, now TVET.

Sir, you have the Transport Board, who every year will be coming to Parliament for large sums to buy new buses, a Police Force who every year has to be doing the same thing, the Government Service on the whole. We must ask ourselves whether we cannot put a system in place where the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and all these other agencies cannot train our youngsters in jobs that can pay them a proper wage every week.
2.40 p.m.

I want to move away from this point for one second. It was rather interesting to hear the Honourable Member for St. James North – and I do not think no better person in this Parliament could have made that point other than himself – saying that he knew of a particular guy who was quite interested in work at one particular point in time and now that he has mentioned work to him, he has no interest.

What do you expect, Sir, when you live in a country and every day when you go next to the road on the west coast you can see the type of lifestyle that can only influence people to look at the other side of life and not the side of working hard to achieve a living because when one looks toward the hard way, one cannot get the same achievements out of life as if you look at the particular lifestyle that you are supposed to see on a daily basis.

I have already mentioned in this Parliament the problem of an eight-year old child who was asked by his teacher what he expects to do when he becomes a senior person in this society. So we cannot get in this Parliament and behave as if we are in this world and everything is standard. This world is dynamic and Barbados is part of the world. We cannot have a situation where we have about ten different mediums where people are influenced by all sorts of different things and where people see lifestyles that they are not accustomed to and these types of lifestyles are held up daily for our young people to gravitate to and, yet still, we expect them to behave the same way they have been behaving years ago.

I am saying to the Government that the \$19 million which they collect on a yearly basis and only spend about \$8 million and having a surplus of \$11 million on a yearly basis under the false pretense of training that that money can be better utilised if they target a particular area. It is quite clear to me that the transport section of the Government is

such a wide section where they can easily take thousands of Barbadians, train them in a particular area and pay them salaries for which they would be prepared to work.

But what do we have: A junk yard at the Barbados Defence Force (BDF), a junkyard at the Police Headquarters, a junkyard at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPT) and a junkyard at the Ministry of Agriculture. At every single ministry in this country you can find a junkyard but, yet still, we have talented people out there who have workshops and who are prepared to do the preventative work to make sure that these vehicles can be brought back to life in this country and we cannot see it as a Government to put the resources where our mouths are to make sure that our young people are given jobs that can develop their minds and also develop our country.

There are young bright men in this country who have seen the opportunity and who through a process of trying to develop businesses have gone into a particular venture – which I will not mention at this point in time – to build a capital base and by building that capital base there is also a spin-off where they have developed workshops and they are employing people who are doing good work in this country but the Government cannot see it fit to make sure that part of the training fund is passed to these young businessmen to help develop this industry.

In the 1980's, the great, Right Excellent Errol Barrow said that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) should be properly utilised to save this country millions of dollars in foreign exchange. I wonder how many of the Government Members pass by Weymouth on a daily basis to see buses that our young men and women could be converting and putting back on the road on a daily basis but no...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: All in the aim for foreign exchange this Government feels that every time that they need buses for the transport system they must go to Brazil just because they know that they can get a loan in foreign exchange which will help build up the reserves. I am saying that one would have thought that having companies like ACME, UCAL and a lot of other workshops spread throughout Barbados – and I do not want to identify them but in the process of time I will – that Government would have recognised that it will make more sense to empower these people and to help them to reconvert some of the so-called derelict vehicles and put them back in a state that they can easily be used in this country.

When one makes an investigation and one really checks the buses one would recognise that sometimes the only thing that is needed is an engine and anybody who understands anything about a vehicle...

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his speech referred to the fact that this Government is importing buses from overseas and having businesses like ACME and so on and not being in a position to give them any work. I just want to let him know that he is misleading the House in that at this present moment we have some 15 buses that will be coming out of ACME Garage within another few weeks from now.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, I am serious about this Mr. Deputy Speaker. To tell me that every year we are going to spend \$20 million and he could get up as a Minister to tell me that they are giving ACME 15 minibuses to build is of no significance because that is chicken feed based on the issue and the argument that I am putting forward and I am not saying that ACME...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: This is the whole point, the problem is, ACME and the other workshops that are spread throughout Barbados must be given a commitment that the Barbados Transport Board and the Government of Barbados are prepared to give them enough work. I am telling you that there are workshops in Barbados which will be able to recondition a lot of those buses that are now being transferred from Weymouth up to Haggatt Hall and other places in Barbados. We can get a lot of those buses back on the road because when you think about it some of the problems they have are minor.

I am saying that the Government must stop using a strategy of trying to get foreign exchange and dumping things that can be used properly. I am saying that some of these buses can be reconditioned and there are people in Barbados who are capable of doing that particular job but it means that we must be prepared to think further.

The problem with this particular Government is that they are in a short-term mode and somebody must get them in the long-term mode because thinking within one week is their latitude but I would like to see that stop because it is the lives of Barbadians that they are playing with and it is the future of our youngsters that they must take into consideration.

I can understand why the Minister of Public Works and Transport would want me to sit down because every single day he is developing another landfill at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPT). He has changed his Ministry now from being the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPT) to the Ministry of Health. Bare garbage and solid waste in this country and otherwise.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. I think the Honourable Member is misleading this House again. There is no landfill anywhere in the vicinity of the Pine where the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPT) exists. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was at the Sanitation Board, they told me that the landfill is a place where you collect garbage and all the vehicles there happened to be garbage and it has to be placed there by Government. If you check, Sir, all the garbage at Public Works is placed there by the Government and it is only Government that can create a landfill. He is the Minister, Sir, and he will have to be the Minister of Public Works and garbage also.
2.50 p.m.

I am saying, Sir, that a lot of the vehicles that are being dumped right now at the Ministry of Public Works can easily be used within the private sector if they would only use...

Aside.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You would lose the Government the next day. I am saying, Sir, that the Government must understand that they must come with a long-term policy to deal with these particular problems and they cannot continue to waste the taxpayers' money the way they have been wasting it.

I want to know, Sir, from the Minister what is being done every year with that surplus of over 11 million dollars that is being collected through the Training Fund? I would say, Sir, that Government has been short changing Barbadians by using the Training Fund to collect large sums of money and not spending at least half of it back on the people of Barbados. What is more regrettable, Sir, is that money is being collected and public servants at this time are finding it difficult to get study leave and so on. I will not deal with the school children who cannot get leave now. I will deal with that in another debate.

Sir, the question must be asked. How can the trade union movement in this country be prepared to sit on a board and allow the Government to collect this money and they are not prepared to let some of this money or the majority of this money be spent back on their workers? It is clear to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the trade union movement in year 2000 continue in this mode, they would have lost all the foresight left to them by the 'Great Excellent' Frank Walcott and all the great leaders before him, Sir.

Because the pace at which they are moving, soon from now, instead of collecting union dues, we will have to vote more money in this Parliament to pay the operating expenses of the trade union movement. It is clear to me that the trade union movement has lost its direction and sooner rather than

later, Sir, the members will have to find either a new leader for the trade union movement or a new organisation to carry their complaints because anybody who cannot understand that they have been given a mandate by the workers to represent their interest and instead of representing the interest of the workers they feel that they must represent the interest of the private sector and the Government, must ask one self whether they are being paid by the private sector or the Government or whether they are being paid by the workers.

I am saying that the trade union movement must understand that they agree to sign a protocol that the interest of the workers must be accepted also. Otherwise, you will be telling me that you will be training workers and the workers are not taking in the training. The training means that they have a better understanding and higher expectations. If the trade union leaders do not understand that workers in Barbados have a higher expectation, something is wrong in this country and somebody must tell them so. If you doubt me or have a quarrel with me, go and quarrel with Hilary Beckles too. He has repeated it and he was invited by the trade union movement to address their annual conference so if they have a quarrel with me, they should have one with Dr. Beckles too.

I am saying that we must realize the world is changing and trade union leaders must understand that they are important too. They must stop holding onto the jackets of political parties and private sector leaders and believing that once they have done that they do not have to represent the interest of workers. We must recognize that with globalisation the Barbadian worker must understand that the training that has been given to him since the 1960's and 1970's must work in his or her interest. If the Barbadian worker does not recognise that there is something called 'territory', every single piece of work that has been achieved for them over the last 30 years would have been destroyed in less than two years.

I am saying the workers in Barbados must find somebody to protect their interest. The same way the Government and the private sector have someone to protect their interest, the workers must find somebody to protect their interest. No good trade union leader in this century can feel happy to get up in year 2000 and tell people that their only achievement for the last six years was to see the private sector and Government expand and at the same time to see the workers deprived of millions of dollars for their betterment. If you call that progress in the trade union movement, then every single piece of training done by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education would have gone out the window and the workers would not have gained anything from that training.

Leaders in this country must understand that workers also have a particular understanding and they will not sit

back and continue to take foolishness all of their lives. You cannot tell a worker who cannot even find money sometimes to buy a proper home or get a piece of land in this country that he is better off while the private sector and the Government can brag and boast about the millions of additional dollars they have collected and the millions of investments they have entered into. Workers every day are catching their 'royal' to achieve something in life but the other sectors to the agreement are getting every single day in this country but the workers must sit back and say: Yes, Massa, we are happy to see you striving and we will sit back and wait for the crumbs from the table.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I had to make a choice between the days for slave training and the training now in Barbados, I would really have to think hard, Sir, which days I would want. I will tell you why. In the slave days, the workers were forced to come to Barbados to work. In the year 2000, they are not being forced to come to Barbados to work but they are now being enslaved by their own and people feel proud about that. Can union leaders be proud about that? I sometimes wonder what the 'Great Sir Excellent' Grantley Adams, Hugh Springer and Frank Walcott if they were alive today in Barbados would say, Sir, about what is going on in this country. I really wonder. I can tell you what the 'Great Excellent' Errol Barrow would have said.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is given to innovation today in his speech. Sir, I think that the National Heroes legislation requires that these gentlemen be called Right Excellent. He is putting new nomenclature to the name by saying 'great excellent', Sir, but he is talking without pausing for breath or thought. I understand.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand why the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would not want me to call the name Adams great. I will give them the title he wants me to give them, the Right Excellent. That Adams' name means something special to him. Anytime you refer to a great Adams it cannot be in Barbados for him. I understand.

I am saying, Sir, that those great trade union leaders and leaders of Barbados who fought so hard for the empowerment of blacks in this country will have to stop and think twice of what is really going on in this country. I have seen a situation where we are bragging about how much money we are spending on developing the minds of people and at the same time one would think that when you develop the minds of people of Barbados that you would provide opportunities to help develop the people.

No, we will come to Parliament and we will vote for money for them to be trained and to be retrained but when it

comes to giving them economic empowerment that is not for them. Yet, the people we are not voting money for training can brag about how they can buy out and sell out and do all sorts of things and they can gain this massive power and then when certain people seem to be thriving in a particular sector they can hold board meetings down the East Coast and they can decide whether they should come back in the supermarket business because of the power given to them by certain relationships called Protocols to come and try to kill a black man who has succeeded in developing the supermarket business.

Yet we have had governments who have patted themselves on the back and will tell you that everything is well. So I am saying that we have to ask ourselves in this country whether we are going forward or whether we are going back. In my opinion, every single citizen in this country has a right to achieve in this country but no one group should feel that they have the right to achieve much faster than another group, especially when they were always leading. I am saying it is time for catching up and if you need to cut your eyes in another direction it has to be in the direction of those people who have been underprivileged all the days of their lives.

I would hope, Sir, that the Ministers sitting on the Front Bench would have another look at what is called the protocols of this country. It is clear to me that the protocols in this country should not be a three-way relationship but should be a two-way relationship and that the trade union movement should remove themselves from those protocols. Thank you very much.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in this debate to speak on the issue of the amendment to the Technical Vocational Education Training Act. I believe that I should try and focus on the principles of the amendment before us and the legislation before us and not follow the previous speaker who found it necessary to launch a major broadside on the trade union movement rather than speak to the principles of training in Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading by giving the impression that she does not support any of the things I have said.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am aware of the fact that the Honourable Member knows better and knows that there is a time and place for everything and that this debate today is one which speaks to the issue of training, and it is that which I intend to confine my remarks.

Sir, the issue of training has been one which this Government has felt very strongly is necessary in our

strategic direction to relieve the country of unemployment and equally to ensure that we get the issues pertaining to the 'info-market' performed right. It is for that reason perhaps more than any other reason that it is located in the Ministry responsible for Labour because many of the issues that confront the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Board as well as the Barbados Vocational Training Board relate to issues which in fact go to the very heart of our labour market in Barbados. We have also recognised that there is a distinct division between education and training.

Education seeks to provide a child with the necessary skills, information and socialisation through the provision of ethics and values and how to live together in a society; a civilising function that no other function or no other institution in the society can adequately deliver. If we did not need to deliver those functions then there would be no need for schools. Schools go beyond the provision of information and skills and provide a very strong socialising function which is absolutely critical in any society that is governed by the rule of law.

Training, on the other hand, recognises that even where a person has received a sound education there may be instances where his knowledge in a particular area to fulfil the needs of a particular job are necessary so that he can improve the productivity of himself as well as the enterprise within which he is working.

Very often, Sir, we are confused between the two. Indeed, there may well be a case for arguing that the private sector and the public sector both spent too much money in training because the level of education that has been imparted to the children has not been at the level that it should be and that they spend a lot of money in getting them to basic skills before they can then impart specific information or skills necessary to the training purpose.

One of the things that we have tried to do, therefore, since 1994, is to be able to ensure that our educational system fulfils its mandate of providing a sound education for every child so that what is required thereafter, will be minimal in terms of the delivery of training because each child, having left the school system, will be readily retrainable at all stages of his or her development. This has to be the basis on which any sensible Government proceeds.

We live in a society and an economy today where the rate of change is so rapid, where types of technology emerge that we have never even dreamt of five years ago. We must understand that simply because we are coming to grips with the emerging technology now, does not mean that what we will have to face in 10 or 15 years time will not be so radically different because the continuing pace of technology is growing at the same rate.

For example, we may feel that there are automotive systems of production in manufacturing or in car repairs that we currently use that have so altered our relationship to the task of fixing cars but, there may well be a case in five or 10 years, when that technology has so changed that even the one million dollar automotive lab or the electronic lab that we have put down at the Polytechnic would not be adequate to meet the needs of the industry. The theory being that we do not know where the technology will take us and what will be the requirements to fulfill job skills in ten, fifteen or twenty years.

3.10 p.m.

The one thing that we know that is that whoever has to be trained, has to be trained on the basis of their having certain literary skills and certain skills of numeracy and certain skills in relation to analysis and that what is therefore required of us regardless of the function or purpose of the skill is that person must have a sound education. For that purpose, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is therefore impossible to divorce the needs of literacy, oracy and numeracy from almost any profession or skill or trade that a person would embark upon in this economy in the future.

It is for that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are also engaged in recognising that there must be a new curriculum to help guide us in this direction and new forms of testing and measuring what children learn because whether a child will be a carpenter or plumber as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North said, that child will have to be able to calculate and it will have to be able to read instructions. Many of the manuals to set up things nowadays are highly technical and therefore people have to be literate.

I believe therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the synergies that will take place between the Ministry of Labour and Trade and the Ministry of Education will continue to be very strong. We have tried over the course of the last six years or so to leave it at that level. It is for that reason that the Technical and Vocational Training Board has representatives of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. The Chairman, in fact, is the principal of the Barbados Community College, the Chief Education Officer sits on that Board and therefore, it is only fitting that this amendment should seek to bring on that Board the representatives of the other major training institutions in this country, that of the Barbados Vocational Training Board because that TVET Council then has the opportunity to know everything that is going on in the country and to make rational decisions where people now know that there is no need for duplication because they see on an on-going basis what each institution is trying to achieve and what each institution is trying to do.

One of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are trying to do as well is to have a clear identification of what people should be able to expect, given their stage in school.

We believe that the CXC general proficiency, which, I have said over and over, was really only designed for 40 per cent of the population must continue to be the major basis on which people move on to post secondary education.

We also believe that there must be a mechanism that adequately assesses what a child has learnt before he or she leaves secondary school. We have committed ourselves in the Manifesto to the establishment of a National Diploma of Secondary Education which would be more comprehensive and indeed would be a higher level than the CXC basic proficiency qualification but which at the same time will not only seek to test by way of written examination but will also include all tests, project documents and portfolios to ensure that you test as many skills as possible that a child has having gone through secondary school.

We also recognise that it is not only important to test the core areas of Mathematics, English, Social Studies or Integrated Science but that every Barbadian child, given the way how economic trading blocs are emerging, must have the capacity to speak Spanish in the future. To that extent, a conversational foreign language will have to be a core requirement to get a National High School Diploma in Barbados in the future because we do not know where the labour markets are going to turn, we do not know the directions of trade, we do not know a whole host of things that may require us to turn more to a southern focus rather than a North Atlantic focus that has been our traditional focus since Independence.

Equally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognise that children do other things during a school setting that inform their socialisation that are absolutely necessary to their performance in the job market. We do not want an employee who may know everything that there is to know but who cannot get along with other people around him because he does not recognise that the interest of the enterprise which he works for is paramount as oppose to his individual interest. School must teach that and any National Secondary Diploma that we give must also reinforce that concept among our children.

The Honourable Member for St. James North spoke at length as to the need for the values, the need for reverence of human life, the need for respect of authority, all of those things that help make not only society functions but also help to make enterprises productive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are currently working on that and will be announcing very shortly to the public the plans for the National Secondary Diploma which will be compulsory for all children attending secondary school in Barbados.

It does not stop there because one of the electives that will be available in the National Secondary Diploma is the elective of technical and vocational education and training. We recognise that a society does not only function by persons doing paper work but that there are a whole host of functions and utilities that must be provided for by reason of the delivery of skills that are so specialised that without them our tourism industry could not survive, we could not live in this society because we need plumbers, we need carpenters, we need designers, we need all of those technical skills in order to be able to make the society and the economy function.

In all circumstances we recognise that persons may need different levels of preparations to be able to do those skills. I think that is the point that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North was making in his presentation so that while we acknowledge there must be a commitment to make every child literate, numerate, articulate and capable of analysis that what a child needs to do to become a professor at University in terms of academic training will not have to be done by a child who want to become an automotive mechanic through the programme at the Polytechnic. There are different levels and intensities of educational training. What we do hope though, like the old seventh standard primary education, is that they will have reached a level that regardless of what they decide to do in life they will always be readily trainable to meet those circumstances and purposes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know how much clearer a policy this Government can articulate between the need for education and training than that. We must recognise that simply to get up in here and grandstand and to try to attack the Honourable Minister of Labour for not speaking as you would like is not sufficient or to talk in generic terms about the large number of young people out there on the block.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier this year in a debate in this Chamber, I made a document of the House the 1998 School Leaver Tracer Survey Report. Every year we do a survey on the school leavers and every September we go back and interview them and see where they have in fact ended up and compare it to where they said they wanted to end up.

The reality is that in 1994 we were able to interview more, two thirds of the school leavers and of that two thirds of the school leavers a large number of them had originally said they wanted to go on to sixth form or the Barbados Community College. In the end just more than half of those who said they wanted to do that, were able to do so. A number of them were not able to do so because they did not get the requisite qualifications and just under 20 per cent went to other educational facilities including after school educational classes like the O' Level Institute, Urban College *et cetera*. A number of them went to

university, then half of them who said that they wanted to go on to the University and the Polytechnic. The amount who said that they wanted to go to the Vocational Training Board ended up in the Vocational Training Board, clearly showing that the Vocational Training Board has continued to pick up the slack where persons fall through the gap in the educational system. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know what more evidence you want of an ambitious person because this is a Training Board that has more than tripled the training since we have been *in Government*.
3.20 p.m.

We came into Government to find a dismantled Training Board, we came into Government to find a work experience programme and an apprenticeship programme flagging.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: People feel that the only effects of the 1991 stabilisation programme were on people's salaries, but all the training programmes in this country were cut. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Polytechnic used to be up to almost 2,000 students in 1991. When I became Minister of Education the Polytechnic was barely training 1,300 students. What the Leader of the Opposition forgot to tell us in relation to the same training, was that when he was Minister of Finance – I am not even talking about the bus fare and lunch money – he was part of a Cabinet that agreed that those very same people who wanted to be trained in a programme that was already cut would then have to find fees to pay to get training in this country.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Do not let us ever forget that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was the World Bank loan. For a paltry US\$15,000,000 they would sign away a whole generation of Barbadians and deprive them of the opportunity to be trained in this country. And you want to say now that a Minister of Labour who has been in place for 6 years and who has more than tripled the training programme, who has been responsive to the needs of the economy by putting expanding training available where the demand was for skills.

He talks about carpenters and masons as if they were not honourable professions in this country, but the reality is, that where we would have to import labour in this country would have been in the trades of carpentry, masonry, and steel bending. We came to this Parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and asked for money to finance an expanded programme for construction skills because we had a country where people were investing money to create these facilities, and we were faced with a plight of people coming to the Ministry of Home Affairs to apply for work permits to bring

in labour from the rest of the Caribbean to do what Bajans could have been doing if they were trained.

I venture to say that had we kept the training programme at the levels that they were in 1990, the Minister of Labour would not have had to come to do a special programme to train anybody in Barbados, because we would have been training consistently through the years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I never anticipated before this debate that this would become contentious because the facts are so clear. The facts are there for everyone to see. In fact the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is famous for walking up and down Barbados and saying that this Government has only brought down unemployment because it has done so much training. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am about to make it, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said that I have accused the Government of using training to reduce the unemployment statistics. I have never done that. What I have done, Sir, is accused the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East of helping the Government to improve its unemployment statistics by using training.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: To confirm it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member said that in 1991 that the intake at the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic was 1,300 and the Honourable Member was able to increase it to 2,700 which means that she has been able to reduce the unemployment rate by 1,400 people.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stand guilty as charged by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I prefer to stand guilty because we have set about consistently in seeing that children and young people must benefit from training before entering the job market wherever possible. When they have the training before entering the job market, the employer, union or anybody cannot pull anything over their heads because they have a skill which is now a commercial commodity for trade. We believe that it is proper to train people before they enter the job market.

I hope that I would live in a Barbados to see a day where no child will move from secondary school to a work place without first going and receiving either training or a degree. It must become second nature. Just as we assume that you must go from primary to secondary, you must move from secondary to post-secondary training or university education. I believe, I will go further, that those who do not move from secondary to post-secondary or to tertiary, we have to find a way of bringing into the system to continue the socialising skills and the other basic skills that they need for life. That is what we have had in our youth programmes to try and do.

I want to go further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, because this debate has other implications. We are in the midst of the preparation of the Establishment of the Single Market and the Single Economy. One of the requirements that the House must be cognisant of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the requirement under Protocol II, and I will quote from it. Protocol II, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Protocol which speaks to extending the freedom of movement of goods, the freedom of movement of services, freedom of movement of capital and rights of establishment, which is the right of CARICOM nationals to set up anywhere within the CARICOM region.

This Protocol II must also be taken in light of the decision by the Heads of Government to allow unrestricted movement of skilled labour, service and skills throughout the region. I believe Bahamas and Suriname are the only two countries that have refused to accede to that Agreement.
3.30 p.m.

Protocol II specifically speaks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the fact that Member States must establish the requisite administrative arrangements for common educational standards, certificates and qualifications and they must determine their equivalence, or accord accreditation.

Now, what does this mean in English to people. I may have grown up in Jamaica and I may have gone to the Hart Institute which is their equivalent to the Barbados Vocational Training Board and I may have done tourism training courses there. I could have married a Bajan and moved to Barbados, going to look for a job and the people say: but, what is this Hart Institute qualification. I never heard about it?

In order for them to adequately assess the Hart Institute qualification, there needs to be a mechanism in this country that can determine the proper equivalency of that mechanism to an appropriately accepted standard or certification that employers in Barbados readily recognise. If that does not happen, that employee runs the risk of being treated as an unskilled employee simply because he is not being given the value of the qualification that he has already gained in another CARICOM jurisdiction.

So what that requires, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the region sets up a regional board of accreditation, certification and equivalency and in order for the Regional Board to function, the CARICOM Ministers of Education in 1997 took a decision that each country should set up a national board of accreditation, certification and equivalency which would also deal with articulation agreement matters.

I want us to be clear. There are four issues: accreditation, certification, equivalency and articulation agreement. Now, I have explained what equivalency is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is the mechanism by which we equate the value of the certification obtained elsewhere with something else that we have within our jurisdiction.

There are teachers, I believe went to a Teachers College in Trinidad. It is a Seventh Day Adventist-sponsored college. We had problems here at first trying to determine whether that was equivalent to a university degree or to Erdiston Teachers' College or what else so these things are not new.

Accreditation, however, is a process by which we speak to the quality of the institution and the quality of the programming. Accreditation of programming can also be otherwise known as certification because I can certify a programme, but somebody else will only accredit it if they are satisfied that the quality of the programme is of a certain level.

Equally, accreditation of institutions will take place if the quality of the institution is at a certain level. Now, this is extremely important in the labour market in Barbados. Why, because in the face of the new technology there has been a number of institutions or centres, call them what you will, growing up all about Barbados offering a certificate in computer technology, a certificate in word processing, a certificate in spread sheets, all kinds of certificates for skills that people truly need to be able to do their jobs in the work place.

If these people go and pay the \$500, register for the programme, get the certificate, you know that when they come into the Public Service, the Public Service is going to look at them and say: But I do not know anything about this institution. What happens is that people very often end up spending money in private educational programming for certificates and diplomas and receive no benefit from them at the end of the day.

We hope that through the establishment of the National Accreditation and Certification Board that all post-secondary institutions in Barbados, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be subject to having to receive accreditation. It is fortuitous that we are doing this debate today because only yesterday in my Ministry we concluded the conceptual arrangements for the

National Accreditation and Certification Board. So accreditation, as I said, is where we go in and we do a quality audit on the post-secondary institution, or if as in the case of the University of the West Indies they can present the evidence of a quality assurance process that is recognised internationally, we accept the evidence from them as being valid.

It means that we are not only looking at whether you have adequate facilities for teaching, if you have adequate bathroom facilities, if you have adequate fire escapes but we are also looking at all the aspects of the educational arrangement, whether the quality of teaching at the institution and the certification of the teachers who are there, are up to standard so that you will not be guilty of 'ripping off' the average child who goes to this facility.

Then, there is certification and this is where the Honourable Minister of Labour spoke in terms of the National Vocational Qualifications, the NVQs and the need for those. When the Training Board trains people now, they do not have a certification process that allows the person who has received the training to go to another Caribbean country and get the benefit from it when they go to be employed. As a result, there has been a decision of our Ministers of Training in the region that there should be a Caribbean Vocational Qualification better known as CVQ, into which all national vocational qualifications feed so that whether a person does a diploma in plumbing in Barbados or a diploma in plumbing in St. Lucia at the Sir Arthur Lewis College or one in Jamaica, we will all know that they have followed the curriculum and that they have the same type of certification.

The only way we can have a successful single market and single economy that allows the freedom of movement of services is if we have common education standards, or educational standards for which we can easily set an equivalent programme to be able to assess it.

The last thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that Board will have to do is to deal with issues of articulation agreement and what do I mean by this, Sir. An Articulation Agreement is the process by which two institutions that would normally come one after the other would programme it, but sometimes you find that there is an overlap in the programming, not only of a curriculum but as has happened in Barbados, a person may attend The Barbados Community College, then go on to the University of the West Indies and find not only are they redoing some of the same work, but the same person that is teaching at the Community College, is teaching at the University and they throw up their hands in frustration and say that this is a waste of money.

Do you know something, the only body's money that is wasted is the Government's because we do not charge tuition fees, unlike what was proposed by the Democratic

Labour Party. The Government has a cause in seeking to find and bring about efficiency and that is why we need articulation.

For 15 years the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies tried to reach an agreement on articulation and could not reach it. One of the very first actions this Government took in 1994 was when I called in the Community College and the University of the West Indies indicating that the Government is funding both and that they had 12 months to come up with a framework for articulation, if not, we would be reviewing the amounts of money given to both institutions.

Well, we have said to the public that that framework is now there and there are about 12 areas that students at the Community College can move on to the University and get an advance standing. In other words, instead of doing a degree in three years, they can finish it in two years and for every child that we save, it means that we are paying less because the unit cost at the Community College is about \$12 000 less per student than it is at the University of the West Indies. So there is no doubt about the cost efficiencies that brings to the educational system.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would you please wind up?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

We hope to be able to address those issues in terms of bringing about greater cost efficiency.
3.40 p.m.

These are obligations that we have under the Single Market and Single Economy through Protocol II. I can assure this Honourable Chamber that before the year is out, we hope to bring a piece of legislation which would establish the National Accreditation and Certification Board which would seek to make sure that there is cost efficiency and that we protect those innocent students out there who may be going to overnight sham educational institutions but more importantly that we also seek to ensure that by streamlining these systems that we undertake a level of reform within our labour market which will go substantially toward improving the competitiveness and the productivity of Barbadian enterprises and the Barbadian public sector.

I believe, because as I have said to many people, this is a very unsexy and technical area but it is an area that if this Government does not do, it will continue to add as a major drag on our labour market and the movement of skills and people within the Caribbean region.

I, therefore, feel that this House would recognise that a lot of the work which the Minister of Labour has been doing toward the establishment of the National Vocational

Qualification and the Caribbean Vocational Qualification is but one necessary component in the establishment of the National Accreditation and Certification Board which will ultimately govern the entire situation.

I want to support this and to commend this amendment to the Act because it is simply the Minister of Labour making right what the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Government left wrong in 1994.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not too easy to follow the Honourable Minister particularly when she is in her free flow – in her element. She is like the 'Bush Hall Express' not the Rawalpindi Express. She is very sharp.

Sir, I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy trying to put a case for the Opposition after his leader made such as a disastrous attempt.

Sir, if a youngster at Bayfield or some other area was stabbed by another that would be on the front page of the paper tomorrow along with the call for the representative, the Honourable Minister to do something to help these young people who are in problems and who are deviant. Today, the Honourable Minister has put a case for those young people and he has shown all and sundry how their training has paid off but the Honourable Member for St. John thinks that this is too repetitive.

Sir, if due praise is necessary, then we should give it. I know the Honourable Minister feels very pleased as he drives from the east and work his way into almost the heart of the city to see that these young people are placed in meaningful employment.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said he was not sure if we were going backward or forward but it is a basic theory in relative motion and you experience it as in if you are somewhere in one place and going the next way, you feel as if you are going backward if you are stationary. So maybe it would appear to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that he is going backward because they came to a virtual standstill and this Barbados Labour Party (BLP) administration has gone full flight ahead.

Sir, the Vocational Training Board has worked hard and very hard, at saving several of these young people, who normally would have ended up as another statistic on the block, by getting them into gainful employment and helping them to be marketable and equipped to make a positive contribution to their own lives.

Sir, the Skill Training Centres which were the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) own – I am not afraid or ashamed to say that – have reached the age of maturity and

dividends have already paid off for the investment which this Barbados Labour Party (BLP) had made way back some 21 years ago.

Sir, I know that the programmes may seem very simplistic but vocational training programmes are extremely expensive particularly when you look in terms of the basic tools, equipment and machinery whether they be lathes or otherwise because these are extremely expensive pieces of equipment.

Sir, I make no bones about it but many of these young people are turned off from the formal education system because they do not like the great amounts of reading and being quiet and stationary. Sir, to confront them after they have escaped from it in secondary school by making their programme too heavily loaded with respect to academics could turn them away again. What we have to do is to get them into the system, let them do the things which they like doing. If they like using their hands or driving heavy duty equipment, let them do that, then later in the programme, at another stage, we will have to quietly introduce them and immerse them into things of a greater or a more involved academic level.

Sir, although I am pleased with what is going on with the Vocational Training Board and training in particular, I still think there is more scope for mopping up a couple more thousands who are still precariously perched on the brink of despair. There must be a system to win them over. It is like going out on a crusade – you must go out there and get them.

Sir, from conducting interviews with young people, I have concluded that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) is in great demand by persons who twenty or twenty-five years ago would have been content with leaving school, filling out an application form for the Government Service, going to work in a post office or in a bank, going onto a university or just to go onto the Barbados Community College (BCC) but it is in such great demand that you are getting young people with five or more CXCs who have decided that they want to do welding, or something along the mechanical engineering field who do not want to go Trinidad or England because they are not ready for that yet and they are, therefore, pursuing courses with the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP).

Now what happens, by virtue of they having this great interest of getting into the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) they have displaced those for whom the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) was originally designed, leaving the unfortunate ones – those who have been displaced – to get into the Vocational Training Board Skills Training Centres.

Sir, it is a vicious process of competitive elimination and in the end what has happened is that those for whom the skills training programme was intentionally designed are left out in the cold. So the Barbados Training Board must address this and must be able at some point in time to extend some of their services in the evening to some of the regular school plants which are closed between 3.00 p.m. in the evening and 9.00 a.m. the next morning.

Sir, I am going to put in a plug for some parochial work. Only last week – and I must praise what is going on at the Valery Skills Training Centre – I visited the Centre to see how they were coming on and how the immediate surroundings were being improved.
3.50 p.m.

Sir, I was also impressed to see what has gone on and what is still going on there.

I am in total agreement with the substantive Minister when he spoke about the G.I.S. getting involved. I am going to say now that at this time of the year, as we prepare for more and more students to leave school at the secondary level, we should be bombarded on television through the works of the G.I.S. with what exactly is going on at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the skills training sectors.

Sir, this must be a down-fall in their marketing strategy. Imagine people who live within that catchment area, in the Brittons Hill, Collymore Rock and Pine areas, do not know what is going on at the Valerie Centre which is a radius of less than a half mile from them. Sir, this cannot speak well for the institution itself, if after having invested millions of dollars for people within the immediate surroundings not to know exactly what is going on and what courses are available at that neighbouring centre.

Right now, Sir, as I speak the students at the Training Board are completing a base to assemble yet another pre-fab building to serve them in carpentry. All this is being done in-house. Immediately after that, Sir, they are going to start yet another structure this time for students who will be enrolled in the mechanics classes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole of that Valerie area has been transformed as a direct result of saving that old Great House and converting it into a centre for learning. Imagine, Sir, the students who have enrolled for the bobcat and the heavy duty equipment training have cleared up the entire area within their boundaries and it is now one good look-out. They have been able, Sir, to improve the general esthetics through landscaping although a lot more still has to be done.

Sir, they were able to use in-house painters and tilers and they have been able to restore the ambience and design of the old building by using those who would have done

carpentry and wood work. Also, as far as the plumbing, the bill which they would have had to pay to restore that house would have cost close to three-quarters of a million dollars. What a saving it has been for them to be able to use their intelligence and skills from within. Again, Sir, that should be showcased and shown to all and sundry that the young people of Barbados are not all involved in crime and violence.

Sir, it will also show the conservationists and environmentalists who like the old houses and who get great pleasure in seeing that the old houses are restored and kept in shipshape what these young people have been able to do and in turn use the building for their further development and education. Sir, it is a plus when it comes to restoration.

Sir, I would like to urge the Honourable Minister to come with me and let us visit the area lest he forgets what is going on. He holds two powerful levers, sports and training. These two powerful levers can bring into play successful young men and women who otherwise would have gone the way of 'the block' and unemployment. Right there Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have a football field, a cricket pitch, hard court facility which I have shown the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. You have done some repairs but some more work has yet to be done.

Sir, whenever you find a youngster who is not so keen on the academics, more often than not he or she has that overwhelming desire to play sports or to use his or her hands. It could be a tale of two cities. He has in his wherewithal the ability to make that centre the home for the young people involved in the Vocational Training Board. There is no sport more sought after than basketball in Barbados. It does not call for much. The youngsters play in the same clothes at school and then they go off.

Sir, we must get the Vocational Training Board more involved just as the Youth Service is involved in having a Second Division Cricket Team. Speaking about that, I would like to draw to the attention of the Honourable Minister of Education that this year unfortunately those players may not be able to play at Weymouth because they will not have as stipulated by the Barbados Cricket Association (BCA) the appropriate facility for entertaining, changing and general comradery involved after and during cricket. I would not like to see this happen at Valerie.

Sir, I am asking the Honourable Minister to take it one step further since he was a fine cricketer some years ago. He will be only too glad to use the skills of the Vocational Training Board in conjunction with the people in the community under the supervision of the National Sports Council, for which he has charged, to build a pavilion at the far south of the Valerie Vocational Complex. Sir, this can be

achieved with consummate ease. Why, it is the same Minister and the same intention to improve the livelihood of the young people.

Sir, I am therefore asking to adopt the Valerie Centre as the home for sports and recreation and at the same time, Sir, exercise some degree of reciprocity and allow the people from within the area to see that centre as being their first choice for training and improving their livelihood just after leaving secondary school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am indeed glad to see that positive signs are being made as the Honourable Minister of Education has said this afternoon, where she has opened up the whole talk about qualification and accreditation. Sir, Barbados is well poised and we must let the people know what is going on lest they forget and see the young people of the country as being a set of hopeless young people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am much obliged.
4.00 p.m.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too would like to support this Bill before this Honourable House and certainly congratulate the Minister for bringing the Vocational Training Board and the TVET Council together by having members from each side joining the Board.

During this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I obviously will go along the side of the housing policy. I am glad that so many people, over 600, were trained over the past year and even with that number there are signs you see on building sites wherever you go in Barbados where there is need for carpenters, masons and people of that ilk.

Now, in Barbados we talk about the 'boys on the block'. It is a general feeling that we can use some measure to get those boys interested in training. I know from experience it is a difficult one. Government has found itself in a very good position, economically, and the building boom has really helped the unemployment in this country. From reports, for the next five to seven years that boom will continue in Barbados so it means we have to be positive when we talk about dealing with the training of young people.

In the building industry the main jobs there are carpentry, masonry, electrics, plumbing, painting and steelbending. The Honourable Member for St. John eluded to the fact that twice as many women are unemployed as men in this country. He may be right in that. I believe the time is right now where women could be gainfully employed if they got training at the Training Board and certainly joined the building boom by aiming at certain areas in the building boom.

I suggest that because they are the fairer sex, electrics, plumbing and painting would be very relevant for ladies who are not as strong generally as men and who can fit into the system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said from my experience, you see signs all over the place. I believe that in this country now we have a lot of building going on but, unfortunately, we have some contractors, I call them supervisors really, who are doing building in this country who are not even qualified to do the work and depend on the techniques of their workmen in order to produce these various buildings.

While it is important that we do the right things in this country, and I talk about steelbending, I would say that one of the most important parts of a building would include the engineers and the people who deal with steelbending. A house is as strong as its foundation. A house could only be considered a good entity when we know we start well. In this country where we assume will be going high-rise rather than going horizontal, it is important that we start the right way.

In Barbados, it is a fact of life that many people, when they start their homes, start with an ordinary house and eventually they start from the back, build and come forward. In doing that, this was in times gone by where people started from the kitchen, a 'shed-roof' and eventually they got a bungalow. I am saying now that it is important that we carry on doing the same thing but, as I said, the young ladies could now make themselves very visible when we start entities like this and we start with proper steelbending, proper engineering and can start from there. Eventually, after five or ten years when you intend to improve on your house, you may have to go upward and because you are going upward you would have a solid and strong foundation.

Now, in this country we have visitors who come here, people from Guyana, St. Vincent and the first year they spend on the site they are labourers and within that 12 months when you go back to any of those sites those same people have become carpenters and masons but somehow here in Barbados we tend to be a bit slow in catching on quickly. I believe the time is right now where Barbadians would have to follow suite, try to pick up the pieces and really try to do something in the building industry.

Mr. Speaker, only two weeks ago I visited a building site where I wanted to see a carpenter. It was pleasing that when I got there before them, to see the two carpenters, two masons and a painter or steelbender turned up with beautiful cars. This was something pleasing to the eye. This has never been seen in Barbados where it was always felt that a certain type of people should have those material things. I am glad to see that, certainly, the workmen in Barbados are now putting their money to good use and making themselves better citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, the contractors need a bit of training. It is surprising to see when you go on sites the workmen have even got to do things like not only digging the foundation, but to square a house in order to make sure that when the mason builds up a wall the carpenter would have no problem.

I remember back in 1994 making my first speech in St. Patricks. I remember a Member who is on the Other Side was talking about the 5-4-3 plan. I wanted to start my speech that night and I remember well the Pythagoras theorem. I am certain the carpenters, masons when they attempt to square a building, they do not know anything about the Pythagoras theorem but the truth is that to square a building, you must start by using the Pythagoras theorem.

Now, when I look around this Chamber I know everybody had the opportunity to go to secondary school. I left school a lot of years ago but I still know the formula which says: "The square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides." I think everybody had to learn that by heart.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am talking about the 5-4-3 plan but you will find the masons in this country doing the 5-4-3 or they can do the 10-8-6. It is the same thing. Those people have the art of squaring a building and making sure that they start the right way. Now, when the mason starts the right way, it is a fact of life that the carpenter, who is going on top of the building has no problem but, as I said, the problem could arise where the mason, in all good faith, does the wrong thing at the bottom, and unfortunately when the building gets to the top, the carpenter has all sorts of problems.

I must say that I do commend the Minister for pushing this entity in training and he must keep pushing training and more training.

Now, in relation to the ladies in this country, the entity of plumbing, in years gone by a plumber was a person who had to put threads on pipes and he had to do lifting and all sorts of things. It is very fortunate now that in this present day plumbing is cutting and sticking, calculating distances between walls to get things in the centre. I sincerely hope that the ladies in this country would think seriously about taking up plumbing as one of the many jobs that could make themselves worthwhile in this society.

The next really is the electrics, but with electrics it takes more than just pulling through wire. There must be certain calculations but it is very light work. The Minister said that in the trade programme it is 20 per cent books and 80 per cent working with your hands.
4.10 p.m.

I believe that the ladies in this country can get themselves together and get on their overalls, and I am sure that they will find the work very accommodating and beneficial financially, if they take electrics in the building boom.

Lastly, painting is something that most people can do and I think the ladies have the touch and can make themselves useful citizens by learning the painting trade. Only last night I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South talking about the amount of house spots available in this country and he said 5 000 house spots the Government has available plus the private sector has twice as much.

Aside.

Mr. D. CARTER: I am quoting what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said. He said, "we have 5 000 house spots available, that the Government purchased land for the land bank and the private sector has twice as many." It is important that we keep things going well. Certainly, in the building boom we must keep training people but the problem is what do we do with the boys on the block. I have tried time and time again to get young people interested in something meaningful and I can say that over the period of six years as a Member of this Parliament, I was only fortunate enough to get about three or four who were ready to do meaningful work.

I believe that the sociologists and those people who work with the community would obviously have the expertise to try wherever possible to help these young people think twice and try to make themselves better citizens by getting involved in such programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, the building boom will go for another five to six years. The economy is booming and only today, I got something clarified because I was a little worried that with the building boom bringing in all these things from abroad it would put a strain on the foreign reserves but, in this Parliament, I asked the Member for St. Thomas if such a strain would affect the economy and he said no, it only enhances things in the country. So all I can say, Mr. Minister of Labour, is keep training the people of the country, keep getting the young people on the block more mobilised.

In connection with the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Labour and certainly the Ministry of Home Affairs, with all the young people available, I am sure that this programme will continue to go well and I congratulate them. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to wind up debate on this particular matter. I want to congratulate and say thanks to those who made a

contribution to the debate, even to the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. John who was a bit confused in his presentation. He repeated almost every point which I made on the need to train women. He said that the generation of tomorrow must be skilled and there is the need for that academic and vocational mix. Still, having agreed with almost everything which I said, he ended up by saying that I did not address this and that. In a very subtle way, he was in full agreement with what I said.

I also want to commend the Honourable Member for St. James North for the very historical account which he gave on education and the point which he made that we must get back to moral values and discipline and that those should be instilled in our young people of today.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was extremely critical of the tripartite nature of the Protocol, this Protocol which was the initiative of his own Government he was extremely critical of it. He also took the opportunity to launch an attack on the trade union movement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was trying hard to see if there was a particular point that I could commend him on taking and, honestly, Sir, I cannot find it.

I want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East for the passion with which he spoke on post-secondary training and for explaining to all and sundry those concepts which can sometimes be confusing on accreditation, the concept of equivalency, certification and articulation agreement.

I want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for his fresh ideas for the Training Board, especially on the use of Valery which is something I am going to look into; the Honourable Member too for Christ Church East Central for the support he has given to my call for the training of ladies and so on.

By and large, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it was a very enlightening debate and it is only my duty now to ask that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 2 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.
4.20 p.m.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Bill was read a third time and cited as the Technical and Vocational Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2000.

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF SUMS UP TO UNITED STATES DOLLARS ONE HUNDRED MILLION (US\$100 000 000) FROM CREDIT SUISSE FIRST BOSTON BY ISSUE OF SECURITIES OF ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE GOVERNMENT'S CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution is brought under the provisions of the External Loans Act and is seeking Parliament's approval for Government to raise on the external market US\$100 million through the best efforts of the arranger, Credit Suisse First Boston Bank. The borrowing is required, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to assist in the capital programme of Government and also as an insurance against dipping into the reserves and against our future needs.

The context in which I am going to set this Resolution may shortly be stated as follows: first of all, during the Estimates the Government made it clear that it would seek external financing to support their capital programme. We are therefore being faithful to our stated intentions in March. The concern which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will have and I suppose members of the general public, is why would you wish to borrow US\$100 million now. That requires an understanding of the state of the economy now and also the international financial movements.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Governor of the Central Bank last week explained that for the first three months of the year 2000 the economy remained buoyant. In fact, the economy grew by 5.1% – that is real GDP. At the same time, this growth has been accompanied by low inflation in the region of 2%. A very significant aspect of the review of the Governor however, was that part of the reason for the growth in the economy at 5% for the first three months of this year was due to the way in which the traded sectors were performing.

Government anticipates that the prosperity which we have been experiencing in this country for the last six years is set to continue because we are now into our eighth year of growth. That has never happened in the history of Barbados. We are into the eighth consecutive year of growth and there is no indication on the horizon that the growth pattern will in anyway abate or slow down in the foreseeable future expect where Government takes deliberate action to slow down the economy to prevent overheating as we have done in the last two years.

Barbados, as I have said, have been experiencing very satisfactory levels of economic growth in the last six or seven years but sustained economic growth can also bring with it, unless controlled and unless prudence operates, certain dangers and certain pressures. Pressures can be exerted on the balance of payments and pressures can be put on the foreign reserves. Fortunately, I am able to tell the House today that Barbados' position as at the 8th of May... I have the print out of the daily position from the Central Bank and the position is this as far as the reserves are concerned, the net international reserves of Barbados as at May 4th – I am not dealing with when the Governor spoke around the end of March, I am dealing with four or five days ago – at May 4th, Barbados' net international reserves were \$760.4 million. I had better say also that Government has no overdraft with the Central Bank, the Ways and Means Account is at zero.

We have record foreign reserves. We have never had foreign reserves of this level in the history of Barbados and yet we are going to borrow, you would say, another US\$100 million. You want a proper reason. The reasons are many.

First of all, Sir, the \$760 million which gives adequate cover for about eighteen weeks, I suppose, with the present trends, with the consumption patterns which we have been seeing in Barbados, from time to time, those reserves will come under pressure.

Secondly, Sandy Lane and the Barbados Hilton which are two earners of substantial foreign exchange which contribute to the built up of foreign reserves are out of business and will be out of business, certainly in the case of Sandy Lane, for the balance of this year, Barbados Hilton, into next year. While those two sources of foreign exchange are not contributing it is a counsel of prudence to have a stock of reserves to ensure stability in the international reserves.

The third reason is an insurance policy. The fourth reason is that we are borrowing against the future of Barbados because all Members know that Barbados has been graduated from those international financial institutions which have, in the past, lent us money on concessionary terms. Now that people are willing to lend Barbados money,

we ought to take advantage of the interest being shown in the creditworthiness of Barbados and go to the market to get money now at reasonable market rates because we cannot go to IADB or the World Bank and get money at concessional rates.

We are borrowing against our future, if I can put it that way, Sir.
4.30 p.m.

Fifthly, it has been published some months ago, that Barbados has been given a very high credit rating by reputable agencies and financial experts overseas. It therefore makes sense, again, when you have a high credit rating to take advantage of that favourable position and borrow when people are willing to lend you because you are creditworthy.

So that though the reserves at present are comfortable, though the reserves are at record level, Government deems it a matter of fiscal responsibility and prudence to go to the market to make assurance doubly sure. So the essential purpose of the loan therefore is to give additional cover to our foreign reserve position and to assist in the capital programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ought to say that Government's expenditure for the first 3 months of the year 2000 has been manageable. We do not anticipate that we would have the same complications – financial difficulties which we had at the end of last year. Honourable Members will know that we had to pay back a loan of about \$60,000,000 in December last year; we had to deal with the increases in public sector wages and salaries; and we had to find money for the first repayment of the eight per cent and those were substantial calls on Government's revenue. We would not have the same situation this year, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some weeks ago the spokesman for the Opposition in the Other Place was predicting doom and gloom and was saying that Barbados' economic position is worst than it was in 1991. They never had \$760 000 000 in reserves in 1991. They could not have gone to Credit Suisse and borrowed \$100 000 000 or been invited to come and borrow in 1991 because these kinds of indicators were not present in 1991.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the robust performance of the foreign reserves suggests that the reserve position is being driven by a vessel and that there has been a steady inflow of capital and finance from overseas, which is finding its way into the Central Bank and again reflecting in the foreign reserves. Government's operations

in the first 3 months yielded a surplus of about \$41 000 000; revenue has been slightly higher at about 16.9 per cent; and Government's expenditure fell by 2.2 per cent in the first quarter.

Now, Sir, the principal terms and conditions of the loan, it is a \$100 000 000 Bond. Bond issues as follows:

Maturity period is 10 years with a bullet payment in year 10.

The pricing of the bond in respect of the interest components and the pricing will be based on the U.S treasuries plus a credit quality spread, which will be determined at the time of pricing the bond issue and the interest will be payable semi-annually in areas in US dollars.

As far as I am aware, Sir, in my substantive capacity, the due diligence that is necessary has been done and the way is almost clear for this loan to be signed, but it cannot be done, of course, unless Parliament approves it and I am therefore asking for Parliament's concurrence in this Resolution which, as I say, is brought under the authority of the External Loan Acts.

I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second it, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to oppose this Resolution. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas in his capacity as Acting Minister of Finance, I should add to that the Acting Minister of Finance presiding over the largest foreign exchange loss in any quarter in the history of Barbados. He may not have known it, but the last quarter of 1999 when you were acting ...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We registered the largest foreign exchange loss in the history of Barbados, demonstrated that notwithstanding all that may be said in here today, that it is still possible for the Barbados economy to register significant foreign exchange depletions and fluctuations.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I did not really want to start there. The previous largest may have been \$70 million in 1994. We have had those fluctuations but it is very important. Now I am not starting what I had to say there because I want to make another point that within the past 2 years the Government of Barbados would have gone to the market for \$350,000,000 in foreign borrowings and it would

have gone to the market on the basis of a departure of its own stated principle that the Government would only undertake foreign borrowing to the extent of its amortisation payments. The last 2 amounts that the Government of Barbados borrowed bore no relationship to the repayment of foreign debt in either of those fiscal years.

Barbados is now adopting a new strategy, as I understand it, even though nobody has identified it as a new strategy, of borrowing money to put down in case events in the international, regional or domestic economy create a demand for foreign exchange. One such example would have been in 1999 when there was a one quarter in depletion of the order of \$82 000 000. Thankfully the Government had gone to the market to borrow \$150 000 000 because if it were not for that we would have to be looking differently at the perspective against which this \$200 000 000 is being borrowed.

If the Honourable Member for St. Thomas tells us that how we have to look at it now, is on the basis that the Government has record reserves and therefore borrowing \$200 000 000 is not a big thing because of this record performance, he is going to explain to me how it is – I think the people of Barbados need to reflect on this – that on 1991 when it was alleged, and events proved it, that Barbados was on the brink of an economic disaster, that we were able to borrow a quarter of the amount which the Government of Barbados has come to this Parliament today, were able to borrow a quarter from IMF, not Barclays, and without a cent from the World Bank or the IADB, Barbados was able to carry out a stabilisation programme and a structural adjustment programme, to stabilise this economy, put it on a sustainable path to economic growth without resorting to the economic capital markets until 1994.

4.40 p.m.

Ask yourself what happened and it is the point of the departure in this debate. I have no problem supporting a programme of foreign borrowing for a Government when that Government identifies a strategy which is very clear and precise that would ensure the sustainability of its economic programme. But we are borrowing this money right now, not in 1994 conditions, when three sectors of the economy were performing extremely well, when the structural adjustment programme was put in place, when the world was able to look at the Protocol on Prices and Incomes, the reform of the sugar sector, the reform of the tourism sector, the massive foreign investment in the tourism sector, the reform of the non-sugar agriculture, the institutional reform which Government undertook, the emphasis on productivity, the privatisation of state assets and the whole range of policies which the Democratic Labour Party had put in place, as distinct from what is happening now in Barbados where the Central Bank Quarterly Review indicates that by the end of the year 2000 it is anticipated that the economy will be led

by the non-trading sectors, even though in the first quarter you had significant growth in the trading sectors.

At the end of this year, it is likely that the sector that would have shown any appreciative growth that one could speak about in terms of the trading sectors, will be the tourism sector. It is going to be business as usual for the sugar industry, business as usual for the manufacturing sector, business as usual for non-sugar agriculture and business as usual for the international business and financial services sector and that quarterly report should not reflect the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. Look behind that because when the Central Bank could identify and say thanks to cruise tourism...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Read the words in the Quarterly Report that the tourism sector has registered a rebound in the first quarter, that tells you the level of economic analysis that we are having in Barbados today. They say that the output of sugar agriculture has doubled in the first quarter, but they did not tell you that last year there was a strike and the sugar crop did not start until the second quarter so that the reason for the doubling of output in the sugar sector is because the crop started on time.

They have been silent on the performance of the International Business and Financial Services Sector and at the end of the report, despite the fact that the economic commentators had seized on the performance of the trading sectors, when you get to the end of the report notwithstanding the performance in the trading sectors, they said that growth will be led in the year 2000 by the non-trading sectors.

Now I have to look at the expression on the face of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South because I know he is not going to let his profession as an economist get him carried away. I ask the Government to take stock because what is similar to 1991 is not the level of foreign reserves, and the spokesman never said that, what is similar to 1991 is the fact that the problems are appearing on the horizon and the Government of Barbados is not demonstrating the urgency and the commitment and the coordination of economic policies across sectors to ensure that the economic growth that we have had for the last eight years in Barbados can be sustained. That is what is similar to 1991. I am urging and appealing to Members on that Side, starting with the experience of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who I have heard every now and again on these issues, to the Honourable Member of St. Philip South to urge the Government to put in place an overall strategy for the Barbados economy. Time is running out and do not assume that when you take \$200 and put it in a bank account and tell the private sector, do not worry, we have some money put

down, that it will cause them to go out there and identify new strategies to sustain economic growth.

It would have the opposite effect and I am saying that the Government is wrong to send their message out to the people of Barbados that we have money put aside for an economic crisis, for the simple reason that we could eat away \$200 million in two quarters in the Barbados economy. If you had a reserve lost of \$82 million in the last quarter of 1999, you would expect to get higher levels of growth in the first quarter of any calendar year than you would get in the other three quarters. You have to look at these things carefully.

What has me worried, and I repeat it, is because I sat in a Cabinet at a time when people did not understand the urgency of the need to have a coordinated strategy, any time that a Minister of Finance loses oversight of the four key productive sectors of this economy, as has happened and I have noticed it in the past two years in Barbados, and that level of coordination in relation to an economic strategy is absent, we start to head down a very difficult road.

Now what is it that the Government can tell me about the sugar sector that is going to be able to sustain Barbados into the new era of trade liberalisation and globalization. Has the Ministry of Agriculture or the sugar producers identified new products? Is there a rationalisation programme for sugar production in Barbados or are we going to postpone the decisions in relation to factories? Are we going to state openly in this country shortly or at anytime in the future, what is the land use policy of Barbados because at the end of the day that is going to be the most critical determinant, of if we have a sugar industry in Barbados or do not have a sugar industry and whether we have an agricultural sector or do not have an agricultural sector. What is the Ministry of Agriculture doing therefore to inspire that level of commitment from the operatives in the agricultural non-sugar and sugar sector in this country? What are they doing themselves?

Let me pause for a minute to register my continuing alarm at the way the Barbadian private sector functions. There has not been a Budget, including mine in 1994, that did not cause them to go up to the Hilton Hotel or Grand Barbados or wherever and sit down and praise the Minister of Finance for his foresight and brilliance for the Budget that he delivered. This year was no exception. If you check the records, it was two months after the Budget...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No. No. Do not fool yourself that it is the bajan private sector. They believe that any decision is reversible.
4.50 p.m.

They were able to reverse the imposition of duty on the duty-free sector. The only people who do not get a reversal are the people at the bottom like the ZR owners. When taxes are put on them, they cannot reverse it but do not fool yourself, the duty-free people got that imposition reverse.

The Barbadian private sector is always quick to give praise after a Budget in the hope that if anything is introduced that affects them that they can get it reverse but you will find that two months after they have praised a Budget they will then hold another meeting of the Chamber of Commerce or some other entity and you will then hear that the Government has done nothing or is doing nothing to improve the competitiveness of their particular sector and that more concessions should be offered *et cetera*.

There is only one way to deal with that and that is for the Government to stop pussyfooting with its public relations, signing Protocols which speak about lofty strategies to sustain economic growth and then none of those strategies are ever followed up or implemented either by the Government, the private sector or any of the other parties who may have a contribution to make to their success because that is what is happening now.

There is a lot of smoke and mirrors and a pretense that everything is fine in Barbados. It is true that we have enjoyed 8 years of economic growth. It is also true that like other small countries throughout the world we are going to face major challenges in the coming five years or the coming decade but the Government has been woefully inadequate, negligent, delinquent and indifferent to identifying a comprehensive strategy to deal with the challenges which Barbados will face.

Nobody has been a greater advocate of telling the world that small countries will face these challenges than the Honourable Member for St. Peter but he has not brought anything new to the table. In fact, when you hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter talking now he reminds you of the old leaders of the developing countries who the developed countries used to describe as Oliver Twist. That is how they look at us and that is how we are sounding more and more as the panic sets in.

Yet, at the same time within the domestic framework of the Barbados economy, if tomorrow one were to ask the Prime Minister of Barbados what strategies he have identified in his own country to deal with the impact of globalisation and trade liberalisation to advance the Single Market and the Single Economy, the Government would have major problems in identifying those strategies.

The Minister of Agriculture recently admitted at a seminar that was held, that Barbados is unprepared at least in relation to his portfolio. The Minister of International

Business came in here in the Estimates and told us that everything was okay and then launch a series of breakfast meetings to meet with people to tell him what the problems were because he subsequently found out that things were not as okay as he told this House they were in March.

The Minister responsible for the manufacturing industry cannot tell us anything other than the application of the bond rate which to my mind is simply staving off the inevitable and in some cases staving it off for too long because at some point in time the merry-go-round is going to stop and those persons who benefitted from these levels of protection are going to be either thrown to the wolves completely unprepared or at the end of the day Barbados will have no manufacturing sector left. The Governor of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has already said that the manufacturing sector in Barbados is dead, or will die, so anybody who...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not expect the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to answer these questions because he is only in a holding pattern but it would be great if this House could be treated as the House was treated in the 1990's to an identification of the key elements of Government economic strategy because we cannot be in a business as usual mode and it is no point of us warning from over here because there are people over there who have warned of it too. I am saying that I have heard the Honourable Member from Christ Church South in very flowery language – but when you strip it of the flowers – warning that the sustainability of this economic model has raised some concerns in his mind.

At the level of public administration, there are still major frustrations for local, regional and international investors in Barbados – inaccessible ministers of Government, inaccessible senior officials and people trying to make decisions about investments in this country. Yet we walk around and talk about record levels of investments and all of those investments are taking place in areas in which we have already designed a framework of fiscal concessions but nobody is paying any attention to the new more creative areas of investment which needs attention now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I am saying that sometimes when I reflect on what we did in 1991, it has to be an economic miracle because nobody said, well, let us borrow a \$100 million and put it down, we had to go to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), we borrowed \$50 million or so and undertook a major structural adjustment programme with no resources otherwise. No money came from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) because they were grumbling over the World Bank absence from Barbados. The World Bank said they wanted

a devaluation of the Barbados dollar but the people of Barbados who stood firmly behind that strategy were able on their own resources and with a clear strategy to start the process of economic growth.

The big question is, how are we going to sustain it because for three consecutive years the non-trading sectors of the Barbados economy have led the economic growth and if in two years Government had to borrow \$350 million despite the high levels of foreign reserves, that must tell us something about the performance of the Barbados economy.

The Honourable Member quotes the latest daily position for Barbados but the Governor of the Central Bank has indicated that the recovery in the reserves basically came from foreign direct investments. Those investments would be in things like Sandy Lane Hotel and people who are bringing in money to undertake, complete or invest in ongoing projects in Barbados, so it is not that that money has been earned from the productive sectors.

Now, I am not criticising that because I think that foreign direct investments as long as it is long term investment is a good thing. Let us understand that is not the criticism but Government must not give the impression that the reason for the improvements in the reserves came from higher levels of productions in the foreign exchange earning sectors of the Barbados economy because that is not so. 5.00 p.m.

I was not talking about you because I am glad you said that because I hope the writer of the *Advocate's* Editorial... well of course he is so perverse that it is difficult to get him to think. He is the same person. He has not changed. The only thing is to read the editorials carefully and cut out the part that would cause the *Advocate* to pay out money. It is the same person.

Would you believe that the Prime Minister delivered a speech in here, I think it was in January, in which he said that the fluctuations that we see in the Barbados economy of sudden reserve losses, sudden reserve accretion, and fluctuations in the productive sectors and growth in the non-trading sectors are not things to worry about because, on balance he said the Barbados economy has been performing well. Yet there is every indication despite what the Governor of the Central Bank said that there are some underlying weaknesses in the Barbados economy. There have always been underlying weaknesses but they will not always be underlying weaknesses. The point that needs to be made is that many of the challenges which Barbados faces in relation to the performance of its productive sectors are matters for which the text was written since 1994.

Sir, if this Government did not abort the sugar sector reform, we would have higher levels of efficiency in the sugar industry but for purely political reasons, the sugar

sector is going to run out of steam because people on that side said it was more important for them to get up and pontificate on matters which they did not know and force the Honourable Member for St. Peter to force his then Minister of Agriculture to stall those major reforms that would have sustained the sugar industry.

Likewise, in the manufacturing sector, the Government came in 1994 and saw a programme which would have seen the removal of the surcharges over a specified period and a programme to put in place measures to assist manufacturers to retool and to face the effects of trade liberalisation and globalisation. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said he was a more generous Minister of Finance than I was and that he was going to put a halt to all of that. It was basically halted and the programme was then resumed two years later and the situation at the end of the day left our manufacturers feeling that they had a longer time and a window of opportunity which they exploited it without undertaking some of the major reforms that would be necessary to sustain them into a period which would see the introduction of a single market economy in CARICOM and other changes in relation to world trading arrangements.

Regarding the international business sector, three years ago we started to tell the Government that the situation was not improving. I remember Honourable Members on the back bench, I will not call their names, getting up in here and challenging people on the statistics in relation to international business companies, offshore banks and so on and saying that there had been a phenomenal increase and the sector was poised to take off. Now we are in the year 2000 and for the past 3 years it is evident that the opposite has been happening.

Barbados is expert at telling us what is in the OEC Report and expert at telling us that these things are inevitable. But nobody anywhere within apparatus of Government and that Ministry can tell us what are the new products that are going to be introduced, what are the new tax treaties that are going to be negotiated, what is the direction that our offshore sector is going to take, what will be the benefit of some of the changes that have been introduced to CARICOM investors using similar vehicles or even Barbadians who are entitled to use those vehicles if they are involved in the earning of foreign exchange or in export.

So we are back in that situation of lull in which people are pushing paper behind desks throughout the Ministries that deal with the productive sectors. Ministers are fooling themselves and the public and it is being compounded by what I would consider to be less than transparent reports being issued from the Central Bank of Barbados with highly emotive language which assist the media to paint a picture of

Barbados that is not entirely correct. But that does not help me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because despite my feeling and despite the propaganda, we all have to live in Barbados.

In the year 2010, the pension of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas together with whatever earnings I have will be used to pay back the loan which the Government is presently negotiating. But at least the courtesy is owed to people who have to pay it back in the year 2010 to know that when this House met and approved this loan that Government outlined a strategy which would accompany the highest level of foreign borrowing that Barbados has ever undertaken in its history in a two-year period.

It will be something that you can look at and say look, like when you are building a house, I am going to build a house. This is the income I have. I better put a little apartment to make back some rent as well so that I can help pay off the mortgage. I anticipate that these are the cut-backs that I can make. These are the additional things that I can do. I can sell a little pudding and souse on a Saturday and do some smocking. I am only putting it in those simple terms to help the House understand that we want to give the fullest support to this. But we are also undertaking major public sector investments which are going to require financing over the next fiscal year such as the purchases of buses and the major expenditures of capital in the Housing Corporation, *et cetera*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not satisfied that the Government has a strategy. But do you know what compounded the situation? In 1994 when the Barbados Labour Party came to office, the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that, if there was one legacy he would leave with Barbados, he was going to ensure that the odious developments that took place between the Democratic Labour Party and the international institutions would be brought to an end. He would usher in a new era of productive relationship with the international institutions and the Government of Barbados so he embarked on negotiations with the IADB and the World Bank for a series of projects which they would fund.

Sir, would you believe that at the last meeting which the Government of Barbados held with the IADB almost every single project which the IADB is financing has had problems. If you check the Estimates to see what the Government of Barbados drew down from the IADB in the last fiscal year, you would see that despite all of the talk about a pipeline of over a hundred million dollars in projects, the Government of Barbados was barely able to scrape up just over 10 percent of its allocation in that fiscal year.

So the situation between Barbados and the international institutions, whether it is in relation to Greenland, the South Coast Sewerage Project, Tourism Investment Project that

they were undertaking, is that almost every single one of those projects had a big question mark over it. Therefore, the legacy of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter would be that he took a situation in which he at least had a rapport with those international institutions and the technical consultancies were flowing and brought almost all of those IADB projects to a complete halt.

5.10 p.m.

When the Honourable Member for St. James South was having problems with the South Coast Sewerage Project, he said to give her a break he was going to take it over himself and deliver but what has he delivered. He said that we were being unfair to his Minister and not to pressure his Minister that he would bring that to an end: "I, the Prime Minister of Barbados, will ensure that this project is brought to fruition." At the same time you had delays and problems in relation to Greenland. I do not know what the situation is in relation to EduTech. I cannot speak on the financing of it, but I know that the Minister of Education is not entirely happy about the way she is being treated by the Ministry of Finance in relation to EduTech.

So the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter would have brought our relationship with the international institutions to a new low. If it were low when he came and found it, he has brought those relations to a new low. So we do not even have levels of foreign project financing which would indicate that Barbados has truly entered into a new regime of positive relations with the international institutions. That has to be very worrying.

Many of these major public sector projects which the IADB was involved in and for which large sums of taxpayers' money have already been spent were projects which would have had an effect, and a critical effect, on our environment and social policies in Barbados. So somebody has to explain how we have reached this new low in our relationship with the IADB.

I understand that it was a standing joke that the Prime Minister of Barbados went to the IADB and said they are not putting enough money in the Caribbean region. It was a standing joke in the corridors where that meeting was being held that Barbados had a pipeline of significant resources from the IADB and the pipeline has almost dried up. People were saying, does he really know what he is talking about. The Barbados Government has been one of the most delinquent – I meant the apparatus of Government. If you want to blame the technocrats, that is your affair.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Let us get this straight. Early in the present administration's tenure we had to have a meeting with the Inter-American Development Bank. It was held at Sherbourne with Mr. Havelock Brewster and others precisely because there was

well over \$140 million in project loans financing which had been tied up and was about to be lost under the previous administration. That is the problem, Sir.

Since then, we have tried to structure an arrangement to get the funds to flow down but there had been a back-up of substantial funds from the IADB which could have come to Barbados but had not been unlocked by the previous Government.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, they unlocked it and it lasted for about a year and now it has been locked back because... When I am finished you can tell me the position with Greenland, how much was spent on it, what the IADB position is on Greenland. When you are finished that, tell us about the South Coast Sewerage Project, how much has been spent on it, what is the status and what is the IADB position. When you are finished that, talk about the tourism investment project, what is the IADB position, not what the Government of Barbados has done because we were supposed to have a productive new relationship with the international institutions and that relationship has reached a new low. Almost everyone of the projects have been botched in one way or another and the taxpayers of Barbados are going to be saddled with significant losses as a result of the failure to execute those projects.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to ask again what is the strategy for the productive sectors, what is the position of the Barbados Government in relation to international institutions. I do not mean First Boston Credit Suisse. They are a private bank. They lend money and they are interested in two things. They do not care how we spend the money. They want back their money and they want interest. The IADB is into policy lending to which is attached conditionalities which they assume will improve the standing of the people where they make those resources available.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas rightly characterised this loan when he said that it is borrowing against the future. If you borrow against the future you have a solemn duty to the people, who are going to have to pay back that loan, to tell them what strategy is going to underpin that foreign borrowing. It is a pity that in this debate so far the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has not, and I suspect may not be able to answer that question and it is against that background that the Democratic Labour Party with reservations is going to give its support to this measure. As I say, we have to have considerable reservation because this is \$350 million borrowed over two years without a strategy to identify essentially for the productive sectors in Barbados in order to ensure the sustainability of the economic path that we are currently in.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not normally intervene in debates at this time of the

afternoon because I think that any strictures being levied by the Leader of the Opposition will be taken care of by the front bench. This is a subject that I am very interested in and I will not allow some of the doom and gloom being preached by the Leader of the Opposition to be embodied in the record without pointing out that one must remember that in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition he is performing his duty.

It is the duty of the Opposition to see everything that is bad about the Government, not put forward their own alternative proposals but to point out what they think is bad, and they are given sometimes to exaggerating, there being truth periodically.

We all know in Barbados that we are faced today with a situation in which we have to be careful about the new international environment we are facing: The impact of the agreement signed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition with the World Trade Organisation, the impact of the failure at that particular period of time of the Caribbean Economic Community to go forward as a united whole. It is not untrue to say that there is concern in the community, particularly in the agricultural sector and in the manufacturing sector about what will happen in the future in those sectors, having regard to the fact that our commitments entered into by the Democratic Labour Party with the World Trade Organisation have to be honoured. I just want to say that it is only now beginning to be known that within the context of the World Trade Organisation that Barbados has a period of time for adjustment particularly in the non-sugar agricultural area because of the bond rates. Those rates are now being applied in accordance with our rights and obligations. There are one or two points that I think that the public should know. It is not a question as I understand it that when a period of time elapses that the bond rates would automatically be reduced. My understanding is that our obligations in relation to the bond rates, is that over a period of time we will only have to reduce them by a percentage and the percentage is somewhere around 25 per cent. At the end of the period if you have 145% now you only have to reduce it, not 145% to zero% but you will have to reduce Barbados 25% not by 145%. That point has not been coming out. I agree with the Honourable Member with respect to one thing. The private sector in Barbados have not treated themselves in a responsible manner. It is only recently, within the last year and a half, that they have condescended to have experts to advise them. You will see that they have drawn heavily on the retired public service. I believe that their attitudes will be improved by virtue of the fact that they have a new flow of information and a new flow of request. 5.20 p.m.

Now, I want to say further that it is quite ironic that even within the bond rates that some problems will arise. I want the the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to appreciate

this. Some consumers in Barbados will say that those bond rates are applicable to commodities that we ourselves do not produce. Therefore, in this adjustment we have to have a delicate balance between what is a legitimate protection within the context of the World Trade Organisation obligations and your obligations to the consumers who are interested in obtaining products at particular periods at reasonable prices. This adjustment that we are going through has to be continuous. I believe that it has been very clearly explained, certainly by the Ministry of Agriculture and I want to say that the Ministry of Agriculture does have excellent expertise.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: They had a multiplicity of experts that is true, but they may not have had a co-ordinating mechanism to ensure that the experts do not conflict with one another. The point I want to say is that instead of us having this hue and cry about the bond rates, this fear about what is going to happen, what we have to do is to continue with the process of appreciating what will happen after the bond rates go and also what will happen to our consumers within the context of the capacity of the Barbadian producer and CARICOM to satisfy those products. The mitigating factor is that we are introducing the World Trade Organisation bond rates within the context of a parallel Common External Tariff and a parallel single market but this is now being appreciated because those bond rates are going to provide the same level of protection for the CARICOM producers as they are providing to our own. What Barbadians producers ... I have been telling all of those farmers in my constituency who I am constantly in touch with that they have to watch not only externally but they have to watch the fact that the single market is coming into operations and they have to look at the competition within CARICOM. It is a very important point.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is not true to say that we do not have a strategy because the strategy in relation to the World Trade Organisation must be looked at in relation to the strategy of which this Government is a very vocal proponent of trying to make the Caribbean Economic Community understand that we have to be in this together and we have to implement the single market. It is vital for us to implement the single market as part of our strategy to deal with the impact of globalisation and liberalisation.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The point is this, you may have been saying it but the point is, Sir, that it has not been implemented, it is being implemented now. I want to make it very clear that anyone who has had anything to do

with the Treaty of Chaguaramas will know that it proceeds at the fastest pace of the slowest member because they have the unanimity rule.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is a fact.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I hope that the Protocols become familiar topics of conversation and understanding right through Barbados. Sir, I say that because I believe that in non-sugar agriculture there are great opportunities there for us. I recall the time when Barbados was an exporter of carrots, Barbados was an exporter of onions and one or two other crops like peppers and sweet potatoes to the rest of the CARICOM. We cannot produce cabbage or tomatoes as good as those people between Port-of-Spain and airport. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. I was just in Trinidad for Carnival and I saw so many tomatoes – a gallon of tomatoes they were selling for TT\$12.00. We have to look at these opportunities.

Sir, I believe that a lot of structural changes have occurred in relation to the tourism industry. I do not know who could have written that comment in the Central Bank Report in relation to cruise ship passengers because, in my opinion, cruise ship passengers do play a significant role but not as significant a role as that comment would appear to be. The fundamental fact is that Barbados needs to appreciate that there is a diversity of accommodation in Barbados, the impact of which on our tourism earnings, has not been studied in sufficient detail for a long period of time. I refer to the villa market. The reason why we have not felt the impact of the closure of Sandy Lane is because there has been, parallel with that closure, a great increase in accommodation in villas and in apartments. There is absolutely no doubt about that at all.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, I admire the Honourable Member and his aspirations. Sir, it is not only on the west coast. I will take Honourable Members to the south coast. There is a large mass of people on the south coast who have apartments that they rent out to tourists, particularly British tourists. Therefore, I think that we should look at that. The strategy of the Government is – this is my understanding – is that the Government will be implementing some report that they have recently received in relation to incentives to further the development of that area. It is my understanding that the new Hotel Aids Act will bring into operation not only the administrative discretions that used to be granted by Ministers of Finance in relation to refurbishing but also the new concessions that have been suggested so as to take into

account the contribution that this area of the tourism industry obviously makes. I would hope that a visitor expenditure study would be commissioned at a very early period of time because this is something when I was Minister of Tourism and others were Ministers of Tourism, we constantly used to have a contract with BIMAP to do. We used to do it every 2 or 3 years. I honestly feel that you cannot plan in relation to the tourist industry, you cannot pontificate on its impact unless you have the empirical evidence to support it. That is my view. Sir, that, my friend is not here, the new Minister of Tourism, but I will caution him and warn him that is one of the first things that he should do. Have a proper detailed study of the structures that we have in relation to the villas and the alternate accommodation in Barbados.

5.30 p.m.

Now, Sir, about the other areas in relation to international business, because the belief in Barbados is propounded by a few accounting firms that what we should be going for is quantity not quality. When this international business regime was devised as to be an important market, there was always a debate between some accountants, the Government and others, as to whether we should go for a no-tax jurisdiction or a low tax jurisdiction with tax treaties. There are still those people who feel that you judge the contribution of the international business to Barbados' economy by seeing how many new Foreign Sales Corporations, how many new society restricted liabilities, how many international business companies and how many offshore banks. This Government's position has always been that we should go for quality not for quantity.

Now, again, I am of the view that while we may not have had a phenomenal increase in numbers, that the quality of the work that is being done in Barbados has been increased and contribution has increased. I believe that in the area of captive insurance that we have been able to bring to Barbados good substantial insurances, particularly since the new product was introduced of the qualifying insurance companies.

The Honourable Member in his zeal to perform his duty as the Leader of the Opposition, obviously has forgotten that there have been substantial amendments to the captive insurance and the domestic legislation to allow these offshore companies now to become offshore companies and have a preferential tax rate, and to allow Barbadian companies to participate in the offshore insurance business at the same tax rate.

It was a deliberate strategy to answer to criticism of the harmful taxation because no man can say, legitimately, that you are having preferential harmful taxation when you are taxing your own citizens in the same activity at the same rate as you are taxing foreigners. That is a substantial strategy

change. Similarly, I believe in the international business area of legislation that the law has been amended to allow Barbadians, provided that they are indulging in foreign.... I do not mean Barbadians who want to pervert the legislation.

I think that you all must understand this, that whatever innocence a Government has with legislation, whatever good intentions, that in the business sector in Barbados there are 3 or 4 people who are going to sit down and see how they can 'crook' the Government that is their nature. Some of them are born conceived crooks. Let us understand that. Some of them have an aversion to paying taxes, they do not like Barbados, they only use Barbados for the purpose of being able to make money and we must let them know that when they are found out they must be prosecuted by the Director of Public Prosecutions for common law cheating. That is an offence that needs to be introduced and tested in Barbados. A lot of them devise schemes to subvert the Property Transfer Tax, to subvert the law, they should be locked up. They swear a lot of false affidavits as to value. I trust that the Attorney General would bring down the legislation quickly because there are also participants in other activities which would lend us a bad name, namely money laundering.

Sir, what we must do, in my opinion, is to have a more proactive approach to the implementation of what we all agree so there cannot be any doubt about it. It is a legitimate criticism of the bureaucracy in Barbados that decision making takes too long. From judges down it is the same. There is no question about that. I am very glad that they went to school they should have gone to school a long time, because we recognise now that if you have to participate in the important area of dispute resolution that you have to be trained. If you make a little mistake that is nothing, that is the nature of the job. Nobody is 100 per cent perfect that is why we have appeal courts. But what we need to do is to appreciate the pivotal role in an environment, like what we have, in international business of a dispute resolution system.

What I am saying is that if the lawyers and judges do not solve it, the parties are going to solve it, because alternate dispute resolution has come into existence here because of the unsatisfactory...

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is not true to say that the Government does not have a clear strategy on that. I want to go a little further, Sir, in international business, it is true that we have lost some of the informatics industry, the wage skills and the condition of service in Barbados are uncompetitive in relation to the process data and that kind of work. We have also been pinpointed, and it has been recognised by the BIDC that this country has a comparative

advantage in telemarketing, call-centre work and programming. That is what is being done, that is a strategy change that is taking place. Look in the newspapers and you will see the vast array of jobs that are being offered in telemarketing and call-centre work. We have even managed to persuade the telecommunication monopoly of their responsibility to reduce their rates. That is another reform that must take place. Everybody knows that. Barbados is no different from any other part of the world. We are competing with Wales, Scotland, Grenada and Trinidad. There are a number of countries that have been tested in the Caribbean and they have identified the areas where in the new information technology and the new E-Commere.

5.40 p.m.

Now that E-commerce Bill I know, is being dealt with. I hope it would not take long. It should not take long so I would not think that should be regarded as a criticism by anybody. When Members of Parliament say that if we identify that strategy, we agree with you, but we need to have the bureaucracy to implement what the Politicians want. I keep saying that. If you do not push them, you are not going to get it. They do not have the same enthusiasm as politicians. They have a different security of tenure.

Every five years we have to account. They have 30 or 33½ years to account.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am not going to call them, like the Honourable Member's predecessor, the army of occupation. I am not going to call them that, but what I will say is that we need to ensure that those who we depend on for the implementation of our plans are people who have the same kind of enthusiasm we have. We also have to ensure that we restructure our civil service to attract young people to the service who are capable of appreciating and have the energy to think about what Barbados would be like and want to be part and parcel thereof.

Sir, the borrowing of the money, I have no doubt that the economy has improved in the first quarter. A good barometer is what happens on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in Oistins. I have never seen it better. Go up there and see it. It is better. If you drive on the west coast, if you talk to the restaurateurs if you talk to the various people, there is no question about it, the way how our tourism industry is structured, a substantial part filters down.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I know the Honourable Member has strictures on the all-inclusives, but in Barbados we have a small proportion of our plant in all-inclusive. We have a small proportion in relation to the total plant and that is something I would hope that we continue to have. Not that

I am against anything but that is right.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member wants to talk about the sewerage scheme. I only know of one aspect of the sewerage scheme. I know the litigation aspect of the sewerage scheme and I know one thing that I have been told, and I have seen the figures that may appear to be marking time to Honourable Members. That there were five contracts of the sewerage scheme:

- (4) The building of the plant – that is completed.
- (2) The collection system.
- (3) The building of the outfall. The outfall is completed.
- (4) The connections between the houses.

All of that is done. What is now left is the contract II, the one that they had the dispute over. It was far behind time. My understanding is that those people who advised the Government from an engineering point of view, gave certain advice which the Government accepted.

In order to ensure that there was no hiatus, contract II was spilt into 2A which was digging the micro-tunnel under those areas, that has been completed. They tell me that overall, if you look at the totality of what is the South Coast Sewerage Project that the true assessment of what is completed is 60 per cent because all that is left is that part from St. Lawrence swamp to Oistins, going through St. Lawrence Road. The underground work between St. Lawrence swamp, the Graeme Hall Eco-Tourism Project and the Hilton Hotel, have in fact been completed. It is possible within six months to nine months to commission the plant, but it would be half and I understand that is what they are dealing with now.

Sir, it is not quite true to say that the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government is on a collision course in respect to that because the truth of the matter is that work has been going on. It might not have been going on at the same pace but it has been going on.

Now, be careful with the Inter-American Development Bank because they say one thing here and then when it goes up abroad, they then pull another rule. The gold post periodically shift with that.

Sir, the last point that I will make on that is that with respect to the other areas, it is a known fact that when you are dealing with The World Bank, The Inter-American Development Bank, The Caribbean Development Bank and all of these banks, there is a bureaucracy as large as the Government. You have difficulties with it. Luckily for

Barbados, we are in a position because of our credit rating to have a cushion, in that we can go on the market and borrow. Now, you have that there in case there are central projects that you need to implement that you will have your own money, instead of having to go through the bureaucracy. I hope, Sir, as everybody hopes that this money would be used wisely. There will be disagreements as to how we spend money, always disagreement about that, but the point is...

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: This money? There are a number of projects that the Government has that are not eligible for The Inter-American Development Bank or The World Bank or the rest of their financing. Obviously this has to be done. Obviously you have to use some of this to spend in that area.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: This Government does not have a record of using capital borrowings to finance civil service expenditure.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is not so, Sir. The Honourable Members are a little jealous of the fact that the Government has the VAT to finance all the recurring expenditure. The deficit on the Current Account is a very small percentage of the Gross National Product. They say there is a surplus, Sir.

I have no fear about that but I do caution and all of us have to caution, Sir. The Barbados economy is always an economy that can be pushed by external factors over which we have no control. What we must ensure is that those factors which we have control over, we try to control them and that we ourselves have here a clear appreciation and a vision as to our place in the world.

This is a service economy. We will still have manufacturing. Whatever happens we will still have a cement plant because we have the raw materials.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: You ought to be glad that the Barbados Labour Party had sufficient sense to bring some 'enlightenment' down in your parish. You will still be down there without light.

This is a service economy. Tourism, information services, specialised non-sugar agriculture like our cotton, we have to lick that because particularly now the opportunity which I understand will arise as a result of the legislation that has just been passed in the U.S. Congress where you can send out garments made from your own thing, that becomes

more and more important. We must be 'man enough' to recognise that if we have to import labour to get the cotton done or if we have to use machinery, we have to do that.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. Therefore, when we take it all in all, I think that we should remember the special role that an Opposition has to play in the Parliamentary system. We in Barbados settle it within the context here, we are not like other places that settle it on the street.

Sir, that is my contribution.

Asides.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is quite obvious that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South does pay attention to what goes on within his constituency. If I were to listen to exactly everything he said, it sounded like a political tape from a political meeting held in his constituency a couple of Sunday nights ago. Everything I said, Sir, was repeated in here today... 5.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...including the point, Sir, that the Government of Barbados should recognise that the reason why tourism was able to do so good last year, was because of the villas on the west coast and the south coast.

I am glad, Sir, that we in this Parliament and no better person could have said it than the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for the simple reason, Sir, when the Royal Westmoreland project was being constructed, there was a lot of criticism and it is only today that we have been educated on that particular project. Barbadians should recognise that it was Royal Westmoreland that saved the Barbadian economy last year. If those villas were not on the market, we would have found ourselves in a serious decline.

I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for confirming that particular point but it must be said in this Parliament, Sir, that when you have a situation when a country is not in a crisis where the foreign reserves are not at \$31 million and they happen to be at \$760 million and a Government finds itself still having to go on a capital market, one must ask oneself what is really happening.

I want to explain to the Parliament of Barbados today what is really happening. The truth is that even though we have \$760 million in foreign reserves these foreign reserves are not from the productive sector. These foreign reserves are investments in the country. The Prime Minister by his own admission in going to the capital market to borrow \$200 million, is telling Barbadians that we need to produce because we are not producing, yet we have large foreign reserves and if we were to sit idly and do not do anything about the foreign reserves that two or three years from now we will find ourselves in a situation where we would not have any foreign reserves in this country because we are not producing enough to keep the foreign reserves increasing.

It means that we are increasing our foreign reserves by borrowing. We are doing it through investment but somebody must tell the Government of Barbados that something must be done within the productive sectors to give Barbadians hope. If every year we are going to be going to the capital market to borrow money to keep paying our current bills, what we are actually admitting to the world is that Barbados is a country where everything is done at a cosmetic level in that we are not producing the way we should produce.

When one looks at manufacturing there is no hope. When one looks at tourism, one can only consider tourism as doing a balancing act. The agricultural sector has a lot of potential but for some strange reason the Government of the day had not paid it the amount of attention that it should be paid. When you have a sector that went through the restructuring that it went through in 1994 and finds itself today where a Governor of the Central Bank must use a time lapse to project growth, it is disgraceful.

Can you imagine that because the crop started late last year and it started early this year that a Governor of a Central Bank could come and brag about growth in the sugar industry because of a time lapse? What will happen in the second quarter when there is not a time lapse and the negative occurs. I wonder what the Governor of the Central Bank would tell Barbadians because, to tell me that the sugar industry is doing well because the crop started earlier is to give me the impression that we would get a much larger crop than last year.

The truth is, Sir, all it means that in one quarter the figures will be one thing and in the other quarter, they will be reduced. What we need to look at in this country is the total figure and not use one quarter against the other because it is foolishness. I have said in this Parliament already and I repeat, this foolishness by measuring growth by units, we must change it. We must stop using growth by units. We must start measuring it in terms of dollars.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: These are financial matters. Keep quiet.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not the amount of money that is earned by the tourism industry, it is the number of tourists that arrive in the country that is measured whether you have growth or not.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, it does not make sense to tell me that there have been an increase in the cruise ship numbers coming to this country when the taxi drivers and the people within Bridgetown are telling me that they cannot earn one single cent in this country, when the Central Bank cannot tell me that they have seen an increase in foreign exchange in the country but yet still people are bragging that the cruise ship numbers are up.

What I want to hear, Sir, and what poor Barbadians want to hear in this country is that because of the cruise ship industry, we have been able to get large sums of foreign exchange to put in our Central Bank and the other banks.

If we cannot have that, Sir, it means that the cruise ship industry will only be bringing numbers where people might be just getting off a ship, walking up Broad Street, not spending one single cent because they already spent their money on the cruise ships and yet still we are fooling people that we are doing well.

Sir, I can understand why the Prime Minister of this country will have to come and borrow \$200 million because he understands that even though the foreign reserves are good this year that next year or later in this year the money will be spent and it goes back out of the country and we find ourselves scrambling.

I do not want to see a repeat in this country, Sir, where this money is borrowed for capital projects and the Governor of the Central Bank comes on our television to tell us that the money has been used to purchase food in this country. I do not want to hear that this particular money is spent in this particular way. As you are aware, Sir, sometime last year the Governor of the Central Bank admitted that if we did not have the \$150 million, we would have been scrambling to look for money to buy food. That was the admission of the Governor of the Central Bank.

Sir, we have to make sure that this \$200 million is worked within the economy to generate the necessary funds to service the interest and also to repay the loan that has been borrowed. If we are going to just take this money, put it within the economy and it is not going to service the loan,

then we would have wasted another \$200 million and our grand children would have to service a debt that they would not have achieved anything from.

We must recognise that it is a bullet loan. At the same time, remember what you all said about the bullet loan in the 1990s. This is the same type of loan and you must understand that the bullet loan was borrowed...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The same economic conditions. I am going to tell you something, if the Barbados Government did not get this loan, we would have found ourselves in the same position as was the Sandiford Administration in the early 1990s. The only difference between what is happening now and the Sandiford Administration in the early 1990's is that you have been able to get a loan and the Sandiford Administration was not able to get the loan.
6.00 p.m.

Asides.

But we are now in the same economic conditions and what is even more interesting about this is that we are now discussing bond rates and the freeing up of the market.

In the early 1990's, the Democratic Labour Party tried to put the manufacturing sector in a framework to let them understand that this is what they will have to face later on but instead of their accepting that the world was about to change and they had to change the way they were doing their operations, they all marched up and down town. Included in that march was the trade union movement again. Now today instead of being nine years ahead of the competition, they are nine years behind. If they had accepted the conditions in 1991, they would have prepared their houses and they would have been able to compete nine years ahead of time. Now they have a situation where the protocols have been able to catch up with them and the globalisation and trade liberalisation have been able to catch up with our manufacturing sector. They have not been able to make one simple change to suit the conditions of the world today. If they had listened, they would have been nine years ahead of the competition.

Another thing, Sir, is that this Government should really be apologizing to Barbadians for not allowing the protocols to be implemented within the country first. I have said this already in Parliament. The first place the protocol should have been tested for Barbados should have been within Barbados. Instead of allowing our people to understand the protocols and understand the competition among the Caribbean people, we delayed the implementation of these protocols. What do we have today, Sir. We have a

situation today where we now have the protocols to deal with among ourselves in the Caribbean and also have the World Trade Organisation, trade liberalisation and everything else to deal with at one time. We not only have to deal with them as a Caribbean people, but we now have to deal with them as world people. It means that we do not have to compete with ourselves anymore. We now have to compete with the world. We could have tested it at a primary stage, secondary stage and then at a tertiary stage.

Sir, the Caribbean leaders have all failed their people because they had good mechanisms in place but they failed to implement them in a timely manner and they have been caught up with what is going on in the world. I will not apologize to any one of them for that because we have been hearing about protocols now for years. They had the golden opportunity to teach their own people how the protocols work within the Caribbean and their own country and they failed to do that. Now the monster of trade liberalisation is with us and no educational programmes have taken place within the Caribbean to teach the people how to operate. That is why I was extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for making a very important point again today of what I spoke of in Oistins.

There are many items that are being caught up in the bond rates that have not been produced in Barbados for years and will never be produced in Barbados. I am saying today in Parliament that these items were deliberately caught up in the bond rates because some people feel that is the way to generate new revenue for the Government. I am challenging that the Government of Barbados has introduced new taxes and hidden them through the bond rates. That is why things like chicken wings, the Barbadian meal, cannot now be purchased within the country. Those rates are now so high that it does not make sense to buy chicken wings, the poor man's meal, anymore. Over the years the poor man has been eating chicken wings. All of a sudden they are not good. There are many other items that were never caught up in the trap. Now all of a sudden they are in the trap.

I am going to say to this Government, as I said in Oistins a couple of Sunday nights ago, we have to understand...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South listened because he repeated the whole speech today. We have to understand that Barbados is a service industry in which tourism is the main player. If we are going to use bond rates, we must first also understand that the tourism sector will become more competitive. When you destroy the tourism sector because of the bond rates, the only people you can blame will be yourself. It will be regrettable to see that you have been able

to allow Royal Westmoreland to hold your tourism together so that when Sandy Lane and the Hilton come back on the market you will be able to see some growth. But now for selfish revenue you have allowed bond rates to destroy your tourism industry.

Sir, I am saying to the Minister of Finance that you should listen to what I am saying and correct these measures before you destroy your total tourism industry just to get a 'quick-fix' in revenue for your country.

Sir, I am saying to the people of Barbados that they must understand that because the foreign reserves are high, it does not necessarily mean that the country is doing well. I can go tomorrow and borrow \$50 million, walk around with all the \$50 million in my pockets and everybody will believe that I have got a lot of money. The truth is that at the end of the day I have to pay back the \$50 million, if I spend all of it, I still have to pay it back, so I am still in trouble. That is exactly the position in which this country finds itself.

We have been fortunate that we have been able to attract bonds that have brought capital to the country but if those bondholders pull out their money tomorrow the question is what will happen? \$760 million in foreign exchange might sound like a lot of money but the truth is when you look at how it is allocated and if all that money could remain in Barbados today, you have a good point. If most of that money can easily be removed to another country because it does not really belong to us and it is only in transit, it means that we will find ourselves in a financial bind.

Sir, I am saying that I need to know from the acting Prime Minister of Barbados how much of those foreign reserves have been able to be produced from the productive sectors. I need to have a figure from the acting Prime Minister this evening, how much of that has been placed there by the productive sectors. If he can tell me that more than half of the foreign reserves were allocated by the productive sectors to the Central Bank, then I would have to say maybe we are doing a lot better than I think. The truth is the Honourable Member for St. Thomas cannot tell me that because he knows that most of that...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not interested in whether it has ever been or not. The point is that it is short-lived and it can easily take flight and leave the country just as fast as it came in. That is something that you should be telling Barbadians, that even though the foreign reserves are high, we are not sure how long they will remain within the system. For example, let me tell you what can happen. The Royal Bank can decide tomorrow to bring \$200 million from Canada here, on its way to Jamaica. It will stay in the system

for two days and our foreign reserves will look good. The point is they are in the system and once they are in the system they will be counted at the time they are in the system they then take flight and leave. What will happen? We as parliamentarians must recognise that we have a role to educate Barbadians, that we should be productive and we should build our foreign reserves to the highest level.

6.10 p.m.

Sandy Lane – I have said in this Parliament, and I will continue to repeat this. The Government of Barbados made a serious error when it allowed Sandy Lane to bulldoze the hotel there. With that type of investment, they should have sat the investors of Sandy Lane down and say to them: Look, we have another location in Barbados and we think it would be better for Barbadians and yourself if you were to build this hotel somewhere else within Barbados.

If you think about that policy, you would see that Barbados would have done a lot better last year if that policy was implemented because on one hand we would have been able to retain the number of tourists coming from Europe at the old Sandy Lane and we would have been building a new market for the American tourists that you expect to attract, and all you have to do is buy some helicopters and shift the people from that beautiful location in the North up to Sandy Lane to play golf.

When you have a Government that cannot think, that is what you get. You miss out on golden opportunities. That is why I am saying to this Government you owe it to the people of Barbados, and an explanation must be given why you allowed Sandy Lane, and in my opinion, all I can say, to refurbish at \$400 million when you could have had an opportunity where Sandy Lane could have built a new hotel for \$400 million but, because they bulldozed one and rebuilt the other I would have to call it refurbishment. It is no expansion of the tourist market, whereas, if you had gone to the Naval Base and you had allowed them to build a new hotel there, you would have retained the rooms in St. James, have new rooms in St. Lucy and you would have had a wider market to advertise, but you missed a golden opportunity.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a loan of \$200 million ... and the only reason I might give a little support to this particular loan is because I told the Prime Minister the only loan I would support in this House is a loan borrowed in the U.S. dollar. It so happened he came with one borrowed in the U.S. currency.

It will not stop there. I want to know, Sir, if the repayments will be in the U.S. dollar and if that is a commitment I need to know from the Acting Prime Minister because it is one thing to borrow a loan in U.S. dollars but that is not the only important factor. The important factor is the currency that you will have to re-service the loan in

because, as I said in this House already, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) lent a loan to the sugar industry and because they had a bad loan from the Japanese they made the sugar industry repay the loan in Japanese Yen so I hope that this particular loan is not like that.

I am not surprised, Sir, to hear what is happening now to the CDB and the tongue-lashing that the CDB is getting. When I first said it in the House people said I was 'bad-talking' the CDB. I want to know now who is 'bad-talking' the CDB. Within the last few weeks I have heard many things from Beckles and now the shareholders in the CDB many people are finally admitting that the things I had been saying were making sense.

I am saying, Sir, with this \$200 million, the Opposition must demand from the Government that this must be spent on capital expenditure and the type of capital expenditure must be capital expenditure to be able to service this particular loan. It is not one where you can just take it up and say you are going to spend it on capital expenditure and at the end of the day what you have spent the money on cannot service the particular loan that has been borrowed because the taxpayers cannot be the ones to service this loan. It must be the investors who must service this particular loan.

I do not want to hear anything like what has happened at the National Housing Corporation (NHC) that the Consolidated Fund will service the interest. I want to hear that the investors are paying the interest and also paying the repayments on this particular loan.

I would expect the same thing to happen with the \$150 million. The truth is all of that went to pay food bills. That will not be able to happen with the \$150 million. I hope we would learn from our mistakes and that the same thing that happened to us last year would not happen to us this year and that you, Sir, would make sure that every time a loan is borrowed within this Parliament for a particular reason, that the loan is used for the particular reason that it has been borrowed for in this Parliament.

I have been saying that we have been coming and agreeing to sums in this Parliament under the pretence of one thing and those loans have ended up doing something quite different. I think that is a serious charge that when we borrow money to be spent on capital expenditure it should be spent on capital expenditure alone and if we need to change it to revenue expenditure, somebody should come back to this Parliament and tell Parliament that there is a need to change the allocation, that you are not interested in spending it on capital expenditure anymore but you will be spending it on revenue expenditure, although certain Government Ministers do not understand revenue expenditure like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. I am saying, Sir, do not be fooled by the foreign reserves.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: All I can say to you is that there are at least two Ministers on the Front Bench that understand, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for St. James North, they understand revenue expenditure well because of their knowledge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation today where I have asked the Acting Prime Minister to explain certain things to this House, for example, to tell the House whether this loan will be repaid in U.S. dollars. We want to know whether the capital and the interest will be repaid in U.S. dollars. We want to know whether this money, as has been stated, was borrowed for capital expenditure or whether it will be used for capital expenditure. We want to know the capital projects it will be used for and what are the projections of revenue from these particular capital projects to make sure that they can service the particular expenditure that they incur because of the loan. We would like to know, Sir, when these capital projects would come on stream considering that we are now borrowing \$200 million at an interest rate of say, 10 per cent. It means we are paying 10 per cent on money. We are also losing money at the same time for the simple reason we will have \$200 million put aside not earning any interest or if we are earning interest, it is less than what we will be paying. In truth and in fact we are borrowing to lose. I want to know from the Acting Prime Minister how much money we will be losing in borrowing this loan at this particular time when there is no need for it, according to the Members of Government because the foreign reserves are good.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this debate which, as expected, has generated some considerable debate. First of all, dealing with this matter of this \$100 million loan to be undertaken by the Government of Barbados, this could only be taken in the context of the economic performance of the country.

We must, of course, all agree that the economic fundamentals are essentially strong. In fact, Sir, the review undertaken by independent, impartial respective sources, for example, Standard & Poors, which, as you would know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has given Barbados an A-credit rating which is not a credit which is heaped lightly on countries or corporations. It would have done so on the basis of a very thorough and comprehensive review of the economy, of the past several years of the economic potential based on current circumstances and based on their own future projections because inherent in the rating which will be given to a country, a corporation or individual is an assessment and making and expressing a professional opinion on the

capacity of that individual corporation or country to repay money borrowed into the future.

No credit-rating agency, Sir, worth its salt, and the agencies which have rated Barbados or certainly worth their salt, would ever put themselves on the line by way of giving us an enhanced and improved rating based on worsened economic circumstances. As I said, they do not base these on historical evidence. They make a projection into the future so I want to start from that very basic perspective because, obviously, on both sides of the divide, given that we have certain specific party political interests, we may very well come to different conclusions looking at the same figures but we should look, when in doubt, for guidance from those that have no axe to grind, political or otherwise, and be guided by their professionalism in these matters.
6.20 p.m.

Sir, I want to highlight some of the economic fundamentals that are mentioned. First of all, the growth in the first quarter of the year which is typically the period in which we showed good growth so that in order to make an assessment of how we have done this year we obviously have to look at the previous similar periods and compare like with like. The 5.1 per cent in the first quarter of this year certainly compares very favourably to the 1 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 1999 that is a lot, Sir.

Sir, that shows that the economy in the first quarter of this year has outperformed a similar period in the last year. That is the first point that I want to make. What is also more fundamentally important in the context of undertaking a \$100 million loan denominated in foreign exchange is the performance of the foreign exchange sector.

Sir, based on the performance of the foreign exchange earning sectors there was a boost in the net reserves by some \$134.1 million in the first quarter of this year. When compared to the corresponding period between 1993 and 1999, that is, January to March 1993 to 1999, the average was about \$67 million so that the reserve growth for this year was stronger than any of those previous years. That is the stuff on which Standard and Poors, Moodys and The Institutional Investor would have based their very admirable credit ratings, not on what pours forth from the Other Side. It is not based on them, and thank God for that. Through this administration of the finances of central Government, as you will agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the operation of central Government in the context of a small open economy that has a very fundamental impact on economic performance, particularly the management of the size of the deficit and related matters.

Sir, in terms of Government performance for the first three months of this year that is instructive as well. Basically, Sir, central Government operation would have yielded a

surplus of \$41 million based on out-turn figures that we have so far that is in contrast to a deficit of \$46 million in the previous financial year for the first quarter. Basically, Sir, Government expenditure would have fallen by 2.6 per cent compared to a growth of 3.6 per cent in the previous year. In the context of all that has happened around us we are managing the finances within central Government very carefully. We have undertaken expenditures in the public interest and for the public good but we are not spendthrifts. We are not into conspicuous consumption, not even in the face of improved economic performance and high foreign exchange earning. That Sir, augurs very well for our ability to pay back our debts and for our ability to be able to interest investors in providing finance for us.

Do you know what is even more interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the performance of the Government in this first quarter in terms of expenditure control even included the repayment of the first tranche of the eight per cent. Even with the repayment of the first tranche of the eight per cent Government, through prudent management, through care and caution, was able to end up with a reduction of 2.6 per cent of projection in the first quarter of the year. Sir, that is the background against which I speak.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition noted that in 1991 the Democratic Labour Party only borrowed a small amount of money – that is true. They borrowed only what anybody would bother to lend them. They were lucky that anybody bothered at all because when we compare the credit rating of the administration at that time and the credit now, when we compare the performance of the Government then as it is now, they were lucky that they got anything at all.

Let me make one other observation on the economic performance. If you listen to the Opposition you would believe that the Government has borrowed this big amount of money and that Barbados is sinking under the weight of debt. Do you know what you have to do when you think about borrowing money, Sir, you do not think only about the absolute amount of money you are borrowing, you consider your debt service and your ability to pay. The Estimate laid in this Honourable Chamber would have indicated that there has been a fall in foreign debt service by some \$52 million, a reduction of some 54.1 per cent between the last financial year and the current financial year.

Less of our foreign exchange earnings will be committed to debt and, therefore, more is available for other public expenditure in the public interest. In fact, Sir, management of external debt has been the downfall of many small developing countries around the world. Barbados, and this Administration, Sir, has always focussed very carefully on a few fundamental indicators, the size of the fiscal deficit, the size of our external debt ratio and the like. When they get to the point where you are taking all of your foreign

exchange just to repay debt you are 'spinning top in mud', we are no way near that. Our debt service as a percentage of foreign exchange earnings has fallen for every single year that this Party has been in administration. That is important, Sir, that is a fundamental point.

6.30 p.m.

Sir, it means that the country is in more than a strong position to borrow this US\$100 million, to manage it well, based on our track record, and to pay it back without even a blithe being seen on the radar screen of the economy. That Sir, is the acid test, whether you are dealing with management of your personal finances, whether you are dealing with the management of your company's finances or whether you are dealing with the management of the finances of your dear sweet and beloved country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, questions were raised concerning the performance of the foreign exchange earning sectors and our capacity to be able to continue to earn and continue to function. Let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that notwithstanding the challenges that face us in our foreign exchange earning sectors that the performance has been creditable, that we are getting on with the job. Take for example, in the manufacturing and informatic sector, Sir, we have been under some pressure, there have been some challenges but I have just received some information indicating that in terms of our performance during the last financial year the performance of Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, which is charged, amongst other things with the responsibility of stimulating and facilitating investment in those two sectors, that eleven foreign owned enterprises have been attracted to Barbados and established in the areas of manufacturing and information technology. Also, Sir, that some 33 domestic enterprises have been established directly with their assistance. There are other domestic enterprises that would have been set up on their own or through some other entities.

Sir, it shows that there continues to be an interest in the development and exploitation of opportunities and also the building of capacity for future earning in the manufacturing and informatics sectors. Sir, I am also involved that based on the quarterly surveys conducted by the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation that through their efforts, through the effort of that agency, together with the other staff of the Ministry of International Business that some 4 288 jobs were generated in manufacturing, information technology and other services sectors which the IDC promotes and develops. That represents, Sir, a substantial improvement over previous years. It is interesting to note, Sir, that the lion share, some 91 per cent of that number were generated by expansion in existing enterprises, a smaller amount 9 per cent were generated by new enterprises.

Sir, we have to be careful when we are playing the numbers games. Very often, in several of our sectors, in several aspects of our society we use some very crude indicators to measure growth and development. If we were to simply measure activity in terms of new enterprises you would have yielded a result of 384. However, measurement included expansion in existing enterprises yielding, Sir, the larger figure. That is instructive as well, Sir, when we speak to the issue of what happens in the international business and financial services sector because the limited statistical information which is there and which we are seeking to improve at this time, Sir, only captures new registrations. It does not, in any effective or scientific way capture what is happening in enterprises that have been here twenty years, ten years, five years or two years. You may see, based on your listings, a reduction in new licences but if you do not also have the capacity to measure and compare the investment and trading activities in existing enterprises you will never get an accurate figure of what is happening in the sector – but I will get to that, Sir, because in the amendments which are coming to the international business companies legislation which we proposed to bring during the course of the year, there will be very clear and improved provisions for the collection of statistical information on the international business activities in this country. In addition to that, Sir, we in the Ministry have been working along with the Central Bank and the Barbados International Business Association to develop a survey methodology to more adequately capture and to be able to present the information on the international business sector.

Sir, it is interesting to note as well considering the manufacturing and informatics sectors that notwithstanding all the challenges that are before us that the statistics that we have gathered based on actual surveys have indicated an increase of some 3.1 per cent in the level of what we call certified exports that is a category of exports to CARICOM under the Caribbean Basin Initiative and CARICAN under LOMÉ which requires Certificates of Origins to be issued by the IDC confirming that they have originated in Barbados. That category of exports has increased by some 3.1 per cent. The certified exports typically represent at least 60 per cent of total exports so that when we look at the out-turn figure we should see an increase in overall export figures.

Sir, what is also interesting, and I want to share with this Honourable House, is that there are a number of small enterprises who have heeded Government's word, who have heeded Government's advice and who are now looking to the export markets for their growth and their survival. Sir, some twenty new exporters were introduced to foreign markets. Twenty enterprises that never exported were able to do so in 1999, that was done with the assistance of the Ministry of International Business. For example, Sir, some of those twenty were assisted in their marketing by being taken to ten international trade shows in Toronto, Atlanta, New Jersey,

New Orleans, New York and London seeking to push the Barbados product and to export the companies and their products to the international marketplaces, helping them to gain much recognition and support around the world.

Sir, I will have more time to speak on these matters and I will speak more fully on them on Thursday at the National Awards Ceremony at the Frank Collymore Hall.

Sir, before I close I want to speak very briefly about new products in the international business sector. Sir, many armchair critics, many backseat drivers who have never generated an idea who have never put forward an innovation, who have never put forward anything that can be used to advance this sector...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: You never hear the Leader of the Opposition or some of the armchair critics coming up with what these new and brilliant products are supposed to be.

Sir, I will help them out. Even as we speak, having had fullest consultation with persons in the insurance sector for example – I should make the point that Barbados is currently the fifth largest domicile in the world, Sir, for captive insurance companies.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: That is so, Sir, check all the international magazines. We have had a very successful exhibition in San Francisco last week at Risk and Insurance Managers Society (RIMS) conference. The point is that we have recognised the opportunity.
6.40 p.m.

So Cabinet has approved and we will – we are at the stage of drafting – come to the House to bring insurance legislation to allow for what in the industry are called Segregated Accounts to allow for various new products that require that kind of corporate entity to be established within the insurance industry.

There is another product, Sir, called Protective Selves which is achieved in the amendment to the Companies Act to allow for Protective Selves and it is a device used in their offshore jurisdictions, Sir, which will be introduced here in Barbados. We will also, Sir, make major amendments to the IBC legislation to strive to clarify and improve its workability, and that has already been reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee on International Business by the industry partners and will be going to Cabinet shortly.

The Foreign Sales Corporation regime, as you know, Sir, is in the process of being reviewed by the United States following the WTO ruling, and we come ready to make whatever legislative amendments are necessary for the Barbados end in order to accommodate that because we must remember, Sir, that the Foreign Sales Corporation is not in Barbados, it is in the United States. We got the opportunity under the Caribbean Basin Initiative to be a registered location and we eventually became the second largest domicile for Foreign Sales Corporations. So we have been working closely with our private partners in the United States as well as the United States Government on finding a new regime which will be WTO compliant but will still allow us, Sir, to continue as being the leading domicile for this activity.

In addition, Sir, efforts, for the general conversion of offshore and onshore sectors in keeping with the new trends, I will talk about that later. We are developing legislation for Mutual Funds and there are Mutual Funds legislation on the table now, but most people in the industry are of the view that whilst it may work well, local Mutual Funds, it is not the best to attract major international Mutual Fund investments and therefore that is being worked on.

In association with the Commerce, Sir, the Commerce legislation to facilitate the offshore activity is coming soon and in addition, Sir, the Government of Barbados will be signing the Double Taxation Treaty with China next week or the week after next. Cuba has been approved the right for signing and Venezuela will sign. Last year we have already signalled that we will be having discussions with India, Israel, Costa Rica and several other countries of the world concerning having treaty relationships.

Sir, we are not asleep. We are hard at work with our partners in the private industry in Barbados, in markets which we serve and with foreign companies to ensure, Sir, the long-term viability and sustainability of the international business and financial services sector in Barbados and the insurance sector. Sir, now these sectors would be able to continue to make very positive contributions to the economy of Barbados and ultimately Sir, for us to continue the very strong financial and economic performance which is the hallmark, Sir, of the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

With those words, I support the Resolution.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful to all Honourable Members who contributed to this debate. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East just dealt with a number of points which I had to make in respect to new products in the international business sector, Sir, there is no need to repeat them, Sir. He has told me that the

model for the E-commerce Bill is an Irish model and that will be studied in my Ministry in due course. The Government has been preparing itself for the E-commerce.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I wish to clarify something that was said by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said that there is a new low in the relationship between the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank. That is untrue. It is a blatant untruth to say that the relationship between the Government of Barbados and the IADB is other than good and harmonious.

Sir, about five weeks ago Cabinet approved for the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Attorney General to sign a memoir under which Barbados is seeking to obtain funds from the Inter-American Development Bank to modernise the penal system and the whole administration of justice. Prior to that – of course, we are aware of the substantial funds – hundreds of millions of dollars which we got from the Inter-American Development Bank to develop the whole Edu-Tech programme. So it could only be mischievous, malicious and wicked of the Leader of the Opposition to put out this kind of misinformation, Sir, that there is a bad relationship between us.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I withdraw those words Sir. It is quite wrong and unfair. We had a conference at Sam Lord's Castle where the IADB is working now with the whole region to develop the justice sectors and the justice system for all of the countries of the Caribbean. That is something completely different from the bilateral arrangement between Barbados and the IADB for our own modernisation process of the penal system and the custodian side of the penal system and the administration of justice.

I would wish to say, Sir, that with some immodesty, that the Inter-American Development Bank has been speaking to me, principally, on behalf of the region. I did not ask for the position as spokesman for the region but they have been contacting me. I had to go to Jamaica last December so that we could put the whole thing on the road and send it forward to the Heads of Government. They have been using me as the person to give leadership to the regional projects. So it is absolutely untrue, Sir, to speak of any problems in the relationship between the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank. I want to clarify that.

Sir, in respect of a comprehensive policy and strategy for the productive sector, it would be impossible for me to even attempt to deal with that. Certainly, that is a matter that has to be dealt with on a sectoral basis, perhaps the Minister of Finance. But the individual Minister of Agriculture,

International Business, Tourism and so on could speak to those individual Ministries and make their input so that the Honourable Members on the Other Side can understand the holistic and coordinated policy that we have.

Sir, I just wish to say that the borrowing requirements for this year are \$316.3 million; the foreign component is \$143 million and in respect of capital projects we are proposing to spend \$79.5 million. I give the Honourable Member on the Other Side the assurance that unlike the practice of the Democratic Labour Party, when I was on that Side, they used to come here weekly with Resolutions, everything said that the Bills will support Government's capital programme. I was one of the first people that took that to task and called for the kind of information the Honourable Member was asking us for today, Sir, so I understand. But I wish to give him the assurance that unlike the practices developed by his Party, these funds are earmarked, as we said, Sir, as support for the capital programmes of the Government which were outlined in March on the opening day of the Estimates by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, and I am not going to be guilty of breaching the Standing Orders by repeating what the Prime Minister has said.

6.50 p.m

I support the capital project. As I indicated quite freely to the House, it is to give us additional cover for the reserves even though today in the Central Bank daily position that was sent to me, we have \$716 million. We have never had it so good yet. We are not taking a chance and we are borrowing as an insurance against any future problems.

With those words and with gratitude to all who have contributed to the debate I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT ALLEYNE'S
LAND, BUSH HALL, ST. MICHAEL FOR THE PUBLIC
PURPOSE OF THE EXECUTION OF A PILOT
PROJECT FOR THE URBAN
RENEWAL PROGRAMME

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: The Resolution before this Honourable House seeks permission to acquire 14 parcels of land measuring 8 203 square metres at Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall, St. Michael to facilitate the execution of the Urban Development Commission's pilot project under the Urban Renewal Programme. These parcels of land are taken from

Gwendolyn Daniel; Irela Cadogan, Vera Dash; Arthur Stuart; Bernard Crawford; Egbert Tull; Sybil Worrell; the Estate of Reuben Weekes; Moorine Smith; Millicent Thornhill; Eugene Richards; Fitz Cumberbatch; Frank Alleyne and the Estate of Drayton Bowen.

This Resolution has taken a bit longer in coming to Parliament because originally there were supposed to be only nine parcels of land but then after the surveyors went back in, they recognised that they could not complete the project unless they had taken another four parcels. The project would be used for the relocation of five tenants, the creation of lots in the tenantry for persons to acquire and the transfer of titles. We would hope that with this development the provision of footpaths and roads would be constructed and the upgrading of toilet facilities would be done where persons in the pilot project would get water-bourne toilet facilities. So this will be the general upgrading of a tenantry.

The project according to the Urban Development Commission is estimated to cost approximately \$1.2 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say that it is from this pilot project at Alleyne's Land that the development of the \$2.50 per square foot concept originated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the survey plans are in order and have been certified by the Attorney General so with those brief remarks I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to have some type of assurance from the Minister of Housing and Lands that these people that the land is being taken from that they will be offered alternative land where possible and that they will not just be given monetary compensation.

As you are aware, Sir, land is becoming a scarce resource in this country and on many occasions the Government of Barbados has been coming to this Parliament, compulsorily acquiring land from poor people, giving them money for the land and then those same people have to go and face the open market to try to acquire land for their children and grandchildren and sometimes for themselves. I would like, Sir, to call on the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Attorney General of Barbados to make sure that the Land Acquisition Act is changed so that it will make it compulsory for Government to first offer land in exchange for land before they offer monetary compensation.

Sir, it is regrettable that in a country where all Barbadians would like to own a piece of Barbados that the Government of the day, who brags about having over 5 000 plots of land, can find it possible to take land from poor

people and do not give them back land in return. I think that is very regressive and that any right thinking Government would recognise – and even in Zimbabwe people recognise the importance of land and they are prepared to sacrifice their lives in order to have a piece of their country.

I am calling on the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Attorney General to make sure that the necessary amendments are made to the Land Acquisition Act because there are too many people who through the goodness of their hearts allowed people to rent land from them and because of the Freehold Tenancies Act have found themselves in situations in Barbados now where they do not own one single square foot of land even though they owned acres of land previously. I think that any progressive Government must first recognise that when someone has been treated in that particular way that it is their responsibility to make sure that they give back from its land bank the appropriate amount of land to that particular person.

Since 1994, I have been calling on this Government to implement a policy like that and so far they have done nothing about it. I am saying that it is regrettable that people living on the west coast of Barbados can tell anybody that they are sure to own their land but if you are living anywhere else in Barbados you cannot give anybody the assurance that you will be able to retain the ownership of your piece of land.

I am also calling on the Government to implement a policy throughout Barbados like the policy which is being used in Urban Barbados as it relates to tenancies but with the only difference that Government make sure that the people who will be affected by having to give up their land that Government in return must give them alternative pieces of land elsewhere.

I can understand the problems of people living on land and having to move and that we do not want that to happen. I can support Government on that particular matter but what I cannot support them on is when they take land from a poor person to give it to another poor person and then that poor person has to go on the open market to fight to get a piece of land.

In Barbados, wherever you see a half acre of land now, it means a half million dollars or something like that. Everybody wants a high price for their land. If a man has five acres of land, that man most likely would have planned his life on those 5 acres of land and he should not be deprived of his 5 acres of land.

There are some constituencies in Barbados where you cannot even trespass on anybody's land because if you do that you will come back with a cane. That is how serious people take land as an issue in Barbados and the Government must understand ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is a terrible thing. St. Philip happens to be one and most likely St. Lucy would be the other one. People in Barbados, especially in rural Barbados understand the seriousness of land and if you were to check the law courts you would recognise that the major disputes within rural Barbados happened to be disputes relating to land.

I am saying that the same way foreigners can understand the importance of owning a piece of land in Barbados that the Government of the day must recognise that Barbadians also understand the importance of owning land and they cannot continue to trample on the rights of Barbadians by taking their lands away from them. I am asking Government to make sure that these people be treated in a particular way.

There are also some people living near to the Combermere School who have worked many years on a particular plantation which I will not name at this present moment. These people were not given the same privileges as the other plantation tenants and now they are being asked by people to vacate the lots they have been living on for a long time. I am calling on the Government to make sure that those people who worked on that particular plantation for all the days of their lives, who would have earned the necessary revenue to entitle them to remain where they are and who sometimes give up their severance pay rights to be able to live on that particular piece of land that their consideration must be taken into account.

Finally, Sir, and I want to repeat this one. No longer can an urban tenantry be described the way that it is described now because it must be treated on the same basis throughout Barbados and no particular area should be given any particular right over any other area and all tenancies throughout Barbados should be given the same rights. I am saying that where people living in St. Michael are allowed to pay the first \$2.50 per square foot that the same thing should be allowed to happen in St. Lucy, St. Philip, St. George, St. Joseph and all the parishes in Barbados where Government is prepared to pay the balance of money. This should not happen only in St. Michael and Christ Church. It must be for Barbadians on the whole.

I thank you very much.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I rise to give support to this acquisition and to say that I am indeed happy that this Minister of Housing and Lands has brought this matter here because it has been on the road for way too long in terms of bringing it to a happy conclusion for the residents of Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall, St. Michael.

In 1995 and again in 1996 we met with the residents of Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall to effect then what was to become the first pilot programme of the Urban Development Commission (UDC) for an entire community. We articulated a programme that would see the transfer of title to the tenants from the landowners at a proposed price of \$2.50 per square foot recognising that Government would pay the difference between the \$2.50 a square foot and the fair market value of the land.

This issue was as a result of the fact that since 1990 the residents of Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall had received notices from the landowners – because there are more than one – to purchase the land in excess of \$5.00 per square foot at a time when comparable land in the vicinity was being sold at \$3.50 and \$4.00 a square foot.

We as an Opposition, took a decision that this issue as well as another problem we had at Lower Estate Tenantry in St. George were two urgent tenancies issues that had to be resolved by whatever mechanism even if by compulsory acquisition but preferably by negotiation with the landowners to put a system in place where Government will pay the difference in the market value. In fact, this gave birth to the \$2.50 per square foot policy from which all residents in St. Michael and throughout the rest of non-plantation tenancies in Barbados will now benefit.

Many people may not know but it is the Town Hall meetings with the residents of Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall, St. Michael which led to the creation of that policy for this Government. We also had as part of the pilot project the provision of walkways and the provision of roads particularly in areas where emergency vehicles could not otherwise access residents in the event of an emergency. We believe then as we do now, that if you have large numbers of people living in a small area that the Government has a responsibility to ensure that emergency vehicles can get in with easy and ready access to ensure that in the event of an emergency there is not a major calamity.

Now, one of the idiosyncracies of our system of governance is the fact that all of the pathways and the roads which have been intended for this pilot scheme have in fact been completed and have been completed now for some eighteen months to two years so that an element of this acquisition is to tidy up that part that these people have now to be properly compensated. This is not the first time that this work was done. This work started in 1997 and there was a major problem and hence what is before the House today is really a corrective action in respect of work which has been done.

We also agreed that part of the pilot project was to ensure that where persons had house spots that were below the size of a proper house spot to accommodate a reasonable

size house that we would try to resite those persons within the existing community because in most instances the persons who were going to be resited were elderly and it was our judgement that if we resited them outside of the community we will bring about their demise which is something we would not have wished to see happen.

Therefore, this acquisition would facilitate the resiting of quite a few persons who currently lived on unacceptably small lots and in some instances almost in the backyard of other people. I think the CEO of the Urban Development Commission (UDC) would well remember an example of a lady's house that so butted and bounded the next one that you could not even open the door and the windows properly and in those circumstances we had to temporarily resite her in order to get access to fix her house, so there is an element of resiting to be done. There are only some 14 house spots and the majority of these in fact will be used for the resiting of persons within the general Bush Hall and Alleyne's Land area.

I think that it is important to note that Alleyne's Land is not a small tenantry. There are in fact some 110 lots among Perfection Road, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Avenue Alleyne's Land, Review Road and Military Road. 7.10 p.m.

We have been proceeding on the basis that the Urban Development Commission who has been negotiating with the owners, because there is more than one owner, of the land will in fact see to it that within the next 4 weeks the actual conveyance of the land at Alleyne's Land to the tenants will commence. We know that there was a slight difficulty in the earlier months of this year and I can only appeal to the residents of Alleyne's Land to recognize that we have now overcome that difficulty. Although 85 tenants have gone in already, we will be asking them during the month of June to touch base with the Urban Development Commission again so as to receive a timetable for when the conveyances will actually start for their particular lot.

We know that this has been causing hardship, and we are sensitive to that fact, because a lot of people would have wanted to borrow money but they cannot do so unless they have approved plans for the plot from the Town Planning Office. We believe they will soon be in a position to complete their plans or to borrow their money. We are grateful for their forbearance in this matter because I do admit it has taken way too long to reach this stage.

I only want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we conceptualized Alleyne's Land, we conceptualized as I said transfer of title at subsidized prices, the provision of walkways, footpaths and roads, improvement of drainage and all of the physical infrastructural things to make a difference. We also conceptualized that within a community like that there had to be a system of assistance to pensioners

and persons who were handicapped or otherwise affected that they could not provide for themselves. To that extent, the Urban Development Commission has brought about a systematic programme of converting pit toilets to water-borne facilities, repairing in excess of 20 old people's houses in the community, ensuring also that persons have access to loans, whether to repair, once they were able-bodied and working or to make the same conversion for themselves from pit toilet to water-borne facilities, and also ensuring that where there was a need for loans to help persons in self-employment who own their own businesses that they could do so in recognition of the fact that once you alter the physical state of a community that there could not be total urban renewal without offering economic opportunities to the residents living therein.

Any failure to offer that economic opportunity would only allow persons who prey on unfortunate and disadvantaged people such as drug pushers and other loan sharks people to have positions of prominence in a community. Unless you create 2 or 3 entrepreneurs in every community and village in this country, then those who are less fortunate are attracted to people who are paying money by less than legal or scrupulous means.

I, therefore, want to commend the approach taken at Alleyne's Land by the Urban Development Commission. I want to say to them that I am equally aware that the pressure is on them to deliver a service to fix a particular need in a community. We will be well advised to recognize that the holistic approach to urban renewal will make the fundamental difference at the end of the day to the face of St. Michael in this country. While we may want to go in and fix a road or to build a footpath somewhere, it is recognizing that we do the work for that entire community whether it is in doing the social surveys to see the needs, dealing with the physical infrastructural needs and issues pertaining to housing and their relationship to the land, we have to deal with the fact that, unless the entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are thriving in that community, then the community itself will explode. When a family is short of money, there must always be somebody in the community they can turn to get fed or to get 'a piece of change' to tide them over until the next month or whatever so that they do not have to resort to theft or otherwise beg you.

Sir, this is separate from any provision of welfare assistance given by the State. This is a concept that is rooted in traditional Barbadian values but it is also a concept that is well understood in all best practised cases of urban renewal across the globe. I want to urge them, therefore, to try and stick as far as possible to the holistic development for communities in urban renewal rather than the single approach which sees a positioning of a road or the building of a water-borne facility but to look at the community as a whole and allow them to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have spoken far longer than I intended to, but suffice it to say that I really want to thank the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Social Transformation, the Chairman of the Urban Development Commission, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and, of course, the CEO of the Urban Development Commission, Mr. O'Brien Trotman, for ensuring that after ten long years this matter may soon come to a happy fruition. I want to say that I believe that we will be facilitated in this speedy and happy resolution of the matter by the attorney-at-law for the landlords who is very well known to all of us. I also want to thank the landlord who is equally anxious to have this matter resolved. I believe that this is a win-win situation in the circumstances and that any other obstacles shall soon be removed within the next 4 weeks.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
LEASE TO THE BARBADOS OLYMPIC
ASSOCIATION INC. OF LAND AT
THE GARFIELD SOBERS SPORTS
COMPLEX, WILDEY,
CHRIST CHURCH

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution before the House seeks permission to lease 8 667 square metres of land at Sir Garfield Sobers Complex to the Barbados Olympic Association for a period of 25 years at a nominal rate of \$100 per annum with rent review in the 10th year, 20th year and then an option to renew for a further period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look at the entire complex at Wildey, you will notice that there are a number of sporting organisations that now lease land from Government, for example, the Tennis Association, Aquatic Centre and the Hockey facility. There is the gymnasium which we hope that during the year we can amalgamate all that land into the Gymnasium Limited. But the entire lands at Wildey comprise over 26.48 hectares which is about 65.43 acres of land. There is a lot of land that Government bought years ago for sports. We hope that in the course of the next 2 or 3 years most of the sporting organisations could get a lease once they go through the Ministry of Sports because the arrangement is that the Ministry of Sports is supposed to give the blessing for these organisations.

But more to the point, Sir, the Olympic Association is proposing to have two buildings on the site, an olympic

centre, sports hall and a dormitory. This will be able to facilitate persons who now are in the sports programme. They now have to pay exorbitant fees for hotel rates and so on. It is proposed, according to the Olympic Association, to have dormitories for persons which will house more than 90 persons at reasonable rates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Olympic Association as you are aware has helped sporting organisations in terms of providing funds for them especially athletics, badminton and other sports which I am sure the Honourable Minister of Sports will talk about.
7.20 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the document is in order and has been certified by the Attorney General. With those brief remarks, I beg that the Resolution do now pass.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to say that we will support this particular Resolution and I hope that when the proposal comes in from North Stars to lease the land that they are now on, that we would also get this support because there is a need for us to start a pilot project that the Government can copy and implement throughout Barbados.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this lease is completed and when the buildings are erected at Wildey, I believe that it will make that complex a truly sporting complex. It is now about ninety per cent there and there is still a lot of work to be done and I believe that when we have those buildings they will go a long way towards making the full sporting complex which we want it to be. Eight thousand six hundred and sixty-seven square metres to be leased to the Barbados Olympic Association and it would be used for their headquarters and that would be the home of the Barbados Olympic Association.

In most parts of the world the national olympic association actually has its own headquarters and what is happening here is that we are moving towards that way. Our national olympic association will at long last have its own headquarters as well.

Right now, a lot of the national associations use the National Sports Council for their secretarial services and assistance and from what I have been gathering from the Olympic Association they are hoping that when they have their headquarters at Wildey that the Football Association or the Athletic Association and the Basketball Association and the Volleyball Association, any of those sporting organisations, would be free to have their meetings and free to use the secretarial services there as well. I think that that is going to be a tremendous amount of assistance to them.

Part of the plans, as indicated by the Minister of Housing, would have to do with the construction of a dormitory and, in particular, they want to use the dormitory for visiting teams coming to Barbados and the visiting sporting groups that come here.

Since I have been Minister of Sports, I have known about quite a few teams who wanted to come but who were actually turned off and this dormitory could be construed by some as being in competition with the private sector because the hotels and the guest houses may think that they should have been the people who would be accessing this particular work. Seen through the eyes of the sporting fraternity, I believe that this is an absolute necessity. As I said, Sir, I have known of instances where sporting groups have actually packed their suitcases and were virtually on the plane ready to come to Barbados but because they realised the accommodation cost that they were facing they could not make the tour.

I know of instances where there were two schools that wanted to come here for the Sir Garfield Sobers Tournament where schools from the region come to play and because of the high price of accommodation they were unable to do so. What the Olympic Association has been saying is that they would make this dormitory available at a much cheaper cost than the kind of accommodation you have now for those sporting groups. I believe it will help us to see more people come to Barbados and more sporting groups come to stay with us.

At the recent CARIFTA Swimming Championship the cost of their accommodation, and I am speaking of what happened last week, eight days ago, when they were having sports here the cost from the hotel to the pool – and this is only part of the cost because some of them did not have to pay for their accommodation – they had a bill for that accommodation for \$20 000. You would not believe it would be in that region.

If we had the Olympic Association with a dormitory at Wildey and we have basketball tournaments being played in the gymnasium or volleyball or hockey on the hockey astroturf or we have the Junior Lawn Tennis Tournament being played right there at the Lawn Tennis Association, it would mean that a lot of this \$20 000 cost that I am speaking about, that the Swimming Association had to pay recently, they would not have to pay. In a way, it is also going to help in terms of the location because they are right there on the spot and the national associations which are in that area would all benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the contribution of the lotteries generally to sports in Barbados. I believe that over the past five years, certainly since I was there, the lotteries have made a significant

contribution to sports in Barbados and a lot of us do not realise but we have been bringing back at the CARIFTA and other games more medals than we have been accustomed. I believe that the Olympio and the Lotto and the other lotteries would have made a contribution in this regard. They pay the airfare and they pay the accommodation of a lot of our athletes who go abroad to represent Barbados and we are able to take two relay teams sometimes in instances where before we could not even take one because of the exorbitant cost. Now the cost is borne by the lotteries and we are able to send more people abroad than we were accustomed.

I have to say that sending teams abroad is an extremely expensive undertaking. In Winnipeg, last year, and this is a classic example to show the amount it costs, we took one athlete there for the equestrian event and the rules said that you had to bring the athlete and you had to bring a coach and you had to bring a groom. All that added up. The big thing is that the cost for the transportation of the horse was \$25 000 by itself. You are going abroad for an equestrian event but the cost of the transportation of the horse alone is \$25 000. When you added up the groom and the athlete and the coach you ended up with a total package in excess of \$50 000 for that one event.

7.30 p.m.

The other thing is too that even now when we are going to the Olympics and we are taking someone to be entered in the shooting event you have a situation where things like the gun, the ammunition and so on with this one athlete is going to cost something like \$30 000. These things are extremely expensive and all of this expenses is being borne for us by the Olympic Association and by Olympio. In all it is going to take our athletes some \$400 000 to go to Sydney.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: This is a significant cost and the Olympic Association is going to be paying all this for the athletes. I am saying that you have to look at it from that respect that they have done a lot for athletics and a lot for sports in Barbados. A lot of people do not realise the amount of money that you have to spend especially on world class athletes. Barbados can shout as loud as they can about Obadele and Andrea and so on but little do they realise that when those athletes compete on the world circuit that somebody has to bear the expenses. When those world class athletes go on the world circuit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they always take their coach, very often they take their physiotherapist and those are expenses that they have to bear. Little do people in Barbados realise that it is organisations like Olympio that has been assisting those athletes monthly by giving them financial assistance. We do not realise it and as Minister of Sports, I have to say that they have been doing a good job and that we have to commend them and thank them.

I do not want to be much longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but just to say that I recall a young lady who I taught in the Cayman Islands who rose to become the top of the Amateur Athletic Association in the Cayman Islands. She is a very brainy person and she wanted to have the CARIFTA Games in the Cayman Islands. She bid for it and she told them to give her the CARIFTA Games and that she had a stadium but she did not have a stadium. She went back to her people and she told them to give her a stadium because she had the CARIFTA Games and she got the stadium and she got the CARIFTA Games because the Cayman Islands have money and they could have done it that way and that is how she got it.

Since I was Minister of Sports a lot of our national associations have gone abroad and they have been bidding for us to have games in Barbados one type or another and very often they do it without the knowledge of the Sports Ministry. The Sports Ministry does not know that they are bidding for these games and, therefore, there is nowhere in the Estimates that we have accounted for those games and those games ran into hundreds of thousands of dollars. We have been asking for the longest while that they should let us know up front when such things happen. You have to realise that very often those Associations do not have any money whatsoever and then they expect to come to the National Sports Council at the last moment and ask for \$400 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we are saying to them is that they should let us know up front when these things are happening so that we will be able to make provision for them, it is not that we do not want to help them. It is just that we want to know in the early. When they come to us at the last minute and say that they have bid for it and it is the next three months then we can only say that we went to Estimates a long time ago and there is no money there for this particular event. Sometimes you tell them, meet us halfway, let us try and raise some of this \$400 000 that you are talking about and what happens is that they go out and do a sponsored walk and raise \$750 or they do a raffle or car wash and raise \$125 and come back and say, here is our contribution but we still have to look for that \$400 000. All we are asking of these sporting bodies is that they let us know up front very, very early. I think that is very important that we know in the early when they are bidding for these games so that we can make some contribution.

I have said that I would not be too long, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I am very glad that the lease is at last in sight so that things will be wrapped up very soon and that the Olympic Association will be able to have their headquarters at Wildey.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend my support to this issue before the Chamber in a very

short and brief comment realising that what I have heard from the Representative of St. Philip North, the Minister of Sports and also what I have heard from the Minister of Housing that from my observation the Garfield Sobers Sports Complex is likely to become the Sports Centre of the Caribbean. At the present moment, I think there are three disciplines of sports that are held outside of the Gymnasium in relation to swimming, hockey and tennis. One of my major concerns at this moment is that I hope that some planning would be put in place because at the present moment if there is an event at the Gymnasium the people who would have attended that event, if it were a success, have been finding some difficulty in getting both in and out of the Gymnasium in relation to the movement of traffic. One of my concerns, and I believe one of the concerns of many people, since there are so many other events and I gather that shortly the Barbados Football Association (BFA) would be having an area of land in that area, if some provision would be made in the future for some movement of traffic both in and out of the Gymnasium. There is the Barbados Swimming Association and I must congratulate them for winning the championship for the first time.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Ministry of Sports and also the Minister responsible for Housing and Lands for the foresight of making that area the sports hub of the Caribbean. I would also like to take this opportunity to plea with both Ministers to properly involve the Ministry of Public Works at some time so that they would be able to look at putting what we could consider to be a feeder road. There used to be another road at the Gymnasium that has now been closed off; that was a road just where the Chinese have set up their dormitory.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: That road used to lead you into Regency Park and could be used as an exit. I am wondering if that could be looked at in some way so that it will help with the movement of traffic in the Wildey area as quickly as possible. I also want to make a plea on behalf of the many sports teams in Barbados who have to travel overseas. Only today I was talking to one of the teams who is going overseas and they are confronted with a problem. For example, the swimming team, these people are faced with paying departure tax at the Grantley Adams Airport on several occasions and I am wondering if the Ministry of Sports in some way would look at finding a situation where these people who are representing Barbados overseas would have a waiver in terms of airport tax when they are going overseas. If you take these young ones who represented Barbados and who we have just congratulated, who are between the ages of eight and on and it is a situation of

paying departure tax, I am therefore asking the Ministry of Sports to appeal to the Ministry of Finance that there could be a waiver in relation to these various teams who are travelling overseas.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Yes, we will write the Prime Minister about that in the Budget. I think that is a strong point and I hope to see it done.

The other thing I would like to appeal to as far as Wildey is concerned is that I noticed in that area, if you take the Barbados Swimming Association, it is extremely active, also many people do not seem to relate to the fact that tennis is one of the major events there. I must also say that as far as the Hockey Association is concerned that they are also suffering in relation to parking facilities. I have observed at the last Hockey Festival that a lot of the vehicles were not compliant with parking in the parking space provided and if there is an event like what is coming up this weekend – Mother's Day event, the Beres Hammond show, where are you going to get thousands and thousands of cars filtering into that area. I am hoping that the security personnel at the Gymnasium would be in force.

7.40 p.m.

I am hoping that the security personnel at the Gymnasium would be able to provide the patrons who attend this event an easy access in and out of the Gymnasium.

Once again, I will like to congratulate the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Minister of Sports for having foresight concerning the development of sports.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for the day. I will like to thank all Honourable Members for their cooperation, the succinct manner in which they presented their contributions today. We were able to deal with some very weighty matters and since cricket is next Tuesday, it gives me the greatest pleasure in moving that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, May 23, 2000 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, May 23, 2000 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. Deputy SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
7.40 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, May 2, 2000.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR
THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. Deputy Speaker recognised the presence of
the pupils and their teachers from the St. Ursula
School.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 1

(5) Report of the National Insurance Board on
the Audit of the Accounts of the
Unemployment Fund for the years 1997
and 1998.

(6) Duties, Taxes and Other Payments
(Exemption) (the Tiona Fund Limited)
Order, 2000.

(7) Exchange Control (Authorised Dealers and
Depositaries) (Amendment) Order, 2000.

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

Leave was granted to His Honour I. A. Roett until
30th June, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO
AMEND THE ACTS GOVERNING
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL
TRAINING IN BARBADOS 2

Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 2, 28; Mr. D. J. H.
Thompson, 8; Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 11; Mr. D.
St. E. Kellman, 16; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 22;
Mr. D. T. Gill, 25; Mr. D. Carter, 27.

COMMITTEE

Mr. Duncan Carter in the Chair.

Clauses 1, 2 and the Schedule were called and
passed without debate.

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION – EXTERNAL
LOAN ACT, CAP. 94D THE GOVERNMENT
IS AUTHORISED TO BORROW MONEY
OUTSIDE BARBADOS FOR SUCH
PURPOSES AND IN SUCH SUMS AS ARE
APPROVED BY RESOLUTION OF
PARLIAMENT 29

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 29, 47; Mr. D. J. H.
Thompson, 31; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 36; Mr.
D. St. E. Kellman, 40, 49; Hon. R. R. Farley, 44.

The Resolution was passed.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND
ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE
CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND
SITUATE AT ALLEYNE'S LAND, BUSH
HALL, ST. MICHAEL 48

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 48; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 49; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 50.

The Resolution was passed.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS
(VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225
TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO THE
BARBADOS OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION INC.
OF THE PARCEL OF LAND, THE PROPERTY
OF THE CROWN SITUATE AT THE
GARFIELD SOBERS SPORTS COMPLEX,
WILDEY, CHRIST CHURCH 52

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 52; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 52; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 52; Mr.
M. Z. Williams, 54.

The Resolution was passed.

SUSPENSION 11

ADJOURNMENT 55

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 55.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CARTER, Mr. D. (Christ Church East Central)
CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)
FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East)
GILL, Mr. D. T. (St. Michael South Central)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
MARSHALL, Hon. R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)
St. JOHN, Hon. Sir Harold (Christ Church South)